

Strategic Plan for Research 2020

Becoming a National Research University

University of North Texas—April 1, 2010

EXTENDED SUMMARY

During its 126-year history, the University of North Texas has progressed from a private normal college to a large, comprehensive public research university with 12 colleges and schools, nearly 50 doctoral degree programs, and a combined annual budget in excess of \$750 million. UNT is the flagship of the University of North Texas System and the largest university in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. With more than 36,000 students it also is the fourth largest university in Texas. It is ranked by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University in the High Research Activity Category.

UNT faculty produce groundbreaking research in a wide range of disciplines within the sciences and engineering, and make nationally recognized contributions to the region's facilities on a 290

UNT, one of the seven emerging research universities in the state of Texas, is greatly energized by the opportunities created by House Bill 51, passed by the Texas State Legislature in 2009. This challenges UNT and other institutions to become national research universities. UNT has developed a long-term strategic plan to realize its vision of becoming a national research university. The university aspires to move to the Carnegie Very High Research Activity category. Already a comprehensive university, UNT would then be in the company of 90 percent of Carnegie Very High Research Activity member universities that are comprehensive and have strengths in many diverse areas.

The strategic plan for research presented here is a two-step plan that addresses each of the seven areas in the THECB's guidelines. The first step is to meet the eligibility requirements for the National Research University Fund by 2012 and then to move forward in the second phase to reach the Carnegie Very High Research Activity category. The key features of the plan are summarized below.

Expand External Research Funding UNT received external funding awards in excess of \$37.6 million in FY 2009, of which \$28.03 million was derived from federal sources. Research expenditures calculated for the National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Report were \$24.12 million, whereas the restricted research expenditures as per the THECB were \$11.24 million. These numbers indicate about 60% increase in awards and research expenditures over two years. With this as the backdrop, future goals are:

- \$45 million in THECB restricted research expenditures by 2015, and about \$50 million in 2016, making UNT eligible for National Research University Fund (NRUF) in 2017 when the Texas legislature biennial session will be held (see Fig. 1 and Table 1).

UNT plans to invest in strategic priority areas (see Table 2) that are most suited to its research expertise and infrastructure; its current and prospective partnerships with regional, national and international institutions and industry; its aspirations to be a major player in the economic development of the region

Expand and Improve Doctoral Education. UNT will continue to provide comprehensive graduate education in over 150 graduate programs. However, based on the results of a comprehensive study of existing doctoral programs, UNT will sustain the productivity of current high-quality programs through the allocation of additional resources, enhance the quality and productivity of programs through outcome-based investments, reallocate resources from producing programs not aligned with UNT's

Enhance Faculty and Student Development UNT will focus on retention and development of high quality faculty members through a variety of supportive and professional development resources. Student development will be enhanced by additional scholarships, fellowships and assistantships for needy as well as meritorious students. UNT will continue its highly successful efforts to promote diversity in the student body. Additionally, UNT will develop innovative ways to support faculty and students for national and international competitions, recognition awards, and prizes.

Expand Research Facilities and Resources In addition to new construction already underway and planned reassignments, renovations, and reallocations, UNT will need to construct a 100,000 ft trans/interdisciplinary Science and Technology Research building during the course of this plan. This new Science and Technology Research building would be located at Discovery Park. Approximately 290 acres at Discovery Park, plenty of land exists for such a building. This facility will be designed and built as a multi-phase structure so that future growth can be accommodated at the same site.

actively develop, promote and expand its inventory of research facilities, centers and academic programs that are among the best in the U.S.

The vision is clear. UNT will build many nationally and internationally recognized programs across the spectrum of academic degrees, research accomplishments and creative endeavors. In 10 years, a very high proportion of UNT faculty will be engaged in research and creative endeavors, both in areas for which external funding is readily available and in the disciplines for which external funding may be minimal but the intellectual contributions and doctoral production still contribute mightily. The challenging work that lies ahead to achieve this vision is invigorating and exciting to UNT leadership, faculty, students and staff. By effectively implementing this strategic plan, the University of North Texas will be recognized as one of the leading comprehensive research universities in the nation, and one day will rise to the ranks of great universities of the world.