

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON STRATEGIC PLAN

University of Houston Strategic Plan – January 2021

MISSION

Connecting potential with opportunity

The University of Houston draws strength from its diversity to transform lives and communities through education, research, service and innovation in a real-world setting. UH is an engine for discovery, conversation and change that informs and leads local, state, national, and global partnerships.

VISION

Building a Top 50 Public University

VALUES

- *Diversity, Inclusion and Freedom of Expression: We value our people and embrace our differences as we remove barriers, engage in free and open discourse and provide resources to think critically and make us stronger.*
- *Innovation: We infuse innovation into everything--our culture, curriculum and campus workplace.*
- *Collaboration: We build strength through creative innovation, entrepreneurship, research, intellectual curiosity and partnerships in everything we do.*
- *Resilience: We change and adapt, transform and are creative to meet the ever-changing needs of the University and society.*

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GOALS

GOAL 1: Student Success: Provide a Top Tier, Inclusive Educational Experience

Strategy #1: Make educational programs more financially accessible for all students.

- Action 1. Expand pathways for first generation college students into UH academic programs and degrees.
- Action 2. Increase enrollments from community colleges, national baccalaureate institutions and within the Interstate Passport program.¹
- Action 3. Streamline processes for admission, financial aid, registration and graduation.
- Action 4. Close gaps in academic success and expedite undergraduate degree completion.
- Action 5. Provide personalized re-entry and retention mechanisms for students who separated from UH before degree completion.

Strategy #2: Use innovative and creative teaching methods to elevate student learning.

- Action 1. Create a UH Learn eco-system by improving and integrating undergraduate learning and educational delivery modalities.
- Action 2. Extend and integrate a system of cohesive strategies to increase student degree completion.
- Action 3. Integrate global learning and experiences through the Aspire Institute for Global Engagement.
- Action 4. Develop new learning delivery mechanisms and modalities that maximize students' opportunities to learn in ways that best match their learning styles.
- Action 5. Animate the UH educational experience with vibrant artistic and landscaping elements that underscore and reinforce learning, in keeping with the UH Centennial Plan.

Strategy #3: Increase the number of experiential learning opportunities that prepare students to excel in their chosen fields.

- Action 1. Build high-impact learning, community engagement and service experiences into course learning outcomes and syllabi.
- Action 2. Infuse entrepreneurialism and innovation learning opportunities throughout all programs and curriculum.
- Action 3. Create transdisciplinary programs that address future workforce and economic demands.
- Action 4. Increase the documentation and accomplishment of academic outcomes across all courses to enable students to showcase their learning from experiential and innovative learning modalities.

Strategy #4: Provide highest quality professional and graduate degree programs and prepare students to lead.

- Action 1. Continue efforts to develop nationally and internationally ranked graduate programs.
- Action 2. Create graduate programs at the cutting edge of knowledge creation and workforce development that are nimble and responsive to changing research and workforce trends.
- Action 3. Attract the best graduate students from the greater Houston region, the U.S. and the world.

¹ <http://interstatepassport.wiche.edu/>

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- Action 4. Streamline administrative processes for graduate and professional program admission, financial aid, registration, theses, dissertations and graduation.
- Action 5. Facilitate transdisciplinary learning through co-curricular learning activities and enrollment in graduate courses across colleges.
- Action 6. Integrate global learning and experiences across graduate programs in conjunction with the Aspire Institute for Global Engagement.

Strategy #5: Provide working professionals with top quality programs to upgrade their skills and help create a robust economy.

- Action 1. Provide immersive and structured professional development opportunities for students to gain exposure to and preparation for a range of career paths.
- Action 2. Develop learning opportunities and delivery modes for lifelong learners who seek ongoing education outside of formal degree and credential structures.
- Action 3. Design innovative continuing and professional education, micro-credentialing, certificates and digital badges that respond to evolving market and societal needs.

Milestones

1. University of Houston will rank among the Top 75 and then among the Top 50 public universities in the nation in the U.S. News & World Report ranking.
2. More than 50% of freshmen will continue to be first generation college students and from underserved communities of color.
3. Number of ranked graduate programs will double and existing ranked programs will increase their standing.
4. UH will increase the number of certificates, modules and micro-credential programs for working professionals.

GOAL 2: Nationally Competitive Research: Build a Research Powerhouse that Impacts our Region and the World

Strategy #1: Conduct innovative research in Houston's areas of strength: energy, infrastructure, health, data sciences and the arts.

