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History

Vision of the Founders

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 UTD's educational infrastructure.

By law, UTD 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, UTD 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.

The Rise to National Prominence

In 1990, the Texas Legislature authorized UTD to admit lower division students. UTD's first freshman class consisted of only 100 students. Despite its small size, this cohort's achievements 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 UTD's freshman class compares extremely well with those from many prominent national universities. UTD consistently has almost two-thirds of its entering freshmen in the top twenty-five percent of their graduating class with many coming from the state's most competitive high schools.

The university's ability to attract and retain these students has propelled UTD into national prominence within a few short years. *US News and World Report* ranks UTD as the third best public university in the state behind U.T. Austin and Texas A&M. Both *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine* and *Consumer's Digest* have ranked UTD among the best values for public colleges nationally. With an acceptance rate of 53%, UTD is the most selective public university in Texas. [Source: *US News and World Report's* "America's Best Colleges 2004"]. The quality of the students who attend UTD has remained consistently high. Over forty percent of the incoming freshmen are in the top 10% of their high school class.

The addition of freshmen has accelerated the rise in the percentage of full-time undergraduates from 31% in 1986 to nearly 70% in 2003. Masters, doctoral and post-baccalaureate students currently comprise 38% of the student body. Given its location and mission, UTD will continue to have significant numbers of professionals attending undergraduate or master's courses part time.

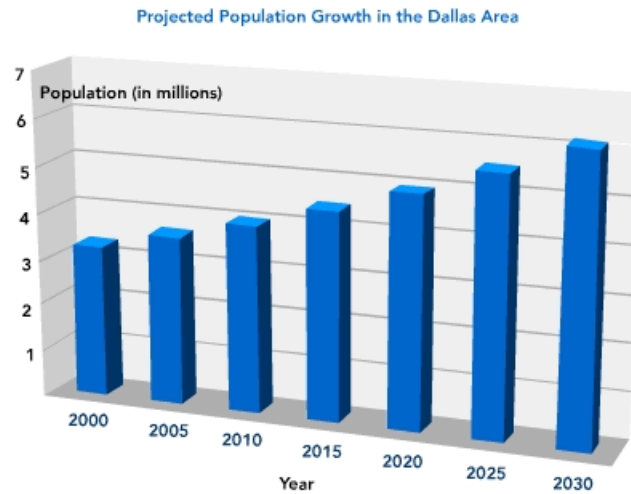
The transition of the university from a part-time upper division school to a four-year university with an emphasis on engineering, mathematics, the sciences and the management of new technologies has been greatly facilitated by the university's faculty. By retaining key faculty members and attracting more nationally and internationally prominent researchers and instructors, UTD 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 have 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.

Eugene McDermott believed that the best human talent, provided with the best education and enriched with an understanding of the arts, was the essential foundation of business success and societal progress. To these ends, the McDermott family has generously supported a wide array of educational projects and has helped develop the rich cultural environment of the Metroplex. The most recent of these projects - the [Eugene McDermott Scholars Program](#) - was established in September 2000 to attract twenty of the nation's brightest students to the campus each year. McDermott scholars are students whose intellect, ambition and leadership set them apart as individuals, who are expected to be a strong influence on their university and their society, who bring with them a long history of academic excellence and active engagement with their schools and communities and who exemplify the characteristics of leadership, scholarship and citizenship. This scholarship enables students to receive full funding through the school year and summer and to attend trips around the country and abroad to enhance their education.

UTD and the Metroplex

The DFW Metroplex is the nation's 9th largest metropolitan area. More than 900 advanced technology firms are located here. According to the Texas State Comptroller's report *Economic Trends and Outlook - The Metroplex Region*, September 2002, the Metroplex accounted for 32% of the gross regional product, 29% of the employment and 25% of the population for the state of Texas in 2000.

UTD provides the education and research vital to the competitive success of the burgeoning high technology businesses that are crucial to the Metroplex, Texas and world economies. Currently, over five million people live in the Metroplex with 1.2 million people residing within a thirty minute drive of UTD. Of these, 75% have continuing demands for professional education.



* Projections provided by the Texas State Demographer and include the Dallas, Denton, Collin, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties.

UTD is growing dynamically . Since 1995 enrollment has increased over fifty percent and the size of the freshmen class more than doubled. Professional masters programs in computer science and other advanced technology areas have seen substantial growth. The university currently offers doctoral education in 26 fields encompassing telecommunications, computer science, electrical engineering, decision sciences and the natural and social sciences as well as arts and humanities.

UTD offers Access to Excellence . Many of UTD's students hail from the Metroplex either because they are working professionals who are already established or are young high school graduates who have found a high quality, affordable education within their own neighborhood. And with its relationships with local community colleges, UTD enables transfer students to transition from 2-year to 4-year education with greater ease. Many, upon graduation, continue to live in the area. Over 45,000 students have graduated from UTD since its founding with approximately 23,000 of those graduates still living and working in the North Texas region.

UTD's student body has become more culturally diverse even as enrollment continues to climb. As UTD strives for greater academic excellence with challenging programs of study and high academic standards, it also reaches out to ambitious, highly talented young people from traditionally underserved communities. Over 45% of UTD baccalaureate graduates are first-generation college graduates.

UTD maintains a consistent one-to-one gender ratio at a time when many public universities have seen male enrollment drop and many technology-centered institutions have continued to demonstrate clear two- or even three-to-one gender ratios with women in the minority. According to data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education under the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), UTD confers more computer science degrees to women than any other private or public university in the nation.

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