



The University of Texas at Dallas Online Catalog

2004 - 2006 Undergraduate Catalog

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Historical Sketch

Prior to World War II, Eugene McDermott, Cecil Green and J. Erik Jonsson, the founders of Geophysical Services, Inc., were in the business of searching for natural resources. The war changed the focus of the company from searching for natural resources to creating instruments that aided in finding enemy planes and submarines. GSI spawned Texas Instruments and in 1958, TI employee Jack Kilby invented the integrated circuit that launched a new era for the company, for North Texas and for the world.

During the expansion of Texas Instruments, the Founders were forced to import engineering talent from outside the state, while the region's bright young people pursued education elsewhere. McDermott, Green and Jonsson saw that Texas needed highly educated minds if the state was to remain competitive in the decades to come. They noted that in 1959 alone, Columbia University conferred 560 doctoral degrees - more than the entire Southwest region. They wrote at the time, "To grow industrially, the region must grow academically; it must provide the intellectual atmosphere, which will allow it to compete in the new industries dependent on highly trained and creative minds."

Therefore, they established the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest (later renamed the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies) in 1961. The center recruited some of the best scientific talent in the nation. The Texas Legislature concurred with the vision of the Founders and mandated in 1967 that science and technology educational opportunities needed to exist in North Texas. McDermott, Green and Jonsson decided to donate SCAS and its lands to The University of Texas System, and on June 13, 1969, Governor Preston Smith signed the bill creating The University of Texas at Dallas. The SCAS scientists formed the core of U.T. Dallas' educational infrastructure.

By terms of its enabling legislation, U.T. Dallas offered only graduate degrees until 1975 when the addition of juniors and seniors increased enrollment from 408 in 1974 to more than 3,300 students. By the fall of 1977, the enrollment reached over 5,300. In 1986, U.T. Dallas established the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science. Today, with the largest undergraduate enrollment in the university, the Jonsson School plays a critical role in providing a highly educated work force for the advanced technology industry.

In 1990, the Texas Legislature authorized U.T. Dallas to admit lower division students. U.T. Dallas' first freshman class consisted of only 100 students. Despite its small size, this cohort's achievements have set the standard for future classes. Since then, freshman classes have grown in size while the university has maintained high enrollment standards. Nationally published data indicate that U.T. Dallas' freshman class compares extremely well with those from many prominent national universities.

The Rise to National Prominence

The university's ability to attract and retain these students has propelled U.T. Dallas into national prominence within a few short years. US News and World Report ranks U.T. Dallas as one of the three best public universities in the state along with U.T. Austin and Texas A&M. Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine, in its October 2000 article "100 Best Values in Public Colleges", ranked U.T. Dallas 60th among all public universities nationally. The quality of the students who attend U.T. Dallas has remained consistently high. Over forty percent of the incoming freshmen are in the top 10% of their high school graduating class and their average SAT scores place them in the top twenty percent of all college-bound students.

The addition of freshmen has accelerated the rise in the percentage of full-time undergraduates from 31% in 1986 to nearly 70% in 2002. Masters, doctoral and post-baccalaureate students currently comprise 40% of the student body. Given its location and mission, U.T. Dallas will continue to have significant numbers of professionals attending undergraduate or master's courses part time.

The transition of the university from a part-time upper division school to a four-year university with an emphasis on engineering, mathematics, the sciences and the management of new technologies has been greatly facilitated by the university's faculty. By retaining key faculty members and attracting more nationally and internationally prominent researchers and instructors, U.T. Dallas has enabled its faculty to provide quality instruction to an increasingly diverse student population while sustaining the university's longstanding research tradition. In the past decade, the faculty has increased the level of external research funds substantially. During this same period, the university expanded its teaching mission, became a full-fledged institution, improved its external research funding, enhanced its areas of focused excellence and became independently recognized as one of the top public universities in the nation.

Mission

The mission of The University of Texas at Dallas is to provide Texas and the nation with the benefits of educational and research programs of the highest quality. These programs address the multidimensional needs of a dynamic, modern society driven by the development, diffusion, understanding and management of advanced technology.

Within the context of this mission, the goals of the university are:

- To provide able, ambitious students with a high quality, cost effective education that combines the nurturing environment of a liberal arts college with the intellectual rigor and depth of a major research university;
- To discover new knowledge and create new art that enriches civilization at large and contributes significantly to economic and social progress; and
- To enhance the productivity of business and government with strategically designed, responsively executed programs of research, service and education.

Organization

The University of Texas at Dallas consists of seven Schools, each headed by a dean: Arts and Humanities, Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Engineering and Computer Science, General Studies, Management, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social Sciences. The schools, in turn, consist of teaching and research programs that provide the disciplinary foundations of the university. In addition to the usual disciplinary approaches, the university has a strong commitment to interdisciplinary study at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Most faculty members teach in both graduate and undergraduate areas so that the character of their instruction is informed by critical examination of the most recent developments in their fields.

Each of the university's schools contains an undergraduate college, headed by an Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education (ADU) who coordinates the undergraduate programs and academic advising within the college. These colleges of The University of Texas at Dallas provide undergraduate students with a personalized setting in which they may pursue their academic careers. Each college offers an intellectual and social home for undergraduates within the larger university.

The Office of Undergraduate Education coordinates undergraduate education across the seven schools. The Council for Undergraduate Education (CUE), chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Education, oversees lower-division admissions, academic advising and degree requirements, and develops and implements educational policy. The staff of the Office of Undergraduate Education manages the freshman admission review process and Academic Excellence Scholarship programs. They coordinate academic advising, administer the teaching evaluation system, monitor academic compliance for NCAA athletes, manage pre-professional training programs, and supervise the Collegium V honors program, as well as all Intellectual Competition teams. In addition, all freshman and sophomore students without declared majors are advised in the Office of Undergraduate Education.

Statement on Equal Education Opportunity

The university is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status in its provision of services, activities, and programs, and in its treatment of students. Students seeking further information about this policy, or related complaint procedures for alleged discrimination or sexual harassment should contact the Dean of Students.

Accreditation

The University of Texas at Dallas is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501) to award baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

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Statement on Equal Educational Opportunity

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the University community. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, and veteran status. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is also prohibited pursuant to University policy.