

## Questions Submitted by the Deans Council

Acknowledging that there are unique concerns relative to specific units and a diverse set of questions to consider, our intention is to create a framework of inquiry regarding value added through system affiliation.

### Legislative Support:

1. How do you utilize your position within the system to advocate for the specific needs of each of your system campuses, especially during legislative session? Please provide examples.

### TTU System response:

*One of the Texas Tech University System's (TTU System) most important and impactful roles in serving our component institutions is leading our governmental relations initiatives and strategy – both at the state and federal levels. The chancellor and Governmental Relations (GR) team at the TTU System Administration work closely with the presidents and leadership teams at the component institutions to champion and secure key legislative initiatives and exceptional item priorities, as well as broader higher education policy and formula and non-formula funding initiatives benefiting our universities. Additionally, the GR team assists in coordination of university experts and leadership to provide public testimony to the legislatures.*

*With offices and professionals located in Lubbock, Austin and Washington, D.C., the TTU System Administration GR team includes experienced and recognized professionals who are the leading authorities for higher education policy and work in tandem with the GR staff at each institution.*

### Examples of recent success:

- **Texas Tech University (TTU):** School of Veterinary Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding).
- **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC):** mental health initiative (2019 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **Angelo State University (ASU):** academic and student success (2019 legislative support and funding); Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence (2021 legislative support and funding).
- **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso):** Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **Midwestern State University (MSU Texas):** Bolin Hall (2021 legislative CCAP funding – prior to affiliation with TTU System)

## Resource Allocation:

2. How does the system determine resource allocation to member institutions? To what extent does the system influence allocation of resources within each university?

### TTU System response:

*The role of the TTU System Administration is to provide our component institutions with exceptional leadership, services and resources that support the fulfillment of each university's mission and goals.*

*Fostering a culture of collaboration, sustainability and excellence, the TTU System Administration performs specific functions that have been strategically identified and coordinated between the component institutions to maximize consolidated expertise and efficiencies. These services and resources administered at the TTU System Administration are designed to complement those managed at the component universities and are responsive and adaptable to each university's individual needs.*

*Considering our comprehensive growth and success, the TTU System is recognized as a prominent leader in higher education yet is nimble in size to ensure services are allocated and available to each university.*

*Regarding services provided by the TTU System Administration, those include:*

- *Audit Services*
- *Board of Regents*
- *Chancellor's Office*
- *Chief Financial Officer*
- *Equal Opportunity*
- *Facilities Planning & Construction*
- *General Counsel*
- *Governmental Relations*
- *Information Technology*
- *Institutional Advancement*
- *Investments*
- *Leader & Culture Development*
- *Risk Management*
- *System Relations*
- *Treasury*

*In addition to offering specific services, the TTU System Administration instills a servant leadership model and provides autonomy for the management and operation of our component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university have the authority to manage its funds and allocate resources accordingly.*

*Beyond the services, SFA team members also would gain access to colleagues within the functions of the TTU System Administration offices listed above and at the component institutions to collaboratively share best practices and strategies.*

*For some existing university services, specifically in Audit Services and General Counsel, SFA employees would join the TTU System Administration team while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. This approach allows the university to have access to a larger team of attorneys and auditors, who work collaboratively across the TTU System, and to a wider range of expertise in nearly all legal matters, including medical*

*malpractice and professional liability, real estate and construction, Title IX and athletics, as well as faculty, staff and student matters.*

3. What percentage of each system university's total budget is allocated to its academic affairs division?

**TTU System response:**

*For the general academic institutions in the TTU System – ASU, MSU Texas and TTU – the percentage of each university's budget allocated to instruction and academic support in FY 2023 defined by NACUBO standards is as follows:*

- *ASU – 33 percent*
- *MSU Texas – 32 percent*
- *TTU – 30 percent*

*One of the strengths of the TTU System Administration is the understanding that each university leadership team is the expert when it comes to knowing the needs specific and critical to their university's operations and mission. The component universities have the authority and autonomy to make various decisions at the university level, with support and guidance – when needed and requested – from the TTU System Administration.*

*As such, many functions, including university budget allocations for academics, are decided and executed at the university level, not the system administration level.*

4. Provide examples of how you have invested in students, staff, and faculty.

**TTU System response:**

*As an executive organization in higher education, the TTU System Administration does not directly work with students and faculty on a daily basis. However, the leadership, services and resources invested by the TTU System benefit multiple university stakeholders in an indirect manner. From the enterprise software databases, such as Banner that helps administer student financial aid and employee compensation to legal services and beyond, the TTU System invests in many areas that support the operations of a university.*

*In a more direct fashion, there are specific initiatives at the TTU System Administration that precisely support students, staff and faculty.*

**Example:** *The TTU System Administration **Leader & Culture Development** (LCD) office offers services to member institutions related to people development and culture initiatives based on shared core values of each individual university or system entity. The LCD team actively visits campuses to support the organization's values-based culture and guide leadership development training. This team also assists universities throughout the system in integrating a values-based culture into recruiting, hiring and building a retention process.*

**Example:** Institutions of the TTU System receive funding for annual staff recognition awarded by the chancellor and **Chancellor's Council** funding, which supports student scholarships and faculty recognition across the system.

- Funds provide for student scholarships, empowering institutions to recruit students who raise the academic profile of the universities and to ensure higher education remains accessible for students with financial need.
  - **Example:** Because of Chancellor's Council scholarship finding, TTU is able to provide a competitive aid package for National Merit Scholars, among others, who attend the university. In 2016, TTU had seven National Merit Finalists; this year, TTU had 97, along with more than 4,400 Presidential Merit Scholars.
- Funds also recognize faculty who excel in teaching and research. Each year, the Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching and Research Awards – the TTU System's most prestigious faculty honors – recognize outstanding scholars across the institutions of the system.
- Funding from the Chancellor's Council, which is discretionary, and can be used in emergency circumstances, and was utilized during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - **Example:** In March 2020, ensuring the safe return of students studying abroad in COVID-19 impacted areas became critical as discussions began to impose international travel restrictions. Through a collaborative effort led by Chancellor Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D., that included steadfast supporters and university leadership, the Chancellor's Council was able to aid in the quick and safe return home of students studying abroad before those restrictions were implemented.

**Example:** The TTU System also invests in its faculty, staff and administration across the system by offering a **health and wellness program** to team members. The programs and resources available are designed to enhance the lives of all employees across the TTU System.

#### **Curriculum:**

5. Describe the curricular autonomy that exists between the system and its member institutions.

#### **TTU System response:**

Authority for each component institution's curricula remains at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4](#).

6. Provide specific examples of how the system invests in academic excellence including program accreditation and accountability.

#### **TTU System response:**

Academic priorities of the component universities are decided by each institution and supported at the TTU System Administration in various areas.

*Nationally distinct for the complement of academic programs offered at our universities, the TTU System is one of nine university systems in the U.S. to offer programs in undergraduate, medical, law, nursing, pharmacy, dental and veterinary education.*

*The TTU System Board of Regents and executive leadership help consult and advise component institutions on academic and student affairs issues regarding the educational mission and academic rigor of its programs, in addition to the clinical affairs within the health-related institutions.*

*These functions are primarily centered around the Academic, Clinical and Student Affairs Committee of the TTU System Board of Regents. For more information, see [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 1, Section 01.02.8 d \(1\)](#).*

*Each institution's Provost/Chief Academic Officer works closely with leadership across the university and is responsible for the overall academic mission of the institution. Additionally, the TTU System Administration Governmental Relations team supports coordination of academic programming approval through the THECB, and Board of Regents office supports necessary documentation for university accreditation.*

**Identity:**

7. Provide evidence of how the system ensures that its member institutions maintain their unique identities.

**TTU System response:**

*Stephen F. Austin State University would preserve its proud name, mascot and colors as a member institution of the TTU System – just like Angelo State University has since joining the TTU System in 2007 and Midwestern State University has since becoming a member institution of the TTU System in 2021. The TTU System celebrates the uniqueness of our universities with a shared passion for rich histories and traditions.*

8. Describe the reasons you are interested in SFA. How do you see SFA adding value to the system?

**TTU System response:**

*A partnership with Stephen F. Austin State University is an opportunity to affiliate with a distinguished institution that would complement and enhance the profile and strength of the TTU System's nationally recognized brand. We believe our cultures align well and that we are united in our mission and in the communities we serve.*

*Partnering with SFA would give the TTU System a presence in a new part of the state, allowing the system to serve the entire State of Texas from the furthest point west in El Paso to the eastern state border, with SFA as a shining star of the system in the Deep East Texas region. That means an increased impact and awareness of our entire system and each component institution.*

*Most importantly, the areas that align among our institutions will allow us to find additional ways to support each other, our communities and our state. SFA and the TTU System share, among other things, a dedication to serving our regional and rural communities. Like SFA, we have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing and meeting the needs of rural Texas.*

*SFA has a storied history with a strong base of passionate alumni, dedicated supporters and incredible employees and students who will continue to build on the legacy of excellence that 100 years has established. We believe we could help strengthen SFA's success as it enters its next century.*

## Questions Submitted by the Academic Department Chairs Forum

### Compensation

1. How will adjustments (merit, raises, compression) to faculty & staff salaries be evaluated? Provide examples of how adjustments to salaries were incorporated as a result of previous affiliation with your system. How do the salary and workload expectations differ among affiliated universities, and how is that incorporated into salary?

#### **TTU System response:**

*One of the strengths of the Texas Tech University System (TTU System) Administration is the understanding that each university leadership team is the expert when it comes to knowing the needs specific and critical to their university's operations and mission. The universities have the authority and autonomy to make various decisions at the university level, with support and guidance – when needed and requested – from the TTU System Administration.*

*As such, many functions, including discussions regarding salaries, are decided and executed at the university level, not the system administration level. Each university leadership team is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget. The TTU System Administration may assist universities with additional guidance.*

*The TTU System Regents' Rule Chapter 4 addresses academic workload at the component institutions – [04.06 – Academic workload – general academic institutions](#)*

2. What policies and procedures govern employee benefits that would be applied to our campus? Are benefits applied equally throughout the system? If there any examples of differences in benefits among your affiliated institutions, then please provide examples.

#### **TTU System response:**

*State employee benefits are guided by state law. Employees of the TTU System and its component institutions are state employees and, when eligible, are provided with benefits from the [Texas Employees Group Benefits Program](#) (GBP) – part of the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) – and with retirement benefits from the [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\)](#) and [Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) Annuity for Active Employees](#).*

*TTU System Regulations provide clarity and consistency across member institutions in regard to employee leave ([TTU System Regulation 07.12](#)) and remote work ([TTU System Regulation 07.13](#)).*



## Policies and Procedures

3. Will the system guarantee faculty the academic freedom to discuss and opine on controversial topics relevant to the course, even if this offends some students and administrators? Please provide examples of how your system has supported academic freedom among your affiliates.

### **TTU System response:**

*Academic priorities of the component universities are decided by each institution and matters of academic freedom are managed at the university level. The TTU System Board of Regents and executive leadership helps consult and advise component institutions on academic and student affairs issues regarding the educational mission and academic rigor of its programs, in addition to the clinical affairs within the health-related institutions.*

*These functions are primarily centered around the Academic, Clinical and Student Affairs Committee of the TTU System Board of Regents. For more information, see [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 1, Section 01.02.8 d \(1\)](#).*

*Each institution's Provost/Chief Academic Officer works closely with leadership across the university and is responsible for the overall academic mission of the institution. Authority for each component institution's curricula remains at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4](#).*

*Additional information pertaining to faculty responsibility across the TTU System is detailed in [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4, Section 04](#).*

4. When other universities have joined your system, which of these policies and procedures remained local or which ones were merged to the system: hiring process, general counsel, dual-credit, audit services, contracting/purchasing, information technology services, grant and support programs, curriculum & program management, assessment, tenure & promotion process, office of the registrar (academic probation & suspension, audits, graduation, plan of study, program fees and differential tuition).

