

FACT SHEET

PURPOSE

Lone Star College System-University Center is a partnership of universities and the colleges of the Lone Star College System to provide unduplicated bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and continuing professional studies to the college service area. Partnerships, seamless articulated programs, collaborative governance, shared facilities, interactive telecommunications, and "first stop" student services provide the basis for the LSC-University Center to serve as the critical link for community development and individual opportunity to over one and one-half million citizens of North Houston, North Harris County and Montgomery County.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Six universities and the community college system, including five colleges, have joined together to offer unduplicated bachelor's (29) degrees, master's (33) degrees, and three special programs for a total of 65 programs.

Lone Star College System:

- LSC-North Harris
- LSC-Kingwood
- LSC-Tomball
- LSC-Montgomery
- LSC-Cy-Fair

Partner Universities:

- Prairie View A&M University
- Sam Houston State University
- Texas A&M University
- Texas Southern University
- University of Houston
- University of Houston-Downtown

LSCS local taxpayers and private sector partners built the facility and telecommunications infrastructure at no cost to the state. Universities are responsible for their degrees and support the instructional, facilities utilized, and shared support services costs. The College System is responsible for the instruction and student services at the freshman and sophomore levels.

OVERVIEW

LSC-University Center is the centerpiece for multi-level instruction of universities and the LSCS. LSC-University Center includes a dedicated classroom/laboratory facility of approximately 78,000 sq. ft. as well as an interactive, video conferencing system that connects the colleges of LSCS and the partner universities. The Universities began offering classes in September 1997. In recognition of his commitment to making higher education available to the community, the building was named in honor of George P. Mitchell, CEO of Mitchell Energy and founder of The Woodlands. LSC-University Center received full approval by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in April 1996. Groundbreaking occurred in June 1996 using the theme "*common ground for the common good.*" Facilities opened in January 1998.

CONCEPT

- LSC-University Center is degree driven.
- Partner universities offer courses necessary for a student to complete baccalaureate and master's degree programs at LSC-University Center.
- Operational costs of instruction, facilities, and services provided are shared pro-rata by the universities based on enrollment.
- Technology and telecommunications are used to interconnect and deliver student support and learning services.
- LSCS colleges offer the freshman and sophomore course work utilizing seamless, articulated AA, AS, and AAS degrees.
- The standards for the quality of the degrees offered and awarded matches standards at the home campus.
- One-stop student support services.
- Diverse multi-level higher education institutions work together and make a difference for students, businesses, and communities.

THE FACILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Lone Star College System was responsible for the funding, construction, and equipping of a permanent facility to house LSC-University Center. LSC-University Center is located in The Woodlands, a planned residential and business community in the northern part of metropolitan Houston. The construction was financed with approximately \$9.5 million of tax funds and a gift of \$2 million and ten acres of land from The Woodlands Corporation and Mr. George P. Mitchell. In 1995, voters of the District approved the \$77.87 million bond issue by a three-to-one margin. The \$9.5 million for LSC-University Center was one of the listed projects. Construction of the facility was completed in late 1997. LSCS, as the owner/operator/landlord of the facility, is responsible for providing the basic support services such as custodial, utilities, security, maintenance, duplication, telephone, and the interactive video conferencing system to support distance learning and other instructional and support needs. The equipment includes the telecommunications system to support two-way interactive video, voice, and data for distance education as well as the computers, software, and networking systems necessary to support the on-site instructional program. LSC-University Center university partners are responsible for the operating budget that is divided among them based on pro-rata share of annual semester credit hour generation at the LSC-University Center.

The facility and technology consists of a 78,000 sq. ft. 3-story structure housing:

- 10 2-way voice/video conference classrooms and seminar rooms
- 29 classrooms with ceiling-mounted LCD projectors, instructor workstation, and large TV's
- 4 seminar rooms
- 4 computer classrooms with 20 to 40 computers per room
- an 84-seat tiered "smart" lecture hall with data, internet, and power at each seat
- 50 workstation open computer lab
- 24 workstation library connecting to all partner libraries via internet
- all rooms connected by broadband cable
- entire building fiber optic cabled
- all classrooms pre-wired to convert to two-way interactive voice, video, and data use
- 3 satellite dishes with ability to distribute signals as desired throughout the building
- 1 Accord MGC 100 MCU (Multipoint Control Unit) providing connectivity for video conferencing throughout the system, with the universities, and through the public IP network
- shared Student Services area to support advising, admissions, financial aid, and other student services
- shared faculty support area with access to computers and other technical equipment to support course development and delivery

CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS ENTERING TUC

- Transfer from LSCS with AA, AS, or AAS
- Transfer without full 60+ hours from LSCS
- Transfer from other community colleges/universities
- "Shoebox of Transcripts" from a variety of universities/colleges
- Transfer from one LSC-University Center university to another LSC-University Center university
- Transfer from "home base" university to LSC-University Center
- Military experience and licensure
- Career changing professionals with one degree desiring to complete another specialty or a new degree
- Individuals with bachelor's degrees pursuing a master's degree
- International students with some prior college coursework or degrees
- "Fresh Start" - based on Texas Law
- Veterans
- Non-Degree Seeking Status (Bachelors; Masters)

ARTICULATED PROGRAMS, AIRWAVES AND SERVICES

- 29 Bachelor's Degrees are seamlessly articulated vertically with the LSCS programs and laterally among the universities for course equivalencies to expedite the students' achievement of their degree. All of these plans are in compliance with the home university for the degree and their related academic policies.
- 33 Master's Degrees are cooperatively offered
- 1 Doctoral program in Educational Leadership
- 2 Post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs
- Faculty, department heads, deans, and administrators are continuously involved in the initial development and continuing review of these agreements, shared services, and compatible systems. Each program has been approved by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and accrediting agencies.

MANAGEMENT

LSC-University Center Council (16 members, including two appointed by each partner) provides guidance for planning and delivery of programs. The Council is assisted by subcommittees: finance, academic programs, and technology. LSCS is responsible for day-to-day management of the LSC-University Center and its facility. The administrative staff consists of twenty-one full-time personnel, nine part-time personnel, and five university coordinators.

FINANCIALS AND FEES

- The day-to-day operating budget for the LSC-University Center is paid by the participating universities; LSCS is responsible for the debt service on the building. Related shared costs for participation at the LSC-University Center have been made based on semester credit hours (SCH) of courses offered to achieve the degrees. The shared cost includes facilities utilization, shared support services, and shared laboratories.
- Annual review of budget, financials, costs, and revenues is made by the Finance Committee.
- A Financial Aid Consortium has been established among the six universities and the community colleges to allow for students to fully utilize their financial assistance for degree completion when courses are taken at more than one school. The "home" university offering the degree is responsible for the financial aid package.

SHARED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES -- COMMON AND CUSTOMIZED

- The LSC-University Center universities and colleges are committed to providing (as much as possible) a "one-stop" seamless approach to the applications, registration, fee collections, calendar, financial assistance, transcript analysis, advising, student information, and student learning support. Common electronic data transmission standards and information technology are used to complete these processes.
- Common application data elements are utilized for the first stop that the student makes. LSC-University Center facilitates transfer of data to partner institutions when a student cross-enrolls in classes with more than one partner using the SPEEDE system based on EDI standards.
- LSC-University Center Student Services staff provides gateway/intake advising to prospective students, reviewing transcripts, and assisting them in determining the program which best meets their needs. The staff then assists the students in getting admitted and beginning the registration process.
- Additional overview and advising sessions are offered with the universities providing intake sessions for orientation, transcript analysis, and degree planning. These are offered at LSC-University Center. Additionally, university program advisors come to LSC-University Center on a regularly scheduled basis to advise currently enrolled students.
- Library Services are provided utilizing internet technology to provide links to each partner university library. TexShare and the University partners provide access to commonly used databases and TExpress provides overnight delivery of books and articles from partners to the LSC-UC. Library services are managed by a full time librarian on-site at LSC-University Center.
- All computer workstations in the library and computer lab provide students with access to Microsoft Office software, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. Partner universities provide additional software to support unique program needs.
- Faculty orientation is provided for all faculty teaching at LSC-University Center to familiarize them with the equipment in each classroom, the procedures and policies, and the services available for the students.

EARLY STARTUP AND ENROLLMENTS

- Sam Houston State University and the University of Houston offered the first courses following Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approval.
- Prairie View A&M University followed with the Bachelor of Nursing Degree program providing new opportunities for ADN/RN nurses to continue with their careers. First graduates were in December 1997.
- In Fall 1997 there were 65 classes, 855 enrollments, and 374 actual students.

CURRENT STATUS

- In Spring 2008, there were 255 classes with 3,970 enrollments and 2,378 actual student headcount.
- Since the LSC-UC was opened in Fall 1997, total student enrollment is 79,066 and total actual student headcount is 52,413.

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