

Size, Mix and Residentiality Report

Charge to the Committee/Situation Analysis

The Committee on Size, Mix and Residentiality is one of six committees established as part of the “Vision in Action” planning process for TCU. The committee is to examine the issues related to TCU’s overall size and preferred mix of students within that overall size. It was also charged with developing an understanding of the role that residential housing plays in relation to the questions of the overall size and preferred mix of students at the University. The committee was charged with reviewing strategic questions like:

1. What are the key strategic factors for determining desired enrollment size and how do these factors interrelate?
2. What are the factors for determining undergraduate enrollment size and how do they differ from factors related to graduate enrollment size?
3. Are there areas where growth is essential to achieve critical institutional priorities?
4. What does being a residential campus mean? Should the University place a priority on having a substantially greater portion of its undergraduate students living on-campus or within the campus neighborhood?

The questions related to mix issues are viewed as reaching beyond the undergraduate/graduate portion questions to include:

- Full-time/part-time students
- New freshmen/transfer admissions,
- International students within the on-campus community, and
- Ethnic and diversity mix.
- Instate/Out of State

The committee used the following approach to focus its efforts.

1. Requested and received key assumptions from the VIA steering committee. These assumptions provide critical context for making decisions about all of the planning issues and goals for TCU.
2. Interviewed senior manager and executives surrounding the issues and the key assumptions. Those interviewed by the whole committee included:
 - Carol Campbell and Will Stallworth (Campus Planning & Finance)
 - Larry Lauer and Ray Brown (Marketing & Admissions)
 - Roger Fisher and Rick Flores (Housing & Dining)
 - Dave Edmondson (Information Technology)
 - Dr. Donald Mills (Student Affairs)
 - Dr. William Koehler and Dr. Nowell Donovan (Academic Affairs)
 - Bob Seal, Pat Miller and Larry Adams (Library, Registrar, Graduate Students)

These people were not only asked to provide information associated with their particular expertise and position, but also to reflect on the overall charge issues. More specifically, the committee sought responses from these individuals concerning such factors as:

- Infrastructure capacity and issues for the current and/or expanded campus,

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- Institutional financial health,
 - Individual college and school needs,
 - Undergraduate admissions and enrollment trends,
 - Retention and graduation goals,
 - Definitions for a residential campus,
 - Graduate programs and their current markets,
 - Recognition factors for TCU, and
 - Linkages to the University's global agenda and position within TCU's mission statement
3. Two members of the committee interviewed each university academic dean.
 4. Used information from Kaludis Consulting and others concerning comparative institutions.
 5. Testing critical questions through the VIA town meeting session.
 6. Continuously refining the committee's thoughts based on each interview and meeting session findings.

Key Assumptions Used

The committee requested key assumptions from the VIA steering committee as a critical basis for accomplishing its work. The assumptions provided were.

1. **TCU would like to be near the top of Tier II ranked institutions.** TCU's current position is the rank of 99th in the *US News and World Report, America's Best Colleges and Universities*. Tier II has institutions ranked from 51st through 125. There are 19 private universities ranked higher than or the same as TCU in Tier II. The rest of the universities in Tier II are flagship state universities. Private universities have better student profile statistics than public universities in this category, while public universities generally receive higher peer assessment rating.
2. **TCU would like to have a strong residential presence.** TCU has about 46% of its undergraduates living on-campus. Most off-campus students live over 5 miles from campus.
3. **TCU would like to increase the number/type of graduate programs (perhaps through adding a professional school).** The national university category includes only institutions in the Carnegie Classification for Doctoral-Research Intensive University and Doctoral-Research Extensive University. TCU is a Doctoral-Research Intensive University, which means that it is expected to produce a minimum of 20 doctoral degree graduates per year from at least three degree program areas.
4. **TCU would like to increase its national visibility.** Other than the peer assessment ranking with the *US News* report there are few benchmarks available to assess national visibility. In graduate programs and research, only the MBA program is listed in the national recognition in the *US News* report on **America's Best Graduate Schools** and no program is listed in the doctoral program ratings of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students or PhD.org.