### **TTU System response:**

*Component universities of the TTU System develop, maintain and uphold university-wide operating policies and procedures. The TTU System Administration provides system regulations that offer uniform guidelines for consistent reporting and operations.*

*Each component institution is responsible for establishing and publishing its tenure and promotion guidelines, subject to approval by the TTU System Board of Regents. [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4, Section 02](#), provides additional details regarding tenure and promotion.*



*The role of the TTU System Administration is to provide our component institutions with exceptional leadership, services and resources that support the fulfillment of each university's mission and goals.*

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*Regarding services provided by the TTU System Administration, those include:*

- *Audit Services*
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- *Governmental Relations*
- *Information Technology*
- *Institutional Advancement*
- *Investments*
- *Leader & Culture Development*
- *Risk Management*
- *System Relations*
- *Treasury*

*In addition to offering specific services, the TTU System Administration instills a servant leadership model and provides autonomy for the management and operation of our component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university have the authority to manage its funds and allocate resources accordingly.*

*Beyond the services, SFA team members also would gain access to colleagues within the functions of the TTU System Administration offices listed above and at the component institutions to collaboratively share best practices and strategies.*

*For some existing university services, specifically in Audit Services and General Counsel, SFA employees would join the TTU System Administration team while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. This approach allows the university to have access to a larger team of attorneys and auditors, who work collaboratively across the TTU System, and to a wider range of expertise in nearly all legal matters, including medical malpractice and professional liability, real estate and construction, Title IX and athletics, as well as faculty, staff and student matters.*

5. What system integrations would be required for operational infrastructure? Please provide a list of internal and external software packages related to academic affairs that are used system wide.

**TTU System response:**

*While the TTU System does not require any operational infrastructure integrations among its member institutions related to academic affairs, component institutions have access to various programs through system-level contracts and in partnering with*

*component institutions, which can offer reduced rates, cost-avoidance, and economies of scale opportunities. Some of these contracts include the following:*

- *Oracle Database (covers Banner and related databases)*
  - *Adobe Sign*
  - *TouchNet*
  - *Cayuse Research Suite*
  - *Gartner*
  - *Microsoft campus agreement*
6. Will we be able to choose our preferred learning management system? Or is this chosen system-wide? SFA currently uses Brightspace.

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for choosing a preferred learning management system would remain at the university level.*

**Structure and Hierarchy**

7. Please describe the relationship between marketing, advertising, and enrollment management across system universities and how do they mutually support each other?

**TTU System response:**

*The areas listed in the question above are not centralized functions of the TTU System Administration. Universities in the TTU System benefit from collaborative expertise and team members regularly engage in discussions between peer colleagues at institutions throughout the system to share best practices and strategies and utilize economies of scale when appropriate.*

8. Please provide examples of system wide collaboration between undergraduate and/or graduate programs and mentorship of graduate students.

**TTU System response:**

*Schools and colleges throughout the TTU System work collaboratively with one another to help position students for success – whether that’s through guidance during students’ application process or preparing students for next steps in pre-professional and graduate study areas that align with component institutions of the system.*

*Becoming a member institution would create additional prospects for pre-professional programs or graduate opportunities for SFA students across the TTU System component institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, current TTU System institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

9. What autonomy does SFA retain regarding staffing, faculty, and future programmatic decisions? Please provide examples of any restructuring or changes to programs that have occurred when institutions have joined your system.

**TTU System response:**

*The authority to retain staff and faculty and make future programmatic decisions would not be changed by joining the TTU System – this authority will remain at the university level.*

## Questions Submitted by the Faculty Senate

### General System-Interest questions (possible category):

1. Why is your institution interested in the potential addition of SFA to your system? What do you see as the joint advantages of such a move? For instance, what are the three most significant ways you believe that SFA would benefit from joining your specific system—and you from SFA’s participation in your system? [Feel free to discuss any specific programs, initiatives, general infrastructure, or human capital particularly informing this response.]

### TTU System response:

*A partnership with Stephen F. Austin State University is an opportunity to affiliate with a distinguished institution that would complement and enhance the profile and strength of the Texas Tech University System’s (TTU System) nationally recognized brand. SFA has a storied history with a strong base of passionate alumni, dedicated supporters and incredible employees and students who will continue to build on the legacy of excellence that 100 years has established.*

*Partnering with SFA would give the TTU System a presence in a new part of the state, allowing the system to serve the entire State of Texas from the furthest point west in El Paso to the eastern state border, with SFA as a shining star of the system in the Deep East Texas region. That means an increased impact and awareness of our entire system and each component institution.*

*Most importantly, the areas that align among our institutions will allow us to find additional ways to support each other, our communities and our state. SFA and the TTU System share, among other things, a dedication to serving our regional and rural communities. Like SFA, we have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing and meeting the needs of rural Texas.*

*SFA would join a system family that aligns well with the values that are important to each component university and one that advocates for each institution’s specific needs – and the needs of their communities. The Lumberjack community would join a system with the ability to elevate the visibility of the SFA brand at the state, national and global levels, with a chancellor (an ’83 SFA alumnus) who is committed to championing the component institutions and their missions and leading them in initiatives that have a system-wide impact.*

*Academic offerings at SFA align well with many of the programs at our current general academic and health-related institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

*And, as part of the TTU System, SFA would have the opportunity to continue to expand and elevate what would become the system's first and only forestry program – which would immediately become a true program of pride for the TTU System.*

2. How do the programs at SFA fit into your strategy for serving the population of Texas?

**TTU System response:**

*SFA and the TTU System share, among many similarities, a dedication to serving our regional and rural communities. Like SFA, our institutions have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing the needs of rural Texas. By joining forces and creating programs that encourage students to serve in these areas, we can supplement our state's resources when it comes to areas like K-12 education, health care, telemedicine, agriculture, forestry, dental medicine and veterinary medicine.*

*Partnering with SFA would give the TTU System a presence in a new part of the state, allowing the system to address higher education needs across the entire State of Texas from the furthest point west in El Paso to the eastern state border, with SFA as a shining star of the system in the Deep East Texas region.*

3. In which programs or initiatives at SFA do you anticipate additional investment (either in terms of personnel and/or non-human infrastructure)?

**TTU System response:**

*We would want to hear more from the university community and its leadership to have a better understanding of the needs regarding current programs, desired areas of potential expansion and how the TTU System Administration can provide services and support in those areas. Ultimate authority for allocation of such investments remains at the university level.*

4. How would an affiliation between our universities likely impact SFA enrollment, in your view, if any? What is the reasoning for that conclusion (for instance, based on prior affiliation experience)?

**TTU System response:**

*Universities in the TTU System benefit from collaborative expertise and team members are encouraged to engage in discussions between peer colleagues at institutions throughout the system. SFA would greatly benefit from having a network of peer professionals in enrollment management across the other component institutions.*

**Examples of recent success:**

*Since joining the TTU System in 2021, **Midwestern State University** (MSU Texas) has collaborated with the enrollment management team at **Texas Tech University** (TTU). In*

*its first year as an official member of the TTU System, MSU Texas has seen an increase in freshman enrollment this fall (2022).*

*In the 15 years since **Angelo State University** (ASU) became the third member of the TTU System family, the university – and the city of San Angelo – has seen consistent growth and historic success for its students, campus population and community. ASU has brought incomparable value to the TTU System, with top-notch undergraduate and graduate offerings and several nationally and internationally acclaimed programs. When ASU joined the TTU System in 2007, its enrollment was 6,239 students. The Ram Family now has more than 10,500 students enrolled.*

5. Which institution in your system seems closest in mission, scope, strengths, and weaknesses to SFA? Why do you say that?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System has five distinct and distinguished institutions:*

- *A nationally recognized public research institution – **Texas Tech University**.*
- *Two comprehensive regional universities – **Angelo State University** and **Midwestern State University**.*
- *Two health-related institutions – **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center** and **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso**, the state’s only health-related institution on the U.S.-Mexico border.*

*Each of the universities is unique – with separate missions, goals and priorities. But elements that remain consistent throughout the TTU System are a values-based culture and a deep commitment and dedication to serving our regional and rural communities.*

*At the TTU System, we are focused on people. We’ve taken the time to establish and foster a values-based culture throughout our organization that takes what matters most to our employees and communities and turns those principles into the structure by which individuals conduct day-to-day business and how people treat each other. We know that The SFA Way guides the Lumberjacks in a comparable fashion.*

*So, when we look at SFA, we don’t just see the university campus – we see Nacogdoches, the entire Deep East Texas region and the people who call the area home. And we see opportunities – for system growth and expansion, yes, but also for growth in enrollment, in population and in the amount of community engagement and types of services provided by our institutions. We feel SFA is a natural fit and aligns extremely well with the TTU System and our current member institutions.*

*Joining the TTU System would give SFA the tools it needs to achieve its goals by increasing the university's strong reputation at the state and federal level to bolster initiatives and strategic priorities that SFA and Nacogdoches deem important.*

*This additional support will allow SFA to continue to better serve its community while also building out signature programs and adding visibility to amplify existing opportunities with other education colleagues, like area high schools and community colleges, and possibly introducing opportunities for new partnerships, which could, in turn, lead to an increase in enrollment.*

6. What programs at SFA do you view as differentiators relative to other regional state universities in your system? Why?

**TTU System response:**

*Proven excellence in forestry, education, nursing, business, engineering and pre-professional programs, among other areas, and in the university's acclaimed athletics programs, make SFA a standout among institutions of higher education in Texas.*

*As part of the TTU System, SFA will have the opportunity to continue to grow and elevate these signature programs. That includes the Arthur Temple College of Forestry & Agriculture, which would become the first and only college of its kind within the system and a true point of pride for the entire TTU System.*

**Institutional Identity questions (possible category):**

7. Would an affiliation between our institutions require an institutional name change? If so, why?

**TTU System response:**

*Stephen F. Austin State University would preserve its proud name, mascot and colors as a member institution of the TTU System – just like Angelo State University has since joining the TTU System in 2007 and Midwestern State University has since becoming a member institution of the TTU System in 2021. The TTU System celebrates the uniqueness of our universities with a shared passion for rich histories and traditions.*

8. What changes might you envision concerning the manner in which SFA is marketed and recruits its students in the event that SFA were to become a member of your system?

**TTU System response:**

*As a member of the TTU System, SFA would have the opportunity to strengthen and broaden its academic program offerings to partner with other system institutions with two-way pipeline opportunities. This could be used as a strategy in recruiting students*



*interested in attending SFA while possibly pursuing graduate opportunities throughout the TTU System.*

*SFA will have the opportunity to market themselves as a member institution of the TTU System, carrying a strong brand awareness, just like TTU, TTUHSC, ASU, TTUHSC El Paso and MSU Texas.*

9. If SFA were to become part of your system, would its mission change to become more focused on research (instead of teaching) than it currently is?

