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## Texas State University poised for boom

Millions being spent to expand campus

Austin Business Journal - by [Sandra Zaragoza](#) ABJ Staff



Submitted Rendering

Texas State in San Marcos educates about 30,800 students now but it's about to go through a growth spurt.

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Texas State University in San Marcos is out of space, but \$633 million worth of construction slated to take place in the coming years will make room for more students.

Last semester, thousands more students enrolled at the university. And demand is so high for on-campus housing that Texas State is conducting a dormitory lottery for upperclassmen next semester.

"We are absolutely one of the fastest-growing universities at 30,800 students," Texas State President Denise Trauth said. "To grow by 2,500 students [over a semester] is very rapid growth, and I think it shows the demand for our programs."

The growing university has been moving forward with expansion projects and renovations that will eventually position it to enroll more students in academic programs such as engineering, materials science and consumer sciences.

Everywhere you look, development at the university, which is the middle of its 10-year master plan, is starting to heat up. In the past couple of years about \$109 million has been invested to expand the campus. But that's only about one-sixth of what the university has in the pipeline.

Texas State has four major projects under construction, including a new family and consumer sciences building in San Marcos and a nursing building in Round Rock. This year, it will break ground on a new undergraduate academic center and a recital hall and theater renovation.

Meanwhile, multiple projects being planned are awaiting funding, including a \$56.7 million music building and an \$82 million engineering and science building in San Marcos, and two health professions buildings in Round Rock that would have a combined price tag of about \$80 million.

The next project to get under way at Texas State will be a \$4 million to \$5 million research and commercialization center. Funding for the center is in place, and the university will be issuing a request

for proposals for land planning in the next few weeks. The site for the commercialization center is just south of campus, at McCarty Lane and Hunter Road.

Additionally, the university will seek regents' approval for a \$47 million housing residence hall complex, which will have about 600 beds. Given enrollment increases, there is a huge need for on-campus housing, Trauth said.

Unlike the other projects, the residence complex would not require funding from the Texas Legislature because it would be funded by revenue from residence halls.

## **Research goals**

The planned commercialization center will assist the university in its effort to become a top research university in Texas.

"We have a responsibility to continue to grow and become a research university," Trauth said. "That will take some time, but that is the ultimate goal. The master plan supports that vision."

The commercialization center would house the materials science program, an interdisciplinary program that consists of engineering, physics, chemistry and other disciplines.

The center also would link faculty and entrepreneurs with cutting-edge research with the goal of spinning out inventions and startup companies. The university is looking closely at research involving energy, security and health.

Amy Madison, economic development director for the **San Marcos Chamber of Commerce**, said the city has taken a special interest in the commercialization center.

The center "will allow us to bring that [commercialization] effort forward, not only for our own businesses and community, but also for businesses that we can recruit to our area," Madison said. "Texas State University is an economic engine for the city of San Marcos. Obviously, their expansion only increases that capacity for our city."

## **Growing pains**

Trauth said Texas State hasn't decided how much it would like to increase capacity, only that it wants to accommodate Texas' growing population for years to come.

According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the university uses 100 percent of its space.

One of its fastest-growing programs is the engineering department. Launched in 2007, the school's inaugural electrical engineering class anticipated 25 students but had 90.

"We believe there is a great deal of pent-up demand for baccalaureate engineering programs here in Central Texas," Trauth said. "And we really believe it's the job of Texas State University to step up to that. But we can't do that until we get the funding for a building."

The school has identified where the new engineering school would be built on campus, but the roughly \$82 million project hinges on whether the university receives state funding.

A \$56.7 million music building project and a \$5 million track relocation also require legislative funds.

In Round Rock, Texas State hopes to build two health professions buildings in the not-so-distant future, with the ultimate plan of relocating its entire Health Professions Department to the Round Rock Higher Education Center.

“Texas State University is in high demand from a student perspective. The kind of growth we are experiencing demonstrates that,” Trauth said. “I just hope we can find the funding to build these buildings because, right now, we are just full.”

### **Texas State Upcoming Projects**

#### **Major Projects under construction or breaking ground soon**

**Family and Consumer Sciences building:** \$9.3 million

**Matthews Parking Garage:** \$21.6 million

**Nursing Building in Round Rock:** \$36 million

**Undergraduate Academic Center:** \$47.7 million

**Alkek Library:** \$997,450

**Theater Renovation:** \$2.4 million

**Bobcat Stadium Expansion:** \$17.2 million

**Biology Research Greenhouse:** \$2.1 million

**Performing Arts Center Complex:** \$83.3 million

**Bobcat Trail Mall:** \$4.1 million

#### **Projects in planning stages**

**Research and Commercialization Center:** \$4 to \$5 million, funding available

**Music Building:** \$56.7 million, dependent on funding

**North Housing Residence Hall Complex (600 beds):** \$47 million, dependent on approval from the [Texas State University Board of Regents](#)

**Engineering and Sciences Building:** \$82 million, dependent on funding

**Track Relocation:** \$5 million

**Health Professions #1 (Round Rock):** \$48.8 million, dependent on funding

**Health Professions #2 (Round Rock):** \$31.9 million, dependent on funding

*Source: Texas State*

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**