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While external ratings should not drive TCU plans and strategies, the comparisons with other Tier II national universities can be used to understand the competitive issues. For TCU, these would include:

1. Relatively poor overall national ranking in the peer assessment category.
2. Low percentage of students in on-campus housing (Goal 75-80%).
3. Lower retention and graduation rates than comparative institutions.
4. Low tuition rates and low financial aid allocations.
5. Low overall percentage of graduate enrollments.
6. Low doctoral degree production compared with other national universities in all Tiers (I to IV).

University strength factors when compared with other Tier II Privates include:

1. Strong overall endowment.
2. High debt rating.
3. Increasing strength in the University admission pool.
4. Low tuition discount rate.

While considered in the ranking of national universities, the TCU Facts 2002-2003 booklet states: "TCU ranks among the top 15 doctoral degree granting institutions in the number of students studying abroad." It has also been stated that TCU is in the top five national universities for the percentage of students studying abroad. This strength follows the TCU mission statement emphasis on global environment.

Findings/Conclusions and Strategic Recommendations

Many of the people interviewed feel that the continuing growth in the TCU undergraduate student body has caused the University to outgrow its critical support and current facilities infrastructures. The current undergraduate size means that the University is losing its ability to deliver on its promises that are so critical to the image of the University for prospective and current students. This changing ability is particularly noticeable for the undergraduate education and experience.

For example:

- TCU has less than 50% of its students living near campus and most of the rest live substantial distances from campus. Both of these issues will be partly addressed through the Berry Street project. Several have estimated that about 75% of undergraduate students living on-campus (or as part of the on-campus community) fits the TCU experience.
- TCU admits more than 600 transfer students per year, but does not offer any on-campus housing.
- Student support structures at the current size are stressed and will need significant infusion on investment if growth continues.
- It is estimated that there is a shortage in basic academic space of 400,000 square feet to serve the student body of the current size.

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- The University has, in recent times, set goals that the 1st year writing program would have class sections not to exceed 18 students, but the current average section size is 22. It also set a maximum session size for foreign language course of 22, but current average section sizes are 26.
- Several schools and colleges have initiated additional admissions requirements beyond the initial University-wide admissions process. These “second” admissions processes are due, in large part, to the growth of undergraduates in already crowded programs, but can confuse students already enrolled within the University.

The depth of the University undergraduate admission pool has improved over the last several years, but continued growth in the size of the new freshman class will soon stress the ability to continue with current academic profile.

- The University has a Texas focus in undergraduate admission and one of the more selective of Texas private universities. Its undergraduate academic profile is somewhat lower ranked.
- Students coming from out-of-state fall heavily from other nearby states where the high school graduation demographics are stable or declining. It is less clear whether these declines are specific to TCU catchment high schools.

Current University retention from freshmen to sophomore years is around 82%. Overall graduation rates after 6 years have been around 64%. For private universities ranked above TCU in Tier II, retention from freshman to sophomore years averages 87% and is slightly above 90% for the highest ranking private universities. Comparable graduation statistics for higher ranked Tier II private universities average 70% and over 80% for the highly ranked private universities.

- 1. These factors suggest that TCU should consider reducing the overall size of future freshmen classes, instead of continual incremental growth. Overall undergraduate enrollments, at least until infrastructure, critical support services and University “promises” can be met, should be reduced.** This strategy would allow the University to:
 - Consider taking advantage of the improving of admissions applications to reduce the number of acceptances for students from the lower academic status.
 - Give more focus to retention both through the admissions process and throughout a student’s career at TCU.
 - Invest incrementally in the academic programs and student life activities that are most strategic and appropriate to TCU’s future and avoid some of the incremental investments required to meet the student growth, particularly where major step function investments are now or soon to be needed.
 - Build a strategy to appropriately recognize the role of on-campus and near campus housing in meeting residential requirements.
- 2. Related to this recommendation, the Committee suggests that TCU should consider refocusing its admissions and financial aid strategies on expanding its attraction from student markets beyond the State of Texas and on student**

markets that fit into the upper half of the current 25 percentile to 75 percentile admissions range. This strategy would allow the University to:

- Add depth to our admission profile, particularly from states where shortfalls in state support mean that flagship state universities now have to limit their incoming student enrollments.
- Build depth in student admissions from larger student markets. For example, the percent of college bound students taking the SAT in Texas and scoring above 1400 on the SAT was only 3% of all test takers. Potential students scoring between 1300 and 1399 added an additional 5% to the potential pool (8% total) while the percentage of students scoring above 1150 was about 25% or over triple the number above 1300.
- Investigate possible benefits of early scholarship notification and financial aid estimates.
- Be more competitive for Texas students falling just outside the Top 10% law that governs admission requirements for the University of Texas and Texas A&M systems.

While it is difficult to identify a specific target for on-campus and near campus housing as a percent of the undergraduate population, it is clear that TCU is currently below an appropriate on-campus percent. This can be seen in that:

- Transfer students are currently an important component of the University's admission and enrollment strategy, yet are not eligible for campus housing.
- Many activities and student leadership positions that would typically rely on juniors and seniors are required to use sophomore, since the juniors and seniors live off-campus at such distances.
- Overall student participation in major events falls short of anticipated levels when off-campus students must return to campus for events falling outside of class time.
- Parking and parking security have become an increasingly important issue.
- No temporary housing is available for international students participating at the campus for less than a semester. This makes their recruitment very difficult, yet they could be a critical part of fulfilling the University's global mission.

3. **These factors and others indicate that TCU will require more student housing, either on-campus or near campus, if it wants to build and maintain a residential character.** The Berry Street project is a start to this expansion, but it is still short of what would seem to be needed. The Tier II average is close to 60% and even higher for Tier II privates ranked above TCU. Programmatic factors need to also be considered in setting housing goals, since the construction of housing spaces alone will not enhance the residential character of TCU. The continued renovation or reconstruction of existing housing is considered essential to bring the facilities up-to-date, to have a competitive housing program and to provide programming within the residential system. The construction of a new Student Center and major dining facility can also help TCU enhance its residential character through creating opportunities to join with other students in on-campus activities and through a higher quality, shared dining experience. If the dining

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experience is enhanced, there are likely to be opportunities to attract students living off-campus into this shared dining experience and potentially to build programming around this experience. Over time, however, TCU needs to address the on-campus housing shortage.

There is not general consensus that TCU should expand its graduate program offering and increase the percentage of graduate students on-campus, but the majority would seemingly like to see an expansion of the graduate population if the right programs which can meet appropriate levels of quality can be developed and those programs do not interfere with the undergraduate development of the University. Several of the discussants indicate that TCU has opportunities to expand in graduate programs areas and there are known discussions about the potential of a law school for the University. However, given the current shortage of facilities, these programs should not further stress university infrastructure and thus may need to be taught at off hours or off campus if implemented. Quality and availability of a student market are both critical factors to be considered in developing these programs.

- 4. Graduate programs with broad market potential to serve the Fort Worth-Dallas market should be considered. The Nurse Anesthesia is an example. Though these programs are likely to serve an adult part-time market, they should be put in place at recognized quality level appropriate to TCU.** At least, in the near term, graduate programs aimed at the national market, especially doctoral programs, are likely to be very expensive, put much greater stress on an already stressed infrastructure, and, given our current experience, not gain the University greater national recognition. While the University does not want to lose its standing as a doctoral-research intensive university, a focus on graduate professional areas that can appeal to the more regional market and give regional recognition to the quality of TCU may be more appropriate for investment.

Graduate programs provide opportunity for national recognition, but TCU's current standing in graduate programs and the low percent of graduate students within the campus suggests that the University must use undergraduate distinction in the near term as its primary vehicle for gaining national recognition.