**TTU System response:**

*One of the strengths of the TTU System Administration is the understanding that each of the leadership teams at the component institutions are the experts when it comes to knowing the needs specific and critical to their university's operations and mission. The TTU System Administration is committed to elevating and enhancing what's important to our component universities, and the universities have the authority and autonomy to make various decisions at the university level, with support – when needed and requested – from the TTU System Administration.*

*There would be no required change to the university's mission – that authority would remain at the university level.*

**System v. Affiliate Operations & Governance questions (possible category):**

10. In your system, what is the management and governance structure put in place to oversee an individual affiliate?

**TTU System response:**

*The president of each TTU System component institution is the chief executive officer of that institution and reports to and is responsible to the chancellor. Each component institution president has access to the TTU System Board of Regents, and the board has access to the component institution president.*

*Information regarding administration is detailed in [TTU System Regents' Rules Chapter 2, Section 04](#).*

11. Will there be an external or internal post-affiliation review process of current programs with regards to performance and/or need after the affiliation? Who would conduct that review process, if one would be required?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority to initiate and conduct such a review would remain at the university level.*

12. What would be the status of any open lines and/or personnel searches in progress if our universities were to merge?

**TTU System response:**

*With the exception of presidential searches and appointments, and the filling of open positions (after the time of affiliation) within Audit Services and General Counsel, no personnel changes would be initiated by the TTU System Administration upon affiliation. The authority for personnel changes (with those exceptions) would remain at the university level.*

*Presidential searches are a TTU System Administration-led function, with collaborative input and involvement from the university communities. Audit Services and General Counsel are centralized offices of the TTU System Administration, and these team members would become part of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA.*

13. How much autonomy do universities in the system have regarding establishing their own administrative hierarchies and setting university policies?
14. In general, what operational areas are impacted by system-wide policies, as opposed to affiliate-specific policies?

**TTU System response to questions 13 and 14:**

*Member institutions within the TTU System have full autonomy regarding establishing their own administrative hierarchies and university-level policies. The authority for these processes remains at the university level, in accordance with TTU System Regents' Rules and TTU System Regulations. Additional information regarding system administration-level policies can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules](#) and the [TTU System Regulations](#).*

15. If SFA were to join your system, what process would be followed to search for and select the new president?

**TTU System response:**

*TTU System presidential searches are a collaborative and supportive process that emphasize a commitment to **including representation and feedback from university, community and alumni stakeholders of the institution** from start to finish.*

**Example of success:**

*Immediately after MSU Texas joined the TTU System (Sept. 2021), the Chancellor's Office launched a nationwide presidential search for the 12th president of MSU Texas.*

- *TTU System Regent Mark Griffin led the search committee of 12 members.*
  - *The committee included nine people from MSU Texas and Wichita Falls, representing community members, alumni, donors, former regents, faculty,*

*staff, students and leadership, along with two regents from the TTU System and a representative from the Chancellor's Office.*

- *The process includes a series of campus town halls for stakeholder feedback and timely updates throughout the process from Regent Griffin.*

16. What role would the Faculty Senate have in expressing the needs/concerns of faculty within the system?

17. What similar role would the Staff Council be able to occupy, if any?

**TTU System response to questions 16 and 17:**

*Faculty Senate and Staff Council leaders would continue in their existing autonomy on the SFA campus and also would have the opportunity to communicate openly with TTU System leadership.*

**Employment stability, compensation, and benefit-related questions (possible category):**

18. Will you commit to keeping intact all current SFA academic programs (and their personnel) for at least three years? For five years? [Understanding that programs could be reduced or eliminated during that period by SFA's management team itself.] Why or why not would you agree to these timeframes?

**TTU System response:**

*No SFA academic programs would be eliminated or dissolved because of joining the TTU System.*

19. Does the system perform a regular review (and potential right-sizing) of administrative and staff positions? If so, please describe that process.

**TTU System response:**

*No. The authority for such a review would remain at the university level, not at the system level. The only position at the institution reviewed or evaluated by the chancellor or Board of Regents is the president of the institution.*

20. Can faculty (or staff) move between universities within the system, as and when employment needs change?

**TTU System response:**

*Employees may pursue employment opportunities throughout the TTU System.*

21. If SFA were to become a part of your system, would existing faculty and/or salaries be adjusted to become compatible with other campuses in your system?

**TTU System response:**

*Salary structure is not anticipated to change because of joining the TTU System. Each institution in the TTU System is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget.*

22. Would system-wide salary guidelines be put in place for new hires at SFA (post-affiliation)?

**TTU System response:**

*There are no system-wide guidelines for new hires at the university level. Establishing university faculty and staff compensation policies is based on need and funds available within the institutional budget. Changes to salary structure would not be initiated by the TTU System because of affiliation, however, the TTU System Administration may assist universities with additional guidance, if needed.*

23. If there are positions where an SFA employee's pay is currently higher than, say, a system-wide standard for that equivalent position, is there a possibility of affected employees facing a salary decrease?

**TTU System response:**

*No changes are anticipated to occur because of joining the TTU System. The authority remains at the university level.*

24. Will employee benefit programs like LEAP remain in place in the event of an affiliation, or are benefit programs standardized across all affiliates?

**TTU System response:**

*No changes are anticipated to occur because of joining the TTU System. The authority remains at the university level.*

25. Are job titles and descriptions required to be standardized across members of the system?

**TTU System response:**

*There are no system-wide guidelines for standardized job titles or descriptions for university-level positions.*

26. Is there a standard telecommuting policy that would be enforced within the system, and if so, what is that policy?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System-wide Regulation for Remote Work is outlined here:*

- [TTU System Regulation 07.13 Remote Work](#)

27. What is your process for establishing salary consistency across faculty and staff serving within different system affiliates?

**TTU System response:**

*Each institution within the TTU System is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget. The TTU System may assist universities with additional guidance.*

28. What is your process for determining merit increases for faculty and staff serving within different affiliates?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority would remain at the university level, not at the system level.*

29. What is your process for determining annual salary increases for faculty and staff serving within different affiliates?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority would remain at the university level, not at the system level.*

**Ongoing Academics operations questions (possible category):**

30. What evaluation criteria are used (on an ongoing basis) to determine the viability/retainability of academic programs? How does this assessment process affect annual funding levels for those programs?

31. Does the system actively monitor duplicate programs and seek, if possible, to minimize system-wide duplications? If so, how does that process work?

32. What is the process for proposing/creating new programs?

**TTU System response to questions 30-32:**

*As mentioned in question 18, authority for each component institution's academic mission, including monitoring and evaluation of academic programming, remains at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4](#).*

*The TTU System Board of Regents and executive leadership helps consult and advise component institutions on academic and student affairs issues regarding the educational mission and academic rigor of its programs, in addition to the clinical affairs within the health-related institutions.*

*The TTU System Administration does not actively seek to dissolve or consolidate similar programs among institutions but does encourage discussion among peer colleagues to determine possible collaborative opportunities and share cross-institution expertise.*

*The authority for proposing/creating new programs remains at the university level, with final approval from the Board of Regents, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4, Section 9](#).*

33. What system-level funding sources would be available for pilot programs, if any, in the event that a promising pilot could not cover its initial costs?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System Administration partners and works diligently with the component institutions to secure seed funding for pilot programs and identified priorities through appropriate sources of funds. While most of these funds are externally secured – such as through legislative appropriations, philanthropic support or grants – the TTU System has a strong history of success in helping its universities secure funds for its programs.*

34. What is the system's standard level of funding for research and graduate studies at its affiliates, or is this budget amount determined by each affiliate?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this determination would remain at the university level, not at the system level.*

35. Are librarians an integral part of the learning infrastructure in your system? To what extent, and in what roles?
36. The number of librarians at SFA has been drastically reduced in the last 10 years as open positions were not filled, thereby resulting in fewer research/subject librarians to assist students, instruct classes, perform collection development, etc. Is this something that might change if we were to join your system, or would each affiliate determine those needs?

**TTU System response to questions 35-36:**

*Library personnel play an integral role in providing students, faculty and staff the necessary resources to pursue scholarly activities like teaching and research at institutions across the TTU System.*

*The authority for personnel changes remains at the university level. However, SFA would have access to a wide network of colleagues to collaborate and discuss library best practices, problem-solving and cost-sharing opportunities.*

37. Do faculty who teach online receive a stipend? If so, at what rate?
38. At what stipend rate is development or redevelopment (total revision) of online courses compensated?
39. What centralized technological support is provided for faculty who teach courses at night, or is this determined by each affiliate?

**TTU System responses to 37-39:**

*The authority for university personnel compensation remains at the university level.*

*Regarding technological support, these services are not centralized at the system administration level, but component institutions have access to various programs through system-level contracts and in partnering with component institutions, which can offer reduced rates, cost-avoidance, and economies of scale opportunities. Some of these contracts include the following:*

- *Oracle Database (covers Banner and related databases)*
- *Adobe Sign*
- *TouchNet*
- *Cayuse Research Suite*
- *Gartner*
- *Microsoft campus agreement*

**Curricular- and Accreditation issue questions (possible category):**

40. How does your system deal with the issue of standardized curriculum within duplicative programs across campuses? Must the programs, for instance, feature identical curriculums?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System Administration does not actively seek to dissolve or consolidate similar programs among institutions but does encourage discussion among peer colleagues to determine possible collaborative opportunities and share cross-institution expertise.*

*Additionally, authority for each component institution's curricula remains at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4](#).*

41. How about system-wide accreditation: For instance, is it necessary that external accreditation be performed on all similar programs at once across the system? If accreditation is performed individually, to what extent is the system involved in an affiliate's accreditation exercise regarding a common program?



42. For programs facing discipline-specific accreditation, what type of support (administrative and/or financial) will be provided for them to retain accreditation?

**TTU System response to questions 41-42:**

*The TTU System Board of Regents and executive leadership helps consult and advise component institutions on academic and student affairs issues regarding the educational mission and academic rigor of its programs, in addition to the clinical affairs within the health-related institutions.*

*These functions are primarily centered around the Academic, Clinical and Student Affairs Committee of the TTU System Board of Regents. For more information, see [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 1, Section 01.02.8 d \(1\)](#).*

43. What additional financial support (if any) is provided to program coordinators for accreditation or other needs?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this type of university-level support remains with university leadership, with guidance and support from the TTU System Administration, if needed.*

44. Are there system-wide meetings (either at the program, college, or university level) to share pedagogical best practices and/or subject knowledge?

**TTU System response:**

*Collaboration within the institutions of the TTU System is very common as colleagues in academia and research, and health care and clinics, among other areas, regularly discuss best practices and the possibility for cross pollination between areas of strength within the system. Faculty and staff are encouraged to initiate and facilitate these discussions with their colleagues at other institutions.*

45. Are the system-affiliate's students offered preferential admissions at flagship or other system-affiliates' graduate programs?

**TTU System response:**

*Schools and colleges throughout the TTU System work collaboratively with one another to help position students for success – whether that's through guidance during students' application process or preparing students for next steps in pre-professional and graduate study areas that align with component institutions of the system.*

*Students applying to various programs at the component institutions across the TTU System may receive favorable consideration.*

*Becoming a member institution would create additional prospects for pre-professional programs or graduate opportunities for SFA students across the TTU System component*

*institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

**Resource Allocations & Resource Sharing questions (possible category):**

46. How does the system determine how to allocate state funds (example: PUF or HEF funds) across affiliates in the system? Or are these applied for by each institution...and awarded individually?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System Administration does not allocate state funding to component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university manage the funds allocated to their specific institutions by the state legislature.*

47. What is the process for affiliates to lobby for funding in Austin? Is this permitted? Discouraged? Performed at the system level?

