STRATEGIC PLAN

SECOND CENTURY

2026-2036

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

1 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

↗ STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGIES

Ensure students have the opportunity for a transformative, student-centered experience that provides comprehensive support and an affordable education, and supplies a vibrant, engaging campus life — empowering every student to thrive personally and professionally before and after graduation.

1

Enhance Student Recruitment and Enrollment

2

Increase Financial Literacy and Aid

3

Strengthen Student Support and Retention

4

Enrich Campus Life and Social Engagement

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

1.1
Enhance Student Recruitment and Enrollment

- **1.1.1** Implement targeted recruitment initiatives at the undergraduate and graduate level emphasizing SFA's unique academic offerings and supportive community.
- **1.1.2** Improve efficiencies and timeliness associated with applications, enrollment, and financial aid.
- **1.1.3** Collaborate with regional K-12 schools and community colleges to establish seamless pathways for students, including streamlined transfer processes.
- **1.1.4** Provide an enhanced digital experience so that students can take care of procedural items online.

1.2
Increase Financial Literacy and Aid

- **1.2.1** Expand scholarships, tuition assistance, work-study opportunities, and emergency aid to ensure financial barriers do not impede student enrollment and retention.
- **1.2.2** Re-envision the provision of course materials for students and support open educational resources.
- **1.2.3** Offer programming and resources to educate students and their families on managing finances, budgeting, and minimizing debt to empower them to make informed financial decisions.

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

1.3
Strengthen Student Support and Retention

- **1.3.1** Adopt proactive, data-informed advising practices that address both academic and personal factors impacting student success.
- **1.3.2** Expand orientation and support services for first-year, second-year, transfer, and international students, recognizing their unique backgrounds and positioning them for success.
- **1.3.3** Utilize predictive analytics to identify at-risk students and implement targeted interventions to support their academic journey.
- **1.3.4** Support the development of students as professionals, including growing the number of paid internships and career support opportunities.
- **1.3.5** Increase financial, academic, and housing support options for graduate students to improve competitiveness and affordability.
- **1.3.6** Offer a vibrant residential experience that fosters academic success and personal growth, making SFA a destination of choice for prospective students.
- **1.3.7** Invest and maintain academic, residential, student, and athletic infrastructure according to the Master Plan.

1.4
Enrich Campus Life and Social Engagement

- **1.4.1** Promote a welcoming campus environment by fostering a supportive atmosphere where all students feel connected and valued as part of the campus community.
- **1.4.2** Expand opportunities for student involvement in clubs, leadership roles, and campus events to deepen their engagement and sense of belonging.
- **1.4.3** Develop a co-curricular experience to better describe to future employers the translatable skills and traits the students acquired or accessed through their participation in various co-curricular activities.
- **1.4.4** Offer a variety of events and activities that encourage students to connect, have fun, and explore shared interests, contributing to a vibrant and dynamic campus experience.

2 ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

↗ ACADEMIC PROGRAMS STRATEGIES

Refine academic programming to develop graduates who are versatile, creative thinkers with a broad range of skills — ready to thrive in a rapidly changing job market with the ability to solve complex, real-world problems.

1

Invest Strategically in High-Growth Academic Programs

2

Elevate Career Readiness Through Real-World Experiences

3

Foster Cross-Program Innovation for Versatile Learning

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

2.1
Invest Strategically in High-Growth Academic Programs

- **2.1.1** Identify and prioritize investments in emerging programs with significant potential, that are sustainable and cost-effective.
- **2.1.2** Continuously review SFA's academic portfolio, focusing resources to ensure that it remains innovative, sustainable, responsive to workforce trends, and prepared to deliver a broad range of skills to SFA's graduates.
- **2.1.3** Invest and maintain facility infrastructure in support of academic programs and the Master Plan.

2.2
Elevate Career Readiness Through Real-World Experiences

- **2.2.1** Expand industry and business partnerships and integrate hands-on learning opportunities into the curriculum.
- **2.2.2** Ensure students develop practical skills and adaptability through their academic experience to meet the evolving demands of today's workforce.
- **2.2.3** Integrate high-impact, engaged learning experiences into foundational courses, connecting theoretical knowledge with practical applications to prepare students for real-world challenges.
- **2.2.4** Develop new doctoral and professional programs in strategic fields, including veterinary medicine, aligned with faculty expertise and industry needs.

