

The University of Tennessee Southern
Strategic Focus Plan*
ENHANCE – EXPAND - EXPLORE
Practical Pathway to a Promising Future
2021-2023

Introduction and Background

On July 1, 2021 Martin Methodist College officially joined the University of Tennessee System and became the University of Tennessee Southern.

The transition continues as we seek to fully acclimate, assimilate, and align ourselves with the System. Phenomenal increases in applications since July 1, would suggest rapid growth in enrollment. This growth must be managed and the necessary adjustments in capacity must be anticipated in order to prepare for our promising future.

While the institution has made it a priority to increase indicators of student success over the past few years, we are lagging significantly behind our peers. With our new-found capacity we have an extraordinary opportunity to make progress in the retention and graduation rates of our students.

Our work and opportunity are immediately before us. A strategic focus plan will prioritize our work and capture and enhance our opportunity in the first two years of our life as UT Southern. A more traditional strategic plan will form from the foundation prepared in this first stage.

Strategic Focus I - Grow Enrollment and Increase Student Success

Objective I - Increase admissions standards to align with the State standards.

Performance Goals:

2022 – 3.0 GPA and 17 Composite ACT

2023 – 3.0 GPA and 18 Composite ACT

2024 – 3.0 GPA and 19 Composite ACT

Objective II - Maximize opportunity of increased applications to increase full-time enrollment.

Performance Goal Statement:

- Increase full-time enrollment by 27% Fall 23.
- Increase admissions standard and adjust athletic team rosters for greater student success.

Objective III - Raise capacity to improve the level of student success.

Performance Goals:

- Hire student success coordinator fall 2021.
- Implement student success solutions Pharos 360 software and train staff and faculty of its effective use.
- Collaborate with UT System Assistant Vice President for Student Success.

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Increase fall-to-fall retention of FTFT Cohort

Baseline -54.6%

2022-23 - 59%

2023-24 - 61%

Increase fall-to-fall persistence

Baseline - 68.9%

2022-23 - 70%

2023-24 - 71%

Objective IV - Increase academic program opportunities.

Performance Goal Statement:

- Evaluate Nursing program and develop strategic growth plan.
- Develop 2+2 programs in Agriculture and Engineering.
- Develop job embedded teacher licensure program.

Objective V - Develop Bridge Program with area Community College's. (Columbia State and Motlow State)

Performance Goal Statement:

- Meetings held with each CC Presidents to receive support and approval.
- Design being developed for start in fall 2022

Objectives VI - Student Life – Enhance the student experience to help ensure the success of all students

Performance Goal Statement:

- Use student survey data to develop initiatives and programming to ensure Student Life is effectively serving all students.
- Create programming to support the success of minority, international, and underrepresented student populations. (target number – 3 new programs)
- Establish 2021-22 baseline year for reference in establishing future targets for student engagement.
- Enhance Programming related to Student Wellness and Safety to include the following:

Mental Health Education

Suicide Prevention

Alcohol Education and Prevention

Sexual Misconduct and Prevention

Campus Safety Education and Prevention

- Enhance a culture of inclusion, diversity, and engagement.

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- Explore new initiatives including:

Preparing for residential growth

Veteran's Affairs Office

Office of Disability Services

Research and explore the addition of sororities and fraternities

Develop a comprehensive plan for commuter engagement

Explore non-traditional housing opportunities

Develop a plan for Recreational Services

Research and Explore the addition of E-Sports

Establish substance abuse support group for students

Strategic Focus II – Enhance the openness of our campus culture and the accessibility and safety of our campus facilities.

Objective I - Improve physical accessibility on campus.

Performance Goals -

December 2021 -Work with the UT System's Office of Capital Projects to select vendor for ADA Audit.

January 2022 - Scope is developed and work begins on ADA Audit.

April 2022 - ADA Audit Report is received by UT Southern.

May 2022 - Prioritize and develop a strategy for ADA Compliance in 3-5 years.

May 2022 - Identify what areas of compliance the state will provide funding.

Objective II - Enhance Veteran's Services

Performance Goal Statement:

- Hire coordinator for Veteran's Services fall 2021.
- Identify and establish a space on campus for veterans fall 2022

Objective III -

Strategic Focus III – Create a Financial and Facilities Plan in support of our goals and objectives.