**TTU System response:**

*The chancellor and Governmental Relations (GR) team at the TTU System Administration work closely with the presidents and leadership teams at the component institutions to champion and secure key legislative initiatives and exceptional item priorities, as well as broader higher education policy and formula and non-formula funding initiatives benefiting our universities. Additionally, the GR team assists in coordination of university experts and leadership to provide public testimony to the legislatures.*

*With offices and professionals located in Lubbock, Austin and Washington, D.C., the TTU System Administration GR team includes experienced and recognized professionals who are leading authorities for higher education policy and work in tandem with the GR staff at each institution.*

**Examples of recent success:**

- **TTU:** School of Veterinary Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding).
- **TTUHSC:** mental health initiative (2019 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **ASU:** academic and student success (2019 legislative support and funding); Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence (2021 legislative support and funding).
- **TTUHSC El Paso:** Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **MSU Texas:** Bolin Hall (2021 legislative CCAP funding – prior to affiliation with TTU System)

48. What would be the disposition of SFA's endowment funds and its fund reserve balance in the event of an affiliation with your system? Where would those funds be located and managed?

**TTU System response:**

*Endowment funds at component institutions across the TTU System are primarily invested in the Long-Term Investment Fund of the TTU System. The Long-Term Investment Fund has a spending policy of 4.5 percent. The authority to utilize current balances and future earnings will remain with SFA.*

49. Do all affiliates in your system share the same bond rating, or are they measured individually?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System bond rating by Fitch Ratings and S&P Global is AA+ and is based on data compiled for all system institutions. SFA, along with all member institutions of the TTU System, will share one bond rating for all new bonds issued if the university is an official member of the TTU System. The TTU System's financial strength has been consistently reaffirmed over the last half decade by top marks from the three most influential credit rating organizations in the world – Fitch Ratings, S&P Global and Moody's.*

50. What mid- to back-office support services or infrastructural elements (ex: library and research resources; legal; human resources; accounting; IT; and so on) are shared across system members?

**TTU System response:**

*As mentioned above, SFA team members also gain access to teams within each of the TTU System Administration offices. Of the areas listed, Audit Services and General Counsel are centralized offices of the TTU System Administration – all other functions remain under the authority of the institutions' leadership teams.*

51. To what extent are research resources, particularly academic and research databases, made available to all system members (if at all)? Or do these remain the responsibility of each affiliate to arrange for?

**TTU System response:**

*This remains the responsibility of each component institution.*

52. Is grant funding regularly sought at the system level (and then allocated to affiliates), or does grant funding remain an affiliate-driven initiative? Or do both types of initiatives occur in your system?

**TTU System response:**

*Grant funding is a university function, however, there are resources available within the TTU System Governmental Relations and Institutional Advancement teams to assist the institutions in pursuing their goals.*

**Budgeting questions (possible category):**

53. How are budgets balanced and managed in this system? More specifically, at what level of an organization's operations are budgets balanced (e.g., program, department, college, Cabinet or VP-level, holistic university, across multiple affiliates, at the macro system level, etc.)?

**TTU System response:**

*Component institutions balance and manage their respective budgets in accordance with [TTU System Regents Rules' Chapter 07, Section 04](#). In practice, the Board of Regents reviews and approves annual budgets at the August Board of Regents meeting. Budget adjustments to increase the budget in excess of \$2 million require board approval.*

*Certain construction projects require board approval.*

- Major construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget of \$4,000,000 or more. These projects remain a TTU System Administration Facilities Planning & Construction function.*
- Minor construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget less than \$4,000,000. These projects remain a university function.*
- More information regarding facilities can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 8](#).*

54. What actions are taken, and at what organizational level, when spending is projected to exceed revenue?

**TTU System response:**

*Action would be taken at the university level. Presidents and university Chief Financial Officers would consult TTU System Administration CFO personnel on any significant matter in developing a plan of action.*

55. Are the percentages of budget allocations required to be similar across all affiliates (i.e., the % of budget that goes to divisions like academic affairs, student affairs, athletics, etc.?) Why or why not?
56. What percentage of the budget is directed towards academic affairs/instruction across the system? Or is this figure determined within each affiliate?

57. How are your library, cultural heritage departments, and other primary resource areas funded? What is the level of that funding, aggregated at the system level?

**TTU System response for questions 55-57:**

*The authority for budget allocations and funding for university programs and areas remains at the university level.*

58. What campus groups are typically involved in annual budget developments—or is this left up to each affiliate? What is the typical timeline and set of informational flows related to the budget development (both pre- and post- budget finalization) within your system?

**TTU System response:**

*The chancellor issues a budget memo in the spring to component university presidents. Component institution Chief Financial Officers implement a process to develop the university's annual budget and brief the chancellor and regents in July on budget proposals. Final budgets are presented for approval by the full board at the August Board of Regents meeting.*

**Research collaboration questions (possible category):**

59. Can you provide examples of significant or noteworthy research-based program collaborations across affiliated members in your system?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System Administration serves to support and champion initiatives brought forth at the university level. There are currently ongoing conversations among the five component institutions on ways to optimize research across the TTU System.*

***Examples of current collaborations:***

- *The Innovation Hub at Research Park is a collaborative research space utilized by TTU and TTUHSC researchers, in addition to West Texas entrepreneurs.*
- *TTU and TTUHSC also are exploring innovative research opportunities on the TTUHSC Amarillo Campus alongside the TTU School of Veterinary Medicine in Amarillo.*
  - *This is the only campus in the nation with a school of medicine, school of pharmacy and school of veterinary medicine located on the same campus.*

60. What process would be followed to initiate, say, a shared research project or program initiative with other affiliates in the system?

**TTU System response:**

*Executive-level leadership at TTU System component institutions work collaboratively with each other, the TTU System Administration team and the Academic, Clinical and*

*Student Affairs Committee of the TTU System Board of Regents to identify and develop opportunities across component universities. Research projects or joint programs are identified and prioritized at the university level and leadership teams across the system work to bring synergies where applicable.*

*Additionally, the TTU System Governmental Relations team collaborates with component universities for state and federal research opportunities and supports the connection of such opportunities between the component institutions.*

61. How does system affiliation influence the development of research centers, clinics, and lab spaces?

**TTU System response:**

*Opportunities for collaborative research or clinical endeavors would be subject to a joint assessment of those opportunities among institutions included or interested in the project.*

**Tenure and Promotion questions (possible category):**

62. Do you use a single set of tenure and promotion criteria across the system? Perhaps within specific disciplines taught across multiple affiliates in the system? Or does each affiliate manage its T&P processes itself?
63. If a system-wide T&P process is in play, can you provide that policy/process description?
64. Would existing tenured faculty be grandfathered in as tenured—and with credit given for their elapsed-time in current position—in the event of an affiliation? What about the time-in-role conditions relative to tenure-track (yet not-yet-tenured) faculty?

**TTU System response to questions 62-64:**

*Each component institution is responsible for establishing and publishing its tenure and promotion guidelines, subject to approval by the TTU System Board of Regents.*

*More information regarding tenure and promotion can be found in [TTU System Regents' Rules Chapter 04, Section 02](#).*

*No changes will occur regarding previously approved tenure because of joining the TTU System.*

## Questions Submitted by the SFA Staff Council

### Governance/Policies and Procedures

1. Which of the following policies and procedures will remain local and which will be adjusted to merge with system expectations following affiliation:

#### **TTU System response:**

*One of the strengths of the Texas Tech University System (TTU System) Administration is the understanding that each university leadership team is the expert when it comes to knowing the needs specific and critical to their university's operations and mission. The universities have the authority and autonomy to make various decisions at the university level, with support and guidance – when needed and requested – from the TTU System Administration.*

*As such, the authority for many functions, including several listed below, remain at the university level, not the system administration level.*

- a. contracting/purchasing:

#### **TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function remains at the university level, in accordance with system fiscal management policies and procedures, outlined in [TTU System Regents' Rules Chapter 7, Section 12.1](#).*

- b. information technology applications:

#### **TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function remains at the university level, in collaboration with TTU System Administration.*

- c. software purchases:

#### **TTU System response:**

*Software purchases remain a university-level function, but component institutions have access to various programs through system-level contracts and in partnering with component institutions, which can offer reduced rates, cost-avoidance, and economies of scale opportunities. Some of these contracts include the following:*

- *Oracle Database (covers Banner and related databases)*
- *Adobe Sign*
- *TouchNet*
- *Cayuse Research Suite*
- *Gartner*
- *Microsoft campus agreement*



- d. emergency management:

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function remains at the university level, in coordination with TTU System Administration Office of Risk Management.*

- e. construction management:

**TTU System response:**

*Major construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget of \$4,000,000 or more. These projects remain a TTU System Administration Facilities Planning & Construction function.*

*Minor construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget less than \$4,000,000. These projects remain a university function.*

*More information regarding facilities can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 8](#).*

- f. insurance and risk services:

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function remains at the university level, in coordination with TTU System Administration Office of Risk Management, with opportunities for additional support and services.*

- g. hiring procedures:

**TTU System response:**

*With the exception of presidential searches and hires and the filling of open positions (after the time of affiliation) within Audit Services and General Counsel, no personnel changes would be initiated by the TTU System Administration upon affiliation. The authority for personnel changes (with those exceptions) would remain at the university level.*

*Presidential searches are a TTU System Administration-led function, with collaborative input and involvement from the university communities. Audit Services and General Counsel are centralized offices of the TTU System Administration, and these team members would become part of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA.*

- h. holiday and academic calendars:

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function remains at the university level, subject to [TTU System Regents' Rules Chapter 3, Section 8](#) and [TTU System Regulations 07.12](#)*

- i. scholarship procedures/deadlines:  
**TTU System response:**  
*The authority for this function remains at the university level.*
  - j. property inventory/management:  
**TTU System response:**  
*The authority for this function remains at the university level.*
  - k. Payroll:  
**TTU System response:**  
*The authority for this function remains at the university level. Each university leadership team is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget. The TTU System Administration may assist universities with additional guidance.*
  - l. accounts payable:  
**TTU System response:**  
*The authority for this function remains at the university level.*
2. SFA is currently without a permanent president. The selection of our next leader will be critical to our success, and our institutional commitment to shared governance means that many stakeholders will want to be part of the selection process. How will the system approach the presidential selection process?