Texas demographics are changing and are likely to continue to show dramatic changes over the next 20 to 40 years. In particular, the number and percentage of Hispanics among the Texas college age population is going to increase significantly. While TCU has a reasonable minority student profile among private universities in the South, the long range changes are likely to have a profound change on the TCU environment. The committee found no consensus on these issues and opportunities in its discussions, or even in the definitions regarding diversity. However, it would seem essential that a continuing discussion and definition for the goals of diversity be included in the continuing strategic planning and implementation of that planning for TCU.

Key Assumptions and Strategic Directions

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The TCU efforts to move toward the top of Tier II as an overall strategy clearly will not be accomplished in a short period of time. For public flagship universities, the peer assessment category seems to be most critical to the rankings. This may be heavily related to their strengths in large, well developed graduate programs and related research areas. For private universities, the ranking issues seem more related to the undergraduate student profile, both the admission profile and for retention and graduation rates. The factors that seem to make up these categories, then, include:

Admissions Profile:

- Selectivity Rank
 - SAT/ACT 25th-75th Percentiles
 - Freshmen in Top 10% of High School Class
 - Acceptance Rate

Institutional Factors:

- Percent of Undergraduates Full-time
- Percent of Undergraduate living on-campus
- Percent of Classes under 20 students
- Percent of Classes over 50 students
- Percent of Faculty Full-time

Graduation/Retention Factors:

- Average Freshmen Retention Rate
- Graduation Rate—Predicted and Actual

The recommendations of the Strategy Committee recognize that as the size of the freshmen class grows, it becomes more difficult to improve the relative position of TCU in ranking its student profile. The University must not only take a higher percentage of its applicants to fill its class, but is faced with issues of academic and student service infrastructure issues that will cause the University to spend major incremental funds on meeting step function costs just to sustain the current student body size. Since retention and graduation rates are potentially very important issues for the student profile and for measuring how well TCU is delivering on its promises for high student satisfaction, it would seem that major attention should be paid to these issues.

The residential character of TCU is being lost by continual undergraduate student growth. In the short run, the University can build around such efforts as the Berry Street project and, potentially, the construction of a new student center with a major shared dining facility to upgrade its services and reconnect to students that are unable to find on-campus housing. The Berry Street project points to the potential for additional private sector “partnerships” that might further enhance the residential character of TCU. However, TCU needs to move to set goals for dealing with these residential issues and build against those goals, if it is going to retain and enhance its reputation as serving the residential needs of its undergraduate students. These goals need to include the renovation and redevelopment of existing on-campus housing where such renovation is not now complete. If the University is to retain a high percentage of undergraduate enrollments both from incoming freshmen and from transfer students, then creating

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connections to the University for both types of students are essential. Without being able to offer on-campus housing to any transfer students, the University is likely to always fall short in making the connections for transfer students.

Expanding graduate programs needs market focus and programs appropriate to TCU, building upon existing and emerging University strengths and taking advantage of opportunities where presented. There has been discussion of TCU's purchase of a law school. The Committee is not privy to the state of these negotiations and so can not comment on this specific strategy. Nevertheless, if the University is going to develop greater standing in the community and greater national recognition additional graduate and graduate professional programs seem to be required. By focusing our initial efforts on graduate programs that have a regional student base and a market for the graduating student, TCU can gain with potentially less stress on the physical infrastructure and can position its programs around national standards within local markets. Using this kind of program model should also mean that the costs of recruitment and required student financial support are also minimized. Existing graduate programs could be evaluated around these kinds of review principles as well.

For TCU to be successful in expanding graduate and graduate professional programs, the new programs need to contribute to the academic standing and quality and the financial health of the University.

TCU currently must build in national visibility over time principally through its undergraduate program efforts and selected graduate and research areas. TCU already is a nationally recognized university in undergraduate areas. Its Tier II national ranking for its undergraduate programs is evidence of this status. Clearly the University's athletic programs are providing additional national recognition for the successes on the playing field. However, the University needs to return to its promises to students to build undergraduate programs of distinction linking academic and student experience areas. The current study abroad programs, given the percentage of TCU students participating, provide one critical opportunity for gaining national recognition. Publicizing and marketing the TCU promise and identifying areas that deserve greater national recognition provide opportunities to increase the TCU competitiveness for quality students.