- Action 1. Make UH the center of energy research in the world through the Aspire Institute for Sustainable Energy and Energy Security, ongoing energy-related work across the colleges and partnerships with energy-related innovators.
- Action 2. Develop groundbreaking research agendas and support the growth of the Aspire Institutes in energy, smart cities and infrastructure and healthcare innovation.
- Action 3. Multiply the impact of UH Aspire Institutes and research organizations by building intentional and strategic collaborations among these entities.
- Action 4. Build effective multidisciplinary models that will address health disparities, improve health equity and train the next generation of health practitioners and health researchers.
- Action 5. Create an Innovation Complex to partner with faculty, staff and students to generate and advance discoveries and ideas that lead to new products, services, licenses and businesses for the benefit of society.
- Action 6. Secure endowed professorships, research funding and scholarships that address service to and advancement of UH and its research and global aspirations.

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Strategy #2: Create sustainable solutions local, national and global challenges.

- Action 1. Build upon the work of the Aspire Institute for Resilient Infrastructure and Smart Cities, the Innovation Complex to identify and address urban challenges through policy, interdisciplinary action research and think tanks.
- Action 2. Partner with metro Houston region leadership to leverage urban research challenges and opportunities and build local solutions that will scale to global implementation.
- Action 3. Utilize the scale of networks to pursue grants from national and international funding sources to address complex urban challenges.
- Action 4. Reduce health disparities in the Houston metro community through UH Health.

Strategy #3: Build infrastructure and networks to promote interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research.

- Action 1. Enhance the infrastructure, investment, policies and incentives for conducting collaborative research that spans academic departments and colleges.
- Action 2. Make UH a destination institution for talented faculty from around the world to conduct transdisciplinary research.

Strategy #4: Support faculty and staff to compete in honors and recognitions at the highest level.

- Action 1. Increase research, scholarship and creativity, and boost the visibility and impact of this work in high-ranked journals, news media and public discourse.
- Action 2. Amplify the accomplishments of the UH community both internally and externally.
- Action 3. Advocate for faculty and students to achieve national and international fellow designations, awards and prizes across all disciplines through the establishment of the “Faculty Awards Center.”
- Action 4. Showcase the breadth of UH faculty excellence by creating a university-wide Distinguished UH Professor distinction that honors faculty across all colleges who are superlative in teaching, research or creative activity with work of national and international impact.
- Action 5. Establish competitive compensation and support packages for faculty across all ranks.
- Action 6. Expand the diversity of faculty new hires by advancing outstanding graduate students into faculty positions.
- Action 7. Create residencies for world-class artists and scholars who will enrich the student and faculty learning and work experiences.

Strategy #5: Build an immersive culture of research and innovation for all students.

- Action 1. Expand and support undergraduate research opportunities and international experiences through the Honors College Undergraduate Scholars and Major Awards program to prepare students to be competitive for national and international grants and scholarships, including UH’s first Rhodes Scholar.
- Action 2. Provide research-oriented doctoral students with resources, support and mentoring to develop into world-class researchers, innovators and creative artists.

Milestones

1. UH will be known as the “Energy University” by conducting groundbreaking research that helps the industry find solutions to local and global challenges.
2. UH Health will be the primary contributor to research on reducing health disparities in the community.
3. Through enhanced research efforts and initiatives, UH Arts will double its public engagement and visibility.
4. The UH ASPIRE Institutes will contribute to the University’s world-class research.

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5. Twice as many faculty will receive national honors and competitive grants.
6. The University will gain preeminence in the arts, humanities, creative expression and social sciences.
7. UH will build an Innovation Complex to expose students to the ethos of innovation and entrepreneurship across all disciplines.

GOAL 3: Social Responsibility: Serve as an Exemplar for Equitable and Inclusive Community Engagement

Strategy #1: Build a coalition of medical and health professionals, health care providers, and students who work with community members to achieve health equity.

- Action 1. Build a Population Health Complex through a coalition of UH scientists, health care providers and students with community members to create effective models that will address health disparities, improve health equity and train the next generation of health practitioners and health researchers.
- Action 2. Expand locations and opportunities for health practitioners' clinical training and dry lab space for investigators in conjunction with the Population Health Complex.
- Action 3. Advance novel programs for systems-science education and research studies that build on and expand high-quality, impactful health disparity and health equity research.
- Action 4. Develop public-private partnerships to create multidisciplinary community-based clinics as part of UH's deep commitment to community engagement and improving population health outcomes.
- Action 5. Recruit leading funded researchers representing a broad range of disciplines that focus on population health.
- Action 6. Connect with and build upon the Aspire Institute for Healthcare Innovation's work to multiply the impact that UH brings to addressing population health challenges.