**TTU System response:**

*TTU System presidential searches are a collaborative and supportive process that emphasize a commitment to **including representation and feedback from university, community and alumni stakeholders of the institution** from start to finish.*

**Example of success:**

*Immediately after Midwestern State University (MSU Texas) joined the TTU System (Sept. 2021), the Chancellor's Office launched a presidential search for the 12th president of MSU Texas.*

- *TTU System Regent Mark Griffin led the search committee of 12 members.*
    - *The committee included nine people from MSU Texas and Wichita Falls, representing community members, alumni, donors, former regents, faculty, staff, students and leadership, along with two regents from the TTU System and a representative from the Chancellor's Office.*
  - *The process includes a series of campus town halls for stakeholder feedback and timely updates throughout the process from Regent Griffin.*
3. What level of autonomy will SFA retain regarding its institutional shared governance practices? Will there be any changes to representative bodies such as Staff Council? How

will the system actively facilitate staff representation in system-level and university-level conversations?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System Administration and its component institutions value the shared governance model in higher education. The current SFA Board of Regents governance would be assumed by the TTU System Board of Regents.*

*Staff Council and Faculty Senate leaders would continue in their existing autonomy on the SFA campus and also would have the opportunity to communicate openly with TTU System leadership.*

**System Resource Investment & Affiliate Accountability**

4. Please provide specific examples of how system affiliation will benefit SFA with respect to:
- a. legislative representation:

**TTU System response:**

*One of the TTU System's most important and impactful roles in serving our component institutions is leading our governmental relations initiatives and strategy – both at the state and federal levels. The chancellor and Governmental Relations (GR) team at the TTU System Administration work closely with the presidents and leadership teams at the component institutions to champion and secure key legislative initiatives and exceptional item priorities, as well as broader higher education policy and formula and non-formula funding initiatives benefiting our universities. Additionally, the GR team assists in coordination for university experts and leadership to provide public testimony to the legislatures.*

*With offices and professionals located in Lubbock, Austin and Washington, D.C., the TTU System Administration GR team includes experienced and recognized professionals who are leading authorities for higher education policy and work in tandem with the GR staff at each institution.*

**Examples of recent success:**

- **Texas Tech University (TTU):** School of Veterinary Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding).
- **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC):** mental health initiative (2019 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **Angelo State University (ASU):** academic and student success (2019 legislative support and funding); Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence (2021 legislative support and funding).
- **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso):** Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **MSU Texas: Bolin Hall** (2021 legislative CCAP funding – prior to affiliation with TTU System)

b. resource allocation:

**TTU System response:**

*The role of the TTU System Administration is to provide our component institutions with exceptional leadership, services and resources that support the fulfillment of each university's mission and goals.*

*Fostering a culture of collaboration, sustainability and excellence, the TTU System Administration performs specific functions that have been strategically identified and coordinated between the component institutions to maximize consolidated expertise and efficiencies. These services and resources administered at the TTU System Administration are designed to complement those managed at the component universities and are responsive and adaptable to each university's individual needs.*

*Considering our comprehensive growth and success, the TTU System is recognized as a prominent leader in higher education yet is nimble in size to ensure services are allocated and available to each university.*

*Regarding services provided by the TTU System Administration, those include:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <i>Audit Services</i>                         | • <i>Information Technology</i>           |
| • <i>Board of Regents</i>                       | • <i>Institutional Advancement</i>        |
| • <i>Chancellor's Office</i>                    | • <i>Investments</i>                      |
| • <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>                | • <i>Leader &amp; Culture Development</i> |
| • <i>Equal Opportunity</i>                      | • <i>Risk Management</i>                  |
| • <i>Facilities Planning &amp; Construction</i> | • <i>System Relations</i>                 |
| • <i>General Counsel</i>                        | • <i>Treasury</i>                         |
| • <i>Governmental Relations</i>                 |   |

*In addition to offering specific services, the TTU System Administration instills a servant leadership model and provides autonomy for the management and operation of our component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university have the authority to manage its funds and allocate resources accordingly.*

*Beyond the services, SFA team members also would gain access to colleagues within the functions of the TTU System Administration offices listed above and at the component institutions to collaboratively share best practices and strategies.*

*For some existing university services, specifically in Audit Services and General Counsel, SFA employees would join the TTU System Administration team while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. This approach allows the university to have access to a larger team of attorneys and auditors, who work collaboratively across the TTU System, and to a wider range of expertise in nearly all legal matters, including medical malpractice and professional liability,*

real estate and construction, Title IX and athletics, as well as faculty, staff and student matters.

To be clear, **no jobs will be directly lost by joining the TTU System**. Rather, SFA employees in roles within centralized areas will become members of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA.

c. employee benefits:

**TTU System response:**

State employee benefits are guided by state law. Employees of the TTU System and its component institutions are state employees and, when eligible, are provided with benefits from the [Texas Employees Group Benefits Program \(GBP\)](#) – part of the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) – and with retirement benefits from the [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\) and Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) Annuity for Active Employees](#).

TTU System Regulations provide clarity and consistency across member institutions in regard to employee leave ([TTU System Regulation 07.12](#)) and remote work ([TTU System Regulation 07.13](#)).

The TTU System also invests in its faculty, staff and administration across the system by offering a **health and wellness program** to team members. The programs and resources available are designed to enhance the lives of all employees across the TTU System.

The TTU System Administration **Leader & Culture Development (LCD)** exists to offer services to system institutions related to people development and integration of culture based on the shared core values of each individual university or system entity. The LCD team makes regular visits to institutional campuses supporting a values-based culture and leading leadership development training. This team also assists universities throughout the system in integrating a values-based culture into recruiting, hiring and building a retention process.

d. vendor relations:

**TTU System response:**

The component universities of the TTU System manage their vendor relations.

5. What will the system gain by affiliating with SFA?

**TTU System response:**

A partnership with Stephen F. Austin State University is an opportunity to affiliate with a distinguished institution that would complement and enhance the profile and strength of the TTU System's nationally recognized brand. SFA has a storied history with a strong

*base of passionate alumni, dedicated supporters and incredible employees and students who will continue to build on the legacy of excellence that 100 years has established.*

*Partnering with SFA would give the TTU System a presence in a new part of the state, allowing the system to serve the entire State of Texas from the furthest point west in El Paso to the eastern state border.*

*Most importantly, the areas that align among our institutions will allow us to find additional ways to support each other, our communities and our state. SFA and the TTU System share, among other things, a dedication to serving our regional and rural communities. Like SFA, we have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing and meeting the needs of rural Texas.*

*SFA would join a system family that aligns well with the values that are important to each component university and one that advocates for each institution's specific needs – and the needs of their communities. The Lumberjack family would join a system with the ability to elevate the visibility of the SFA brand at the state, national and global levels, with a chancellor who is committed to championing the component institutions and their missions and leading them in initiatives that have a system-wide impact.*

*Academic offerings at SFA align well with many of the programs at our current general academic and health-related institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

*And, as part of the TTU System, SFA would have the opportunity to continue to expand and elevate what would become the system's first and only forestry program – which would immediately become a true program of pride for the TTU System.*

6. In what ways will the system assist with increasing SFA's enrollment? Describe how the system addresses potential enrollment competition across member institutions.

**TTU System response:**

*SFA would be the shining star of the TTU System in the Deep East Texas region. The TTU System is committed to elevating and enhancing what's important to our universities through a system of support and collaboration, not conquering and consolidating. We share a passion for our rich histories and traditions while building and complementing areas of strength unique to each institution.*

*In the 15 years since ASU became the third member of the TTU System family, the university – and the city of San Angelo – has seen consistent growth and historic success for its students, campus population and community. ASU has brought incomparable*



*value to the TTU System, with top-notch undergraduate and graduate offerings and several nationally and internationally acclaimed programs.*

*When ASU joined the TTU System in 2007, its enrollment was 6,239 students. The Ram Family now has more than 10,500 students enrolled.*

7. Describe system expectations of institutional performance and accountability. How will performance objectives be set and measured? What happens when expectations are not met?

**TTU System response:**

*Strategic plans and accompanying accountability measures are developed at the university level and provided by the president to the chancellor and Board of Regents for approval. These are reviewed by component institutions on an annual basis with each president.*

**Human Resources**

8. Will system affiliation require adjustments to current employment benefits, such as:
- retirement,
  - insurance,
  - worker's compensation,
  - employee assistance programs,
  - leave accruals,
  - compensatory time accruals, and
  - employee and dependent tuition assistance?

Please provide a comparison of each of these current (SFA) vs. future (system) benefits, specifically noting potential reductions.

**TTU System response to question 8, section a-g:**

*State employee benefits are guided by state law. Employees of the TTU System and its component institutions are state employees and, when eligible, are provided with benefits from the [Texas Employees Group Benefits Program \(GBP\)](#) – part of the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) – and with retirement benefits from the [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\)](#) and [Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) Annuity for Active Employees](#).*

*TTU System Regulations provide clarity and consistency across member institutions in regard to employee leave ([TTU System Regulation 07.12](#)) and remote work ([TTU System Regulation 07.13](#)).*

*The authority to administer university-level benefit programs like SFA's Lumberjack Education Assistance Program (LEAP) would remain at the university, not with the system administration.*



9. Will the system allow ERS years served at SFA to count toward the 10-year minimum rule for insurance at retirement?

**TTU System response:**

*As mentioned previously, employees of the TTU System and its component institutions are state employees and, when eligible, are provided with benefits from the [Texas Employees Group Benefits Program \(GBP\)](#) – part of the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) – and with retirement benefits from the [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\)](#) and [Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) Annuity for Active Employees](#)*

10. There is significant concern about the impact of system affiliation on job security. Please describe how you will address positions at SFA that overlap with positions at the system level (e.g., general counsel, Title IX, audit services, human resources) as well as positions that may be currently outsourced at other institutions affiliated with your system (e.g., financial aid verification, groundskeeping, custodial services, and skilled trades work).

*As mentioned above, the role of the TTU System Administration is to provide our component institutions with exceptional leadership, services and resources that support the fulfillment of each university's mission and goals.*

*These services administered at the TTU System Administration are designed to complement those managed at the component universities and are responsive and adaptable to each university's individual needs.*

*In addition to offering specific services, the TTU System Administration instills a servant leadership model and provides autonomy for the management and operation of our component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university have the authority to manage its funds and allocate resources accordingly.*

*Beyond the services, SFA team members also would gain access to colleagues within the functions of the TTU System Administration offices listed above and at the component institutions to collaboratively share best practices and strategies.*

*For some existing university services, specifically in Audit Services and General Counsel, SFA employees would join the TTU System Administration team while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. This approach allows the university to have access to a larger team of attorneys and auditors, who work collaboratively across the TTU System, and to a wider range of expertise in nearly all legal matters, including medical malpractice and professional liability, real estate and construction, Title IX and athletics, as well as faculty, staff and student matters.*

*To be clear, **no jobs will be directly lost by joining the TTU System.** Rather, SFA employees in roles within centralized areas will become members of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA.*

11. In recent years, Hanover conducted salary studies for staff and faculty positions at SFA. (Detailed findings are available [here](#) and [here](#); in short, most salaries at SFA are below average compared to peer institutions and market.) What specific actions will the system take to
- close the gaps between SFA employee salaries and salaries at peer institutions and
  - address salary equity, compression, and disparity concerns?

**TTU System response:**

*Each university leadership team is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget. The TTU System Administration can assist universities with additional guidance when needed.*

**Organizational Structure/Institutional Alignment and Identity**

12. How will SFA's organizational structure change as a result of system affiliation?

**TTU System response:**

*All presidents of TTU System component universities report to the chancellor and TTU System Board of Regents. No other organizational structure changes are anticipated to take place because of joining the TTU System, other than in the offices of Audit Services and General Counsel, as previously described.*

13. Describe the criteria that will be used to evaluate potential department realignments and position reallocations.

**TTU System response:**

*The authority would remain at the university level, not at the system level. No changes like this have been made due to a university joining the TTU System.*

14. In what ways does the system's mission align with the values of our local and regional communities? Please provide evidence of how the system will support the growth, health, and continued success of both our local and regional communities.

**TTU System response:**

*Each of the universities within the TTU System is different – with separate missions, goals and priorities – and there isn't a clear-cut way to compare any two. But one element that remains consistent throughout the TTU System is a values-based culture.*

*At the TTU System, we are focused on people. We've taken the time to establish and foster a values-based culture throughout our organization that takes what matters most to our employees and communities and turns those principles into the structure by which individuals conduct day-to-day business and how people treat each other. We know that The SFA Way guides the Lumberjacks in a comparable fashion.*

*SFA and the TTU System also share, among other things, a dedication to serving our regional and rural communities. Like SFA, we have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing the needs of rural Texas. By joining forces and creating programs that encourage our students to serve in these areas, we can supplement our state's resources when it comes to areas like K-12 education, health care, engineering, telemedicine, agriculture, dental medicine and veterinary medicine. Most importantly, the areas that align among our institutions will allow us to find additional ways to support each other, our communities and our state.*

15. Describe how the system aligns with and will further support SFA's current commitment to non-discrimination and diversity in addition to equity, and inclusion practices.