Resource and/or Policy Implications

This series of strategic recommendations will have resource and policy implications for the University. The Committee does not have enough information to estimate these implications in the short run. Clearly TCU has become more dependent of undergraduate tuition revenue over that past several years. Capping or reducing the size of the freshmen class, however, may allow the University to avoid some additions to costs if some of the major facility needs can be moderated. Retention strategies may be an approach available to the University to retain the overall size of the undergraduate student body without some of the added costs. In order to understand these potential opportunities, TCU needs to gain a greater understanding of current retention issues and how these are

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related to resource allocations. Higher retention and graduation rates would produce an improved institutional profile among the rankings, but can not be accomplished if the required investments and costs are too high. The proposed graduate growth strategy looks to graduate programs meeting a higher proportion of all of their costs, while also limiting requirements for additional infrastructure. This is, of course, a difficult management task.

Over the longer run, the need to deal with residential and student connection issues driven from the current lack of residential housing is likely to require significant resources. The Berry Street project and the new Student Center and Dining facility may allow some of these resource commitments to be postponed.

TCU's current financial position, enrollment and program mix, and pricing practices provide an opportunity to develop a model for TCU that is distinct, but is still based on building competitiveness for existing and new student enrollment markets (undergraduate, graduate, graduate professional). The distinct TCU model will come from positioning the University as one of the great values among national universities. Among other elements, this model needs to:

- Remain focused on undergraduate student development. TCU has been known as an institution that takes quality students and adds great value to their development as well educated, highly ethical global citizens. Continued growth, without the ability to make significant investments in enlarging and modernizing the residential programs, providing a larger full-time faculty to keep up with demand in programs with high student interest, and administering services, while at the same time charging ever higher tuition prices, seems to be compromising our value propositions for undergraduate students. By capping overall undergraduate enrollment and reducing the size of the incoming freshmen class, TCU has the opportunity to focus its resource use on strengthening its focus on undergraduate quality, rather than supporting growth.
- Build competitiveness in undergraduate admissions and retention through strengthening programs, building a broader integration of student life functions throughout the student body, continues and even strengthens the commitments to international programs for all students and expands the geographical diversity of incoming classes. To the extent that TCU seeks improvements in academic profile of its admissions, the model would seek to reduce the number of students with low academic standing rather than focus resources on the highest and most competitive academic achievers and prove value through high retention and graduation rates.
- Return to the ideal of an undergraduate “promise.” The promise would serve as a statement to students and parents of TCU commitment to them.

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- Retain and build on the efforts to increase the diversity of the University student body broadly defined. There are a number of definitions for diversity within the TCU community, but the University's commitment to the Fort Worth and Texas communities and to the broader international community cannot be met without expanded diversity a critical component of the University model.

Since the University is committed to its status and ranking as a national university, TCU must include the strengthening of doctoral education and enrollments in its distinct model. In the short run, the University does not seem well positioned to take on building national ranked doctoral programs that require accessing national or international markets. Therefore, the TCU model needs to be:

- Opportunistic in developing and restructuring graduate and graduate professional programs that can be held to national standards for quality, but serve regional markets. This would mean a focus on programs where there is:
 - a. A reasonable market and provable regional market demand at TCU prices.
 - b. The cost of delivery at TCU levels of quality and within existing TCU infrastructure is manageable.
 - c. TCU can be competitive and retain a return on its investments.
- Creative in using graduate and graduate professional programs with scholarship opportunities created through those programs to link and strengthen undergraduate program and distinctions of TCU.

Overall the Committee's proposed approach should allow the University more latitude in using the resources it has available by:

- Continuing to develop TCU around existing strength of program and markets for both undergraduate and graduate programs,
- Taking advantage of appropriate resource allocation opportunities gained through longer term thinking and analysis on how to use retirements and other personnel change to meet needs, and
- Avoiding major step function costs that continued growth would require.