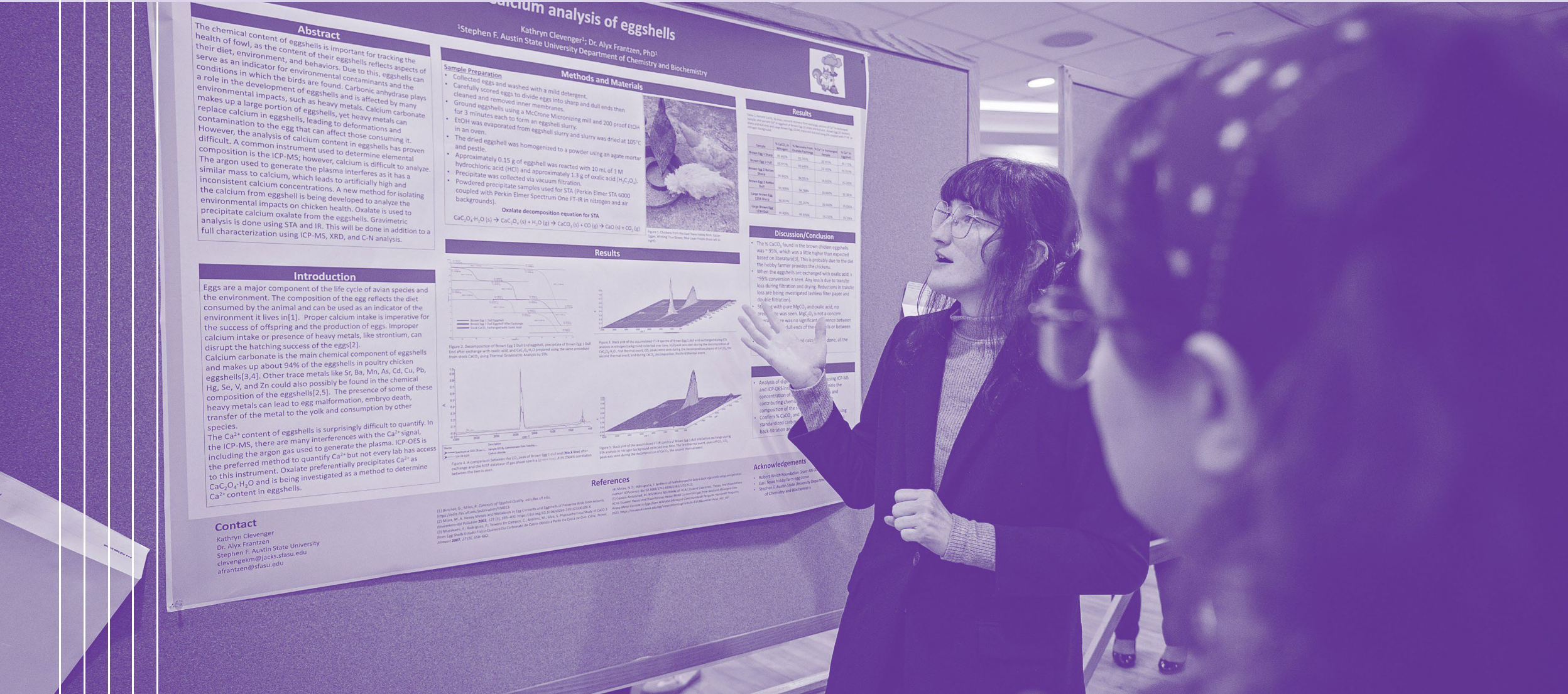
2.3
Foster Cross-Program Innovation for Versatile Learning

- **2.3.1** Encourage dynamic, interdisciplinary collaborations among colleges and departments.
- **2.3.2** Cultivate a learning environment where creative problem-solving and versatile thinking emerge through shared expertise and joint projects.
- **2.3.3** Form an Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee/Task Force consisting of faculty across all colleges to guide the development of collaborative courses and related academic credentials.
- **2.3.4** Create a structured process that enables students to earn certificates or stackable microcredentials that enhance their academic and professional profiles.

Our goal at SFA is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to THRIVE PROFESSIONALLY.

By promoting creative problem-solving and versatile learning opportunities, we prepare graduates to make MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS to their communities and beyond.

3 RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES



↗ RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES STRATEGIES

Establish SFA as a nationally recognized hub for interdisciplinary research, scholarship, and creative excellence through strategic investment in infrastructure, partnerships, graduate education, and community engagement.

1

Promote a Culture of Student Research and Creative Achievement

2

Enhance Research Infrastructure and Faculty Support

3

Cultivate Interdisciplinary Centers of Excellence

4

Amplify Research Visibility and Community Impact

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

3.1

Promote a Culture of Student Research and Creative Achievement

- **3.1.1** Ensure all students have access to meaningful research and creative experiences.
- **3.1.2** Integrate research-enhanced learning into academic programs and expand summer research initiatives.
- **3.1.3** Support faculty mentorship and curriculum innovations.
- **3.1.4** Encourage and support student participation in research, scholarship, arts, and other creative activities to cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **3.1.5** Utilize SFA's unique location and community resources to offer experiential learning opportunities that enrich the educational journey and provide a competitive edge.
- **3.1.6** Foster cross-sector partnerships that enhance experiential and applied research opportunities.

3.2

Enhance Research and Creativity Infrastructure and Faculty Support

- **3.2.1** Invest in facilities and administrative structures to strengthen research capacity.
- **3.2.2** Create flexible faculty workload policies and robust internal funding mechanisms that increase research productivity, including separate teaching and research track pathways.
- **3.2.3** Recruit and retain high-caliber faculty to build research and creative capacity.
- **3.2.4** Expand post-doctoral appointments to improve faculty pipelines.