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System and its component institutions are dedicated to taking innovative steps toward serving a more diverse population across Texas and opening new doors to a more diverse student body pursuing higher education and health care opportunities. Four of the five current member institutions of the TTU System have been designated as Hispanic-Serving Institutions by the U.S. Department of Education.*

16. To what degree are member institutions allowed to maintain their traditions and unique identity? Will SFA keep its name, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring? Would local traditions and/or institutional identifiers be expected to change over time?

**TTU System response:**

*Stephen F. Austin State University would preserve its proud name, mascot and colors as a member institution of the TTU System – just like Angelo State University has since joining the TTU System in 2007 and Midwestern State University has since becoming a member institution of the TTU System in 2021. The TTU System celebrates the uniqueness of our universities with a shared passion for rich histories and traditions. No changes will be made to these respected and honored traditions.*

17. SFA is a current NCAA Division I member of the Western Athletic Conference. Will system affiliation result in divisional membership changes? Will the system require changes to SFA Athletics' visual intellectual property?

**TTU System response:**

*No changes of this nature would be required.*

**Finance**

18. What level of financial autonomy will SFA retain with respect to:  
a. local holdings:

**TTU System response:**

*Over a three-year period, operating funds would be transitioned to the TTU System Consolidated Cash Pool for management and investments. SFA would identify a local depository.*

More information about the TTU System Comprehensive Cash Pool can be located in the [TTU System Investment Policy Statement – CCP](#).

b. Investments:

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System has two types of investment services for its component institutions: operating funds, which are held in the comprehensive cash pool, and university endowments, which are held in the TTU System Long-Term Investment Fund.*

- More information: [TTU System Comprehensive Cash Pool](#)
- More information: [TTU System Long-Term Investment Fund Policy](#)

c. Construction:

**TTU System response:**

*Major construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget of \$4,000,000 or more. These projects remain a TTU System Administration Facilities Planning & Construction function.*

*Minor construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget less than \$4,000,000. These projects remain a university function.*

*More information regarding facilities can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 8](#).*

d. the procurement of goods and services:

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function would remain at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 7](#).*

19. Please detail any costs that member institutions are required to pay to the system for support services. What benefit does SFA yield from these payments?

**TTU System response:**

*TTU System component institutions transfer funds to system offices to provide support for coordination, administration and other related services. Funds from the component institutions account – on average – for approximately 0.5 percent of the institution's overall budget.*

20. How does the system allocate assets between member institutions?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System is recognized as a prominent leader in higher education yet is nimble in size to ensure services are allocated and available to each university. Component universities of the TTU System manage the assets allocated to the institutions.*

21. Will funds raised by SFA's capital campaign or SFA Alumni donations be retained as local resources, or will they be absorbed as system revenue? Please provide specific examples from a previous affiliation with your system.

**TTU System response:**

*Yes, all philanthropic activity associated with SFA fundraising will remain with SFA. [TTU System Regents Rules, Chapter 6, Section 4](#), addresses the issue as "those gifts that are earmarked by the donor or donors for a specific purpose must be used for that purpose only." This would remain consistent with SFA as a member institution.*

**Examples:**

- *ASU Carr Foundation*
- *ASU Foundation*
- *MSU Texas Foundation*

## Questions Submitted by the SFA Student Government Association

### Student Life and Culture

1. Will we have to change our university's name?

#### **TTU System response:**

*Stephen F. Austin State University would preserve its proud name, mascot and colors as a member institution of the Texas Tech University System (TTU System) – just like Angelo State University has since joining the TTU System in 2007 and Midwestern State University has since becoming a member institution of the TTU System in 2021. The TTU System celebrates the uniqueness of our universities with a shared passion for rich histories and traditions.*

2. What can your university system offer to our students?

#### **TTU System response:**

*Becoming a member institution would create additional prospects for pre-professional programs or graduate opportunities for SFA students across the TTU System component institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

3. Will we have to change our university's colors?

#### **TTU System response:**

*No. Stephen F. Austin State University would preserve its proud name, mascot and colors as a member institution of the TTU System – just like Angelo State University has since joining the TTU System in 2007 and Midwestern State University has since becoming a member institution of the TTU System in 2021. The TTU System celebrates the uniqueness of our universities with a shared passion for rich histories and traditions.*

4. Would e-sports and other student clubs merge with joining a larger system?

#### **TTU System response:**

*No, but students at SFA would become part of a larger system family and students are encouraged to initiate conversations with their peers at the other institutions to share experiences, learn about the rest of the system and discuss collaborative opportunities.*

5. Will this change the 100-year anniversary of Stephen F. Austin State University?

#### **TTU System response:**

*No. The centennial celebration for SFA in 2023 would be a celebration for the entire TTU System with a focus on recognizing and honoring the history and traditions of SFA and the Lumberjack family.*

6. What is the process and/or timeline for joining your university system?

**TTU System response:**

*Once a formal invitation from the TTU System is accepted by Stephen F. Austin State University, a memorandum of understanding would be approved by the SFA Board of Regents and TTU System Board of Regents.*

*Legislative action, led by state legislators (potentially during the upcoming 88th Texas Legislature that begins in January 2023), would follow and be required for a partnership to be formed.*

*Once legislation has been approved by both the Texas Senate and the Texas House of Representatives, the bill would head for signature by the state governor.*

*Once the bill is signed, the TTU System Board of Regents would host a special-called board meeting in Nacogdoches, Texas, to officially welcome SFA into the TTU System.*

7. Will this affect student employee salaries?

**TTU System response:**

*One of the strengths of the TTU System Administration is the understanding that each of the leadership teams at the component institutions are the experts when it comes to knowing the needs specific and critical to their university's operations and mission. The universities have the authority and autonomy to make various decisions at the university level, with support – when needed and requested – from the TTU System Administration.*

*As such, many functions, including student university employee salaries, are decided and executed at the university level, not the system administration level.*

8. What will students have to give up in exchange for joining your university system?

**TTU System response:**

*SFA students will not be expected to give up anything to join the TTU System – instead, they will gain a system family that shares values, excellence, history and success.*

9. Will we have to change our university's mascot?

**TTU System response:** *No.*

10. Will Stephen F. Austin's traditions still be supported if we were to join your university system?

**TTU System response:** *Absolutely.*



## Academics, Faculty/Staff

11. Will there be any changes in current employee wages such as health insurance?

### **TTU System response:**

*As with many university-level functions, university employee salaries, the authority for this remains at the university.*

*State employee benefits are guided by state law. Employees of the TTU System and its component institutions are state employees and, when eligible, are provided with benefits from the [Texas Employees Group Benefits Program](#) (GBP) – part of the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) – and with retirement benefits from the [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\) and Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) Annuity for Active Employees](#).*

12. Will joining your university system affect academic programs and/or guidelines?

### **TTU System response:**

*No. Becoming a member institution would create additional prospects for pre-professional programs or graduate opportunities for SFA students across the TTU System component institutions.*

*Authority for each component institution's curricula remains at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4](#).*

*Academic priorities of the TTU System component universities are decided by each institution. The TTU System Board of Regents and executive leadership helps consult and advise component institutions on academic and student affairs issues regarding the educational mission and academic rigor of its programs, in addition to the clinical affairs within the health-related institutions.*

*These functions are primarily centered around the Academic, Clinical and Student Affairs Committee of the TTU System Board of Regents. For more information, see [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 1, Section 01.02.8 d \(1\)](#).*

*Each institution's Provost/Chief Academic Officer works closely with leadership across the university and is responsible for the overall academic mission of the institution.*

13. Will faculty/staff be cut or downsized if we join your university system?

### **TTU System response:**

*With the exception of presidential searches and appointments, and the filling of open positions (at the time of affiliation) within Audit Services and General Counsel, no*

*personnel changes would be initiated by the TTU System Administration upon affiliation. The authority for personnel changes (with the exceptions above) would remain at the university level.*

*Presidential searches remain a system administration level function but are inclusive of the university community.*

*Audit Services and General Counsel are centralized offices of the TTU System Administration. **No jobs will be directly lost because of an affiliation with the TTU System.** Rather, the SFA employees in these roles would become members of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA.*

14. How will affiliation with your university system support academics and student success in the classroom?

**TTU System response:**

*Becoming a member institution would create additional prospects for pre-professional programs or graduate opportunities for SFA students across the TTU System component institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

*Institutions of the TTU System also receive Chancellor's Council funding, which supports among other things, student scholarships, and empowers institutions to recruit students who raise the academic profile of the universities and ensure higher education remains accessible for students with financial need. It also supports faculty recognition, honoring top professors and researchers with awards.*

15. Will affiliation with your system help us with reducing Stephen F. Austin's financial challenges?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System leadership will help consult and advise SFA on potential solutions to financial challenges, within the funding available to SFA.*

16. How will joining your university system affect the average tuition costs for students?

**TTU System response:**

*Every other year, SFA will bring a two-year proposal for tuition and fees to the TTU System Board of Regents for review and approval. The TTU System Board of Regents seeks to balance the cost of delivering a high-quality education while being mindful of the financial impact to students.*

17. If we join your university system, will our projected graduation date(s) and/or requirements change?

**TTU System response:**

*No. Graduation schedules and requirements are a function of the university, not the system administration.*

18. How will joining your university system affect faculty and staff at Stephen F. Austin?

**TTU System response:**

*Faculty and staff are encouraged to engage in discussions between peer colleagues at institutions throughout the system to identify collaborative opportunities via a built-in network of peer professionals and colleagues at other TTU System component institutions. SFA faculty and staff will not be expected to give up anything to join the TTU System – instead, they will gain a system family that shares values, excellence, history and success.*

19. How will affiliation with your university system affect the library at Stephen F. Austin?

**TTU System response:**

*It would provide additional opportunities to build relationships and collaborate with other library employees at institutions across the TTU System. Library personnel play an integral role in providing students, faculty and staff the necessary resources to pursue scholarly activities like teaching and research at institutions across the TTU System. SFA would have access to a wide network of colleagues to collaborate and discuss library best practices, problem-solving and cost-sharing opportunities.*

## Questions Submitted by the SFA Alumni Association

### Identity

1. To what level will the university retain its identity - name, mascot, branding/logo, spirit, colors, traditions, culture, etc.?

#### **TTU System response:**

*Stephen F. Austin State University would preserve its proud name, mascot and colors as a member institution of the Texas Tech University System (TTU System) – just like Angelo State University (ASU) has since joining the TTU System in 2007 and Midwestern State University (MSU Texas) has since becoming a member institution of the TTU System in 2021. The TTU System celebrates the uniqueness of our universities with a shared passion for rich histories and traditions.*

2. How will affiliation with the system preserve the integrity of the degree?

#### **TTU System response:**

*Joining the TTU System brings the ability to elevate the visibility of the SFA brand at the state, national and global levels, with a chancellor (a '83 SFA alumnus) who is committed to championing the component institutions and their missions and leading them in initiatives that have a system-wide impact.*

*The TTU System believes that SFA will continue to be counted among top-flight peers and be appreciated for its strengths, culture and traditions with a bright future ahead.*

### Resources

3. What would be the impact of affiliation on resource allocation?
  - a. Do we gain more funding?
  - b. Will joining a system stabilize the university's financial situation?

#### **TTU System response:**

*One of the Texas Tech University System's (TTU System) most important and impactful roles in serving our component institutions is leading our governmental relations initiatives and strategy – both at the state and federal levels. The chancellor and Governmental Relations (GR) team at the TTU System Administration work closely with the presidents and leadership teams at the component institutions to champion and secure key legislative initiatives and exceptional item priorities, as well as broader higher education policy and formula and non-formula funding initiatives benefiting our universities. Additionally, the GR team assists in coordination of university experts and leadership to provide public testimony to the legislatures.*

*With offices and professionals located in Lubbock, Austin and Washington, D.C., the TTU System Administration GR team includes experienced and recognized professionals*

who are leading authorities for higher education policy and work in tandem with the GR staff at each institution.