Strategy #2: Strengthen our partnership with Historic Third Ward and city of Houston.

- Action 1. Expand partnerships with communities, corporations, non-profit organizations and other entities to address urban challenges (e.g., education, public health, mental health, social work, civil projects, urban development, housing, medicine, public safety, technology, etc.) with particular focus on the Third Ward.
- Action 2. Address health disparities in the Houston metro community through UH Health, and by establishing at health services through clinics in the Historic Third Ward.

Strategy #3: Infuse and support the culture of volunteerism among students, staff, and faculty.

- Action 1. Validate UH's values by implementing the definitions and criteria of the Carnegie Community Engagement designation.
- Action 2. Augment lifelong values of service and volunteerism for students through experiential learning experiences associated with programs, courses, student organizations and service-oriented scholarships.
- Action 3. Expand opportunities and support for UH employees to volunteer in community and civic engagement and service activities.

Strategy #4: Bolster efforts by our faculty, staff and students to seek social justice and racial equity.

- Action 1. Enhance student life programming, learning opportunities and curriculum to help students live, implement and practice the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and responsibility.
- Action 2. Ensure that library resources reflect diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice in collections, archive collections and research tools.

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- Action 3. Develop and strengthen alliances with organizations, corporations and entities within the greater Houston region and the nation that focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice.
- Action 4. Make UH a nationally known for convenings and conferences that connect the transdisciplinary work of colleges to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice with supporting funding and logistics.
- Action 5. Improve the effectiveness of UH faculty, advisors and employees who work with students to improve equity and retention gaps through professional development in pedagogies of engagement relating to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice.
- Action 6. Increase the ways and support for all UH employees to participate in providing support for UH undergraduate and student organizations that support and engage with diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice.

Strategy #5: Support freedom of expression and diversity of views.

- Action 1. Increase opportunities and means for the sharing of diverse views.
- Action 2. Build programming to assist faculty and staff to learn best practices to support of freedom of expression and develop skills in the expression and discussion of diverse ideas.
- Action 3. Enhance student life programming to help students live, implement and practice the principles of freedom of expression.
- Action 4. Ensure that library resources capture full spectrum of diverse viewpoints, and that historical archives endeavor to collect and document the expression of disparate viewpoints, especially across the diversity of populations within the Houston metro region.

Milestones

1. Develop a Population Health Complex that leads interdisciplinary population health practice and research to help eliminate health disparities.
2. UH will continue to partner and collaborate with the Third Ward to strengthen schools, businesses and health care resources.
3. UH will be noted as a model institution for exposing students to diverse ideas and seeking social justice.

GOAL 4: Nationally Relevant Athletics: Build a Competitive Athletics Program

Strategy #1: Pursue the best national platform for student-athletes to compete.

Strategy #2: Prepare student-athletes for academic and lifelong success.

Strategy #3: Build a sustainable funding base to support athletics.

Milestones

1. Athletics' finances, including subsidies, will meet or exceed the national average.
2. Student-athletes will lead the conference in graduation rate and the Academic Progress Rate.
3. Student-athletes' satisfaction with the University will increase.
4. Boosters will increase their engagement with UH.

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GOAL 5: Competitive Funding: Build a Sustainable Funding Base to Support Our Vision and Goals

Strategy #1: Seek legislative support to equitably fund education for our diverse students.

- Action 1. Seek new legislative funding to support the initiatives of this strategic plan.

Strategy #2: Enhance targeted fundraising.

- Action 1. Establish new revenue streams through payment structures for micro-credentials, badges, and other new packaging of learning success.
- Action 2. Accelerate technology transfer and other entrepreneurial pursuits by pursuing small business innovation research, innovation training grants, and additional funding support for UH innovation and entrepreneurialism.
- Action 3. Find novel funding mechanisms to support the refurbishment of buildings and classrooms.
- Action 4. Increase commitment, engagement, and support from alumni, partnerships, stakeholders, and communities (local, regional, national, global).
- Action 5. Position UH for increased financial support from the greater Houston region and Texas by reporting annually on UH's economic impact or return-on-investment to the greater Houston region and Texas to show return-on-investment.

Milestones

1. UH will have equitable funding from the legislature.
2. UH Endowment will top \$1 billion.
3. At least 15% of alumni will give and be actively engaged with the University.