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

3.3
Cultivate Interdisciplinary Centers of Excellence

- **3.3.1** Establish centers focused on high-impact areas aligned with SFA's mission and strengths.
- **3.3.2** Promote research collaboration across disciplines and institutions through consortia and community engagement initiatives.
- **3.3.3** Secure external funding and partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and visibility of centers.

3.4
Amplify Research and Creative Work Visibility and Community Impact

- **3.4.1** Implement a comprehensive communication strategy to highlight faculty, student, and center-based research.
- **3.4.2** Use podcasts, events, and media engagement to reach diverse audiences locally and nationally.
- **3.4.3** Seek national designations (e.g., Carnegie Community Engagement Classification) to validate community impact.

4 INNOVATION

↗ INNOVATION STRATEGIES

Establish SFA as the regional hub for innovation that cultivates opportunities for students to meet the emerging needs of the future, allowing SFA to become the premier hands-on, experiential and service learning university that addresses the unique needs of our local and regional communities.

1

Partner with Business and Industry for Student Experiential and Service Learning Opportunities

2

Establish SFA as a Central Hub to Address Critical Needs of East Texas

3

Leverage the Economic and Population Growth within the Texas Triangle

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

SFA is positioning itself as a center for INNOVATION. Here, students gain practical experience and tackle real-world challenges, collaborating with industry and community partners to address the evolving and emerging needs of East Texas and beyond.

4.1

Partner with business and industry for student experiential and service learning opportunities

- **4.1.1** Enhance career preparation and readiness by establishing co-operative education (co-op) programs and registered apprenticeships, while also increasing paid internships and teacher placement opportunities.
- **4.1.2** Seek opportunities to align research and training initiatives to support the regional workforce, especially those dedicated to regional issues, and align university goals to advocate for the region and key issues wherever possible.

4.2

Establish SFA as a central hub to address critical needs of East Texas

- **4.2.1** Maximize the impact of centers for excellence, designed to support community, workforce, entrepreneurship, and economic development.
- **4.2.2** Explore the feasibility of a community-facing, multi-use facility to bridge the gap between campus and the local/regional community.

4.3

Leverage the economic and population growth within the Texas Triangle

- **4.3.1** Identify credit and non-credit programs to locate in the Houston and DFW metroplex and assess operating needs to deliver those programs.

NMC Health Network
1001
Date AUGUST 8, 2025
Pay to the Order of STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
$ 20,000 00
Twenty thousand dollars & no/100
Dollars
For SFA NURSING SCHOLARSHIP
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Authorized Signature

5 WORKPLACE CULTURE

↗ WORKPLACE CULTURE STRATEGIES

Foster an empowering environment that attracts and retains exceptional faculty and staff by championing professional growth and meaningful recognition.

1

Improve employee recognition

2

Enhance opportunities for professional growth

3

Recommit to clear, consistent, transparent communication and institutional shared governance

PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS

5.1
Improve employee recognition

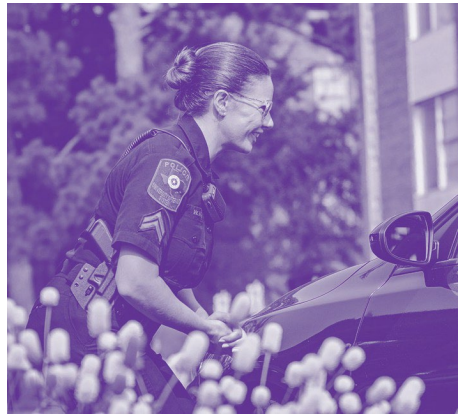
- **5.1.1** Increase salary support for faculty and staff through merit-based compensation and equity adjustments that put salaries at parity with employees at UT System peer institutions.
- **5.1.2** Review and expand non-salaried benefits that support employee quality of life.
- **5.1.1** Provide incentives to reward excellence and promote employee morale.

5.2
Enhance opportunities for professional growth

- **5.2.1** Improve funding models to provide sufficient, equitable opportunities for professional development for faculty and staff.
- **5.2.2** Improve the employee onboarding experience.
- **5.2.3** Review division organizational structures and investigate opportunities to create or revise career ladders.
- **5.2.4** Model and support professional development opportunities in each area using current SFA resources such as academic courses, Coursera modules, micro-credentials, and training.

5.3
Recommit to clear, consistent, transparent communication and institutional shared governance

- **5.3.1** Implement regular forums to share institutional updates and encourage open dialogue between administration and employees.
- **5.3.2** Commit to timely budget transparency with all employees.



"I am personally committed to fostering an environment where every team member feels valued, supported, and EMPOWERED TO GROW. By recognizing achievements, providing meaningful professional development, and maintaining open, transparent communication, we ensure SFA remains a place where exceptional talent thrives and our shared mission CONTINUES TO FLOURISH."

SFA President Neal Weaver

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