**Examples of success:**

- **Texas Tech University (TTU):** School of Veterinary Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding).
- **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC):** mental health initiative (2019 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **Angelo State University (ASU):** academic and student success (2019 legislative support and funding); Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence (2021 legislative support and funding).
- **Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso):** Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine (2019 and 2021 legislative support and funding); mission-specific formula funding (2021).
- **Midwestern State University (MSU Texas):** Bolin Hall (2021 legislative CCAP funding – prior to affiliation with TTU System)

*The TTU System leadership will help consult and advise SFA on potential solutions to financial challenges, including state and federal opportunities. Authority on resource allocation remains at the university level for component institutions of the TTU System.*

4. What resources will SFA gain?
5. What services would likely be outsourced if we were to join the system?

**TTU System response to questions 4 and 5:**

*The role of the TTU System Administration is to provide our component institutions with exceptional leadership, services and resources that support the fulfillment of each university's mission and goals.*

*Fostering a culture of collaboration, sustainability and excellence, the TTU System Administration performs specific functions that have been strategically identified and coordinated between the component institutions to maximize consolidated expertise and efficiencies. These services and resources administered at the TTU System Administration are designed to complement those managed at the component universities and are responsive and adaptable to each university's individual needs.*

*Considering our comprehensive growth and success, the TTU System is recognized as a prominent leader in higher education yet is nimble in size to ensure services are allocated and available to each university.*

*Regarding services provided by the TTU System Administration, those include:*

- |                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Audit Services      | • Chief Financial Officer            |
| • Board of Regents    | • Equal Opportunity                  |
| • Chancellor's Office | • Facilities Planning & Construction |

- General Counsel
- Governmental Relations
- Information Technology
- Institutional Advancement
- Investments
- Leader & Culture Development
- Risk Management
- System Relations
- Treasury

*In addition to offering specific services, the TTU System Administration instills a servant leadership model and provides autonomy for the management and operation of our component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university have the authority to manage its funds and allocate resources accordingly.*

*Beyond the services, SFA team members also would gain access to colleagues within the functions of the TTU System Administration offices listed above and at the component institutions to collaboratively share best practices and strategies.*

*For some existing university services, specifically in Audit Services and General Counsel, SFA employees would join the TTU System Administration team while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. This approach allows the university to have access to a larger team of attorneys and auditors, who work collaboratively across the TTU System, and to a wider range of expertise in nearly all legal matters, including medical malpractice and professional liability, real estate and construction, Title IX and athletics, as well as faculty, staff and student matters.*

#### 6. How will joining a system effect ongoing, and planned, capital improvement projects?

##### **TTU System response:**

*Major construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget of \$4 million or more. These projects remain a TTU System Administration Facilities Planning & Construction function.*

*Minor construction projects include new construction projects and repair and renovation projects with a total project budget less than \$4,000,000. These projects remain a university function.*

*If a construction project valued at \$4 million and above begun before affiliation, the TTU System Facilities Planning & Construction team would provide support on the project. More information regarding facilities can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 8](#).*

## **Personnel**

#### 7. What would be the impact of affiliation on personnel management?

##### **TTU System response:**

*SFA would continue to manage its own personnel in compliance with [TTU System Regents' Rules](#) and [TTU System Regulations](#). One of the strengths of the TTU System*

*Administration is the understanding that each university leadership team is the expert when it comes to knowing the needs specific and critical to their university's operations and mission. The universities have the authority and autonomy to make various decisions at the university level, with support and guidance – when needed and requested – from the TTU System Administration.*

*As such, many functions, including discussions regarding salaries and personnel changes, are decided and executed at the university level. Each university leadership team is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget. The TTU System Administration may assist universities with additional support and guidance. The TTU System Leader & Culture Development team would be available to help in the process of leadership development and ensuring a values-based culture at the institution.*

8. Are current staff and faculty reassured their jobs (job security)?

**TTU System response:**

*With the exception of presidential searches and hires – which are a TTU System Administration-led function, with collaborative input from the university communities – and the filling of open positions (after the time of affiliation) within Audit Services and General Counsel, no personnel changes would be initiated by the TTU System Administration upon affiliation.*

*As mentioned in question 5, Audit Services and General Counsel are centralized offices of the TTU System Administration, and these team members would become part of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. **To reiterate – no jobs will be directly lost because of an affiliation with the TTU System.***

9. Do they plan to right-size our budget by cutting people and/or programs?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority to reorganize units or discontinue academic programs would be made at the university level, not at the system level.*

10. How would SFA staff members' employee pay and benefits be impacted?

**TTU System response:**

*Salary structure and employee benefits decisions would be made at the university level, not at the system level.*

11. What is the likelihood of staff reductions/layoffs/consolidation with system departments?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority to reorganize units or departments would be made at the university level, not at the system level. As mentioned in question 5, Audit Services and General Counsel*



*are centralized offices of the TTU System Administration, and these team members would become part of the TTU System Administration team hierarchy while still retaining their physical presence and offices at SFA. **To reiterate – no jobs will be directly lost because of an affiliation with the TTU System.***

12. Will SFA faculty and staff be brought up to the salaries of the current system?

**TTU System response:**

*Decisions regarding salary structure would remain at the university level, not at the system level. The TTU System Administration may assist universities with additional support and guidance.*

13. Are the preferred systems aware of the compressed salaries?

a. Will they be able to address the disparity?

**TTU System response:**

*Decisions regarding salary structure would remain at the university level, not at the system level.*

*In 2021, the TTU System Board of Regents requested the TTU System entities (TTU System Administration and each component institution) to evaluate staff salaries. TTU System entities develop multi-year compensation strategies. The TTU System leadership will help consult and advise SFA on potential solutions to financial challenges, within the funding available to SFA.*

14. How would current pay inequities among faculty and staff be addressed?

**TTU System response**

*Each institution in the TTU System is authorized to establish faculty and staff compensation policies based on need and funds available within the institutional budget.*

15. Will there be any changes in current employment benefits/wages such as health insurance, LEAP employee scholarship, raises in pay for faculty and staff, retention of staff as opposed to layoffs, things of that nature?

16. What will happen to insurance benefits when an employee retires, if we are part of a system?

**TTU System response to questions 15 and 16:**

*No changes are anticipated to occur. State employee benefits are guided by state law. Employees of the TTU System and its component institutions are state employees and, when eligible, are provided with benefits from the [Texas Employees Group Benefits Program](#) (GBP) – part of the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) – and with retirement benefits from the [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\)](#) and [Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) Annuity for Active Employees](#).*

17. Will any current standings be overturned (tenure...)?

**TTU System response:**

*Each component institution is responsible for establishing and publishing its tenure and promotion guidelines, subject to approval by the TTU System Board of Regents. No changes will occur regarding previously approved tenure because of joining the TTU System.*

*More information regarding tenure and promotion can be found in [TTU System Regents' Rules Chapter 04, Section 02](#).*

**Example:**

*When Midwestern State University joined the TTU System on Sept. 1, 2021, at a Special-Called Board of Regents meeting, the TTU System Board of Regents approved ratification of all MSU Texas previously approved faculty tenure.*

**Academic Programs**

18. What would be the likelihood of elimination of academic programs if SFA should join the system?

19. Will any changes be required to current programs?

**TTU System response to questions 18 and 19:**

*No changes of this kind are anticipated by joining the TTU System. The elimination or dissolution of any SFA academic programs would not be mandated by the TTU System Administration. The authority for academic program changes would remain at the university level, in accordance with the THECB. Each institution's Provost/Chief Academic Officer works closely with leadership across the university and is responsible for the overall academic mission of the institution.*

*Authority for each component institution's curricula remains at the university level, in accordance with [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 4](#).*

20. What programs, schools and departments would the interested parties be able to grow, improve and elevate?

**TTU System response:**

*SFA would join a system family that aligns well with the values that are important to each component university and one that advocates for each institution's specific needs – and the needs of their communities. They would join a system with the ability to elevate the visibility of the SFA brand at the state, national and global levels, with a chancellor (a '83 SFA alumnus) who is committed to championing the component institutions and their missions and leading them in initiatives that have a system-wide impact.*

*Academic offerings at SFA align well with many of the programs at our current general academic and health-related institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and*

*pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

*And, as part of the TTU System, SFA would have the opportunity to continue to expand and elevate the system's first and only forestry program – which would immediately become a true program of pride for the TTU System.*

### **Tuition**

21. How will joining a system impact tuition?  
a. Would tuition/fees go up or down for students?

**TTU System response:**

*Every other year, SFA will bring a two-year proposal for tuition and fees to the TTU System Board of Regents for approval. The TTU System Board of Regents seeks to balance the cost of delivering a high-quality education while being mindful of the financial impact to students.*

### **Athletics**

22. Will the athletics program still be under the NCAA restrictions from the win with Duke?

**TTU System response:**

*Joining the TTU System will not change any rulings by the NCAA.*

### **Systems**

23. How will this change the size of the campus for the future?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System leadership will help consult and advise SFA on potential growth opportunities, both in enrollment and potential footprint expansion.*

24. Will student press freedoms continue to be supported on our campus? If yes, how?

**TTU System response:**

*No changes are anticipated to occur because of joining the TTU System.*

25. Will the system come in and tear down all of the residence halls?

**TTU System response:** *No.*

26. What benefits will this provide to SFA, the most impactful benefit?

**TTU System response:**

*As the higher education landscape shifts – in Texas and nationally – system affiliation is one strategic step a university can take to strengthen its position now and into its future. SFA would join a system family that aligns well with the values that are important to*

*each component university and one that advocates for each institution's specific needs – and the needs of their communities. The Lumberjack family would join a system with the ability to elevate the visibility of the SFA brand at the state, national and global levels.*

27. What will SFA lose in this acquisition?

**TTU System response:**

*When SFA joins the TTU System, the governance of the university will be transferred to the TTU System Board of Regents. The TTU System Board of Regents hold four regularly scheduled meetings each year. Each year, there is a rotation for holding at least one meeting on a component institution campus outside of Lubbock. This allows regents and leadership from the various institutions to become familiar with all component institutions within the TTU System.*

**Example:**

*Since 2020, the TTU System Board of Regents has held meetings in Amarillo (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center campus), Wichita Falls (MSU Texas), El Paso (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso) and San Angelo (Angelo State University).*

28. Will some services be consolidated, resulting in a less duplication of similar functions?

**TTU System response:**

*As mentioned in previous questions, no jobs will be directly lost due to system affiliation, rather, the team at SFA will gain access to a built-in network of support, services and colleagues.*

29. What are the dollar ramifications for affiliating or not?

**TTU System response:**

*By joining the TTU System, SFA would access the system's state and federal governmental relations team with more than 80 combined years of knowledge and relationships in Austin and Washington, D.C. The TTU System is large enough to have a seat at the table legislatively – with support across the state – yet nimble enough to value the individuality of each member institution. As mentioned previously, the chancellor and GR team help champion and support key initiatives and exceptional item priorities to ultimately secure state and federal funding. Being a part of a system will ensure that SFA has a stronger voice and dedicated champion – in Austin and Washington, D.C. – when advocating for the needs of the university.*

30. What is in it for the other University systems to acquire SFA?
31. What are the top 5 reasons [xxx system] believes their organization is the right fit for SFASU?
32. Why is each system interested in acquiring SFA? What does each system consider as major benefits of SFA joining their organization?