Objective I - Transition all business processes to align with UT System

Performance Goal Statement:

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- Hire additional position in Finance Office to assist with transition. (January1, 2022)
- Achieve substantial alignment by July 1, 2022

Objective II - Evaluate what new positions need to be hired for fall 2022

Performance Goal Statement-

- Meet with Provost and each Campus Division to evaluate Administrative staffing needs -January 2022.
- New positions presented to Chancellor for review in February 2022 followed by Leadership Council review.
- Positions posted in March 2022 with interviews in April 2022 for prospective hiring in July 2022.

Objective III – IT Audit to determine present and future needs.

Performance Goal Statement:

- September 2021 - Ransomware audit completed and passed.
- November 2021 - UT Southern with the assistance of the UT System completed their first departmental assessment.
- November 2021 - Risk assessment in process for university enterprise system.
- Spring 2022 - Risk assessment will be completed for all departments

Objective IV – Develop Master Plan

Performance Goal Statement:

- Summer 2022 - Work with the Office of Capital Projects to develop RFP for selection of a firm to assist with Campus Master Planning.
- Fall 2022 - Select firm to begin work on Campus Master Planning.
- Fall 2022 - Work begins on Campus Master Plan.
- Spring 2023 - First draft of Plan presented to Chancellor/Leadership Council.
- Summer 2023 - Final Plan is presented to Chancellor/Leadership Council.
- Fall 2023 - Campus Master Plan is presented to UT BOT for approval

Objective V - Identify Office and Meeting Space Needs

Performance Goal Statement:

- December 2021 - Develop a Space Utilization Committee to explore future space needs.
- January 2022 - Committee will review Credo's Space Utilization Plan to begin its work.
- February 2022 - Committee will meet all contingency groups to discuss space needs.
- April 2022 - First draft of plan is released to the Chancellor and Leadership Council for review.
- May 2022 - Final plan released to Chancellor and Leadership Council for review.
- June 2022 - Initial implementation of the plan begins.

Objective VI – Parking Study to Prepare for Anticipated growth

Performance Goal Statement:

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- August 2021- Request for Proposal (RFP) sent out by Office of Capital Projects for Parking Study.
- September 2021 - Collier Engineering selected to complete Parking Study.
- October 2021 - Collier Engineering completed on site visit.
- January 2022 - Initial Parking Study Plan to be presented to UTS.
- February 2022 - Develop a plan to finance the Parking Study Plan.
- May/June 2022 - Begin implementation of the Parking Plan

Strategic Focus IV - – Increase our Reach and Reputation through Economic Development and Public Service.

Objective I - Mission Integration

Performance Goals:

- Integrate the Turner Center into the University of Tennessee System and develop state/federal partnerships in order to understand the resources available to the region, and the gaps that the Turner Center can fill in the region/state.
- Work with provost’s office to deepen connections with service learning on campus. Promote workshops and (entrepreneurship events, health care partnerships) on campus for students and community. Work with Marketing and Communications and Advancement to promote “Everywhere UT” theme in the community, and to ensure development strategies that strengthen initiatives and community partnerships.
- Promote UT Southern as a regional presence in economic/community development. Regular “think-tank” gatherings of EDC offices/Chamber offices. Presentations and conversations with county leadership throughout South Central Tennessee

Objective II - Outreach and Economic Development

Performance Goals:

- Redesign Gattis Regional Leadership Program for restart in fall 2022.
- Build Rural Health Advocacy Network for Giles County that expands access to healthcare, focusing on prenatal care and vaccines.
- Build and launch Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship Programs that promote UT Southern as a primary resource in the Region. (small business mentor program fall 2021)
- Continue Rural social entrepreneurship cohort with faith communities.
- Develop initiatives with the Governor’s Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

Strategic Focus V - Develop, attract, and retain the best talent in support of our mission.

Objective I - Complete compensation study with Board approved peers.

- UT System to complete compensation study before July 2022.

Objective II - Increase investment and opportunity for faculty and staff development.

- 100,000.00 added to Faculty Development Budget fall 2021.

Objective III – Synchronizing hiring timeline to best timeline for hiring.

- Fully leverage capacity of system HR.
- Proactively anticipate hires where possible and begin process early.