**TTU System response to questions 30-32:**

*A partnership with Stephen F. Austin State University is an opportunity to affiliate with a distinguished institution that would complement and enhance the profile and strength of the TTU System's nationally recognized brand. SFA has a storied history with a strong base of passionate alumni, dedicated supporters and incredible employees and students who will continue to build on the legacy of excellence that 100 years has established.*

*At the TTU System, we are focused on people. We've taken the time to establish and foster a values-based culture throughout our organization that takes what matters most to our employees and communities and turns those principles into the structure by which individuals conduct day-to-day business and how people treat each other. We know that The SFA Way guides the Lumberjacks in a comparable fashion.*

*Additionally, academic offerings at SFA align well with many of the programs at our current general academic and health-related institutions. From aviation and nursing to education and pre-professional programs, our institutions are ready to build partnerships and create two-way pipelines that develop the next generation of Lumberjack leaders, researchers and innovators.*

*Partnering with SFA would give the TTU System a presence in a new part of the state, allowing the system to serve the entire State of Texas from the furthest point west in El Paso to the east state border, with SFA as a shining star of the system in the Deep East Texas region. That means an increased impact and awareness of our entire system and each component institution.*

*Most importantly, the areas that align among our institutions will allow us to find additional ways to support each other, our communities and our state. SFA and the TTU System share, among other things, a dedication to serving our regional and rural communities. Like SFA, we have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing and meeting the needs of rural Texas.*

*Like SFA, we have a deep knowledge and proven experience in addressing the needs of rural Texas. By joining forces and creating programs that encourage our students to serve in these areas, we can supplement our state's resources when it comes to areas like K-12 education, health care, telemedicine, agriculture, forestry, dental medicine and veterinary medicine. And, as part of the TTU System, SFA would have the opportunity to*

*continue to expand and elevate the system's first and only forestry program – which would immediately become a true program of pride for the TTU System.*

33. Will existing honorific building naming's be dismissed and sold by the system?

**TTU System response:**

*No changes of this kind are anticipated to occur because of joining the TTU System.*

34. What parts of our current processes will we lose?

**TTU System response:**

*The role of the TTU System Administration is to provide our component institutions with exceptional leadership, services and resources that support the fulfillment of each university's mission and goals.*

*Fostering a culture of collaboration, sustainability and excellence, the TTU System Administration performs specific functions that have been strategically identified and coordinated between the component institutions to maximize consolidated expertise and efficiencies. These services and resources administered at the TTU System Administration are designed to complement those managed at the component universities and are responsive and adaptable to each university's individual needs.*

*In addition to offering specific services, the TTU System Administration instills a servant leadership model and provides autonomy for the management and operation of our component institutions. The leadership teams of each component university have the authority to manage its funds and allocate resources accordingly.*

35. Would SFA become essentially a feeder school for students who aren't initially accepted to the flagship institution, resulting in many students enrolling for just one year before moving on?

**TTU System response:**

*No. Universities in the TTU System have experienced record enrollment growth over recent years, and we anticipate the same for SFA's future. Becoming a member institution would create additional prospects for pre-professional programs or graduate opportunities for SFA students across the TTU System component institutions.*

**Examples of success:**

*Since joining the TTU System in 2021, **Midwestern State University** (MSU Texas) has collaborated with the enrollment management team at **Texas Tech University** (TTU). In its first year as an official member of the TTU System, MSU Texas has seen an increase in freshman enrollment this fall (2022).*

*In the 15 years since **Angelo State University** (ASU) became the third member of the TTU System family, the university – and the city of San Angelo – has seen consistent*

*growth and historic success for its students, campus population and community. ASU has brought incomparable value to the TTU System, with top-notch undergraduate and graduate offerings and several nationally and internationally acclaimed programs. When ASU joined the TTU System in 2007, its enrollment was 6,239 students. The Ram Family now has more than 10,500 students enrolled.*

36. Does assimilation with [xxx system] provide a wider range of faculty and student teaching and learning resources? If yes, how?

**TTU System response:**

*SFA will gain the opportunity to network with member institutions of the TTU System. Universities in the TTU System benefit from collaborative expertise and team members are encouraged to engage in discussions between peer colleagues at institutions throughout the system.*

37. Will SFA benefit from expertise, experience, and "buying power" of the system in terms of software that the university uses to conduct business, enrollment/recruitment practices, advertising/marketing? If yes, how?

**TTU System response:**

*SFA would greatly benefit from having a network of peer professionals in enrollment management across the other component institutions, as mentioned in examples on question 35.*

*Regarding technological support, component institutions have access to various programs through system-level contracts and in partnering with component institutions, which can offer reduced rates, cost-avoidance, and economies of scale opportunities. Some of these contracts include the following:*

- *Oracle Database (covers Banner and related databases)*
- *Adobe Sign*
- *TouchNet*
- *Cayuse Research Suite*
- *Gartner*
- *Microsoft campus agreement*

38. What will SFA give up -- although I'm sure a system cannot thoroughly answer the question of what functions, student programs, and academic programs and jobs may cease to exist until a thorough analysis of the university is completed, are there some initial thoughts?



**TTU System response:**

*With the exception of current board governance transitioning to the TTU System Board of Regents upon affiliation, there is no expected loss of functions, student programs, academic programs or jobs due to affiliation with the TTU System.*

39. How will the system help make SFA more academically competitive compared to other universities?

**TTU System response:**

*As a member of the TTU System, SFA would have the opportunity to strengthen and broaden its academic program offerings to partner with other system institutions with two-way pipeline opportunities. This could be used as a strategy in recruiting students interested in attending SFA while possibly pursuing graduate opportunities throughout the TTU System. Nationally distinct for the complement of academic programs offered at our universities, the TTU System is one of nine university systems in the U.S. to offer programs in undergraduate, medical, law, nursing, pharmacy, dental and veterinary education.*

40. What changes do they believe need to be made?

**TTU System response:**

*We would want to hear more from the university community and its leadership to have a better understanding of the needs regarding current programs, desired areas of potential expansion and how the TTU System Administration can provide services and support in those areas.*

41. What do they feel are SFA's strengths and weaknesses? Why?

**TTU System response:**

*When we look at SFA, we don't just see the university campus – we see Nacogdoches, the entire Deep East Texas region and the people who call the area home. And we see opportunities – for system growth and expansion, but also for growth in enrollment, in population and in the amount of community engagement and types of services provided by our institutions. We feel SFA is a natural fit and aligns extremely well with the TTU System and our current member institutions.*

*Joining the TTU System would give SFA the tools it needs to achieve its goals by increasing the university's strong reputation at the state and federal level to bolster initiatives and strategic priorities that SFA and Nacogdoches deem important. SFA would gain a system administration leadership team and a chancellor (Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D., who is a proud SFA alumnus) committed to championing the component institutions and their missions, leading them in initiatives that have a system-wide impact and supporting initiatives and strategic priorities that SFA and Nacogdoches deem important.*

*This additional support will allow SFA to continue to better serve its community while also building out signature programs and adding visibility to amplify existing opportunities with other education colleagues, like area high schools and community colleges, and possibly introducing opportunities for new partnerships, which could, in turn, lead to an increase in enrollment.*

### **Alumni Association**

- 42. What happens to the Alumni Association? Will it remain independent?
- 43. How does the system view alumni relations for system institutions?
- 44. What type of changes, if any, would be made to the Office of Alumni Relations?
- 45. Do you allow for an interdependent alumni association?

#### **TTU System response to questions 42-45:**

*No changes will be made to the Alumni Association's independence, the Office of Alumni Relations or the standing MOU between the university and the associations because of joining the TTU System.*

*This authority for functions of alumni relations and changes to the association's cabinet-level positions remain at the university level and at the discretion of the president, who serves as CEO of the university.*

*More information about component university alumni associations can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 6](#).*

- 46. Would the system recognize standing MOU's between the University and Alumni Association?

**TTU System response:** Yes.

- 47. Would the system make changes to the current administration (cabinet level positions)?

#### **TTU System response:**

*The president is the CEO of the university. Changes at this level of the institution would be at the discretion of the president of the institution, not at the system level.*

- 48. Will the system allow the university to partially fund salary and benefits for alumni relations staff members?

#### **TTU System response:**

*This authority is held at the university level, not at the system level. More information about component university alumni associations can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules Chapter 6 – Institutional Advancement](#)*

49. How can the system bring value to the 115,000 living alumni (more than 60,000 email addresses) and how to engage with alumni?

**TTU System response:**

*When joining a system, there is an opportunity to mobilize an alumni base that share multiple university affiliations – perhaps graduates from multiple TTU System component universities celebrating the occasion to bring the SFA Lumberjacks into the TTU System family or the university’s upcoming centennial.*

*Communicating to invested stakeholders of the TTU System and component institutions is a top priority and conducted in coordination with university leadership. The TTU System works closely with its institutions to update internal and external stakeholder audiences with critical, beneficial and timely information, as appropriate. Examples of possible communications include updates throughout a presidential search, legislative session, and events of interest surrounding alumni base locations, among other areas.*

**SFASU Foundation, Inc.**

50. Can the foundation remain fully independent? If yes, are we required to use the system’s investment managers or select our own? Or will the system absorb the university foundation assets?

**TTU System response:**

*Yes, the SFA Foundation may remain independent. There will be opportunities for SFA’s Foundation funds to be invested similarly to funds of other foundations of component institutions of the TTU System, such as the Angelo State University Foundation and the Midwestern State University Foundation. Investment of the Long-Term Investment Fund of the TTU System, valued at more than \$1.7 billion, is managed internally through the Office of Investments at the TTU System Administration.*

*More information about the TTU System’s Long-Term Investment Policy can be found here – [TTU System LTIF Policy Statement](#).*

51. Describe the structure in which the foundation will operate within the system. Based on the response, do you allow for the distribution of funds from a foundation to support operations of an alumni association?

**TTU System response:**

*The SFA Foundation will operate with independence. No changes will occur regarding a distribution of funds supporting operations by joining the TTU System.*

*More information about affiliated entities can be found in the [TTU System Regents’ Rules, Chapter 6](#).*

52. Will funds raised in the "Elevate SFA" capital campaign remain with our campus? Would scholarships established for SFA students continue to benefit only SFA students?

**TTU System response:**

*Yes. All philanthropic activity associated with SFA fundraising would remain with SFA, and all scholarships established for SFA students would continue to solely benefit students of SFA.*

53. Does the system dictate endowment spending policies? If yes, how?

**TTU System response:**

*The TTU System will not dictate how component institutions spend allocated funding. Endowment earnings will continue to be spent at the discretion of SFA management, subject to donor wishes.*

*More information about the TTU System's Long-Term Investment Policy can be found in the [TTU System Regents' Rules LTIF Policy Statement](#).*

54. What will happen to scholarships started by alumni and friends?

**TTU System response:**

*The authority for this function would remain at the university, and these scholarships would remain as intended.*

55. Would the system recognize standing MOU's between the University and the foundation?

**TTU System response:**

*Yes. Any future MOU will be subject to [TTU System Regents' Rules, Chapter 6](#).*

**City**

56. What, if any, consideration has been discussed concerning changes to Nacogdoches who has been generous both financially and graciously?

**TTU System response:**

*Institutions of higher education are major economic drivers for communities. When considering an affiliation with SFA, it's also considering a partnership with the City of Nacogdoches and the entire Deep East Texas region. There are many opportunities that would be mutually beneficial, including growth in enrollment, in population and in the amount of community engagement and types of services provided by our institutions. It would be paramount to continue fostering this incredibly important and deeply established relationship between the Nacogdoches community and Stephen F. Austin State University – and the Texas Tech University System.*