SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2027
Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Texas A&M University (College Station) is situated on the land of multiple Native nations, past and present. These original homelands are the territory of Indigenous peoples who were largely dispossessed and removed. We specifically acknowledge the traditional stewardship of this land by the Tonkawa, Tawakoni, Hueco, Sana, Wichita, and Coahuiltecan peoples. We pledge to support and advocate for the histories, cultures, languages, and territorial rights of historic Indigenous peoples of Texas and the Indigenous people that live here now. This statement affirms continuous Indigenous presence and rights, acknowledges the ongoing effects of settler colonization, and supports Indigenous struggles for political, legal, and cultural sovereignty.

Developed collaboratively in 2020 by the members of the Indigenous Studies Working Group, which is supported by the Glasscock Center.
Welcome to a bold new future for our School of Architecture. After our College of Architecture’s creation in 1969 and subsequent rise to success as the largest in the nation, we face a new challenge to reinvent our distilled School of Architecture at a pivotal time in our nation’s and university’s history.

I’m reminded of another inspirational leader who faced great challenges at Texas A&M, General James Earl Rudder, President, and guide for A&M’s last greatest reformation where we were no longer a compulsory, all-male military school. Instead, President Rudder built on his military experience and his Rudder’s Rangers’ success in OPERATION OVERLORD on June 6, 1944. As we transition to a School, our return to three diverse departments means we can distill our mission and vision. President Rudder knew that diversity makes teams stronger and that when there is a highly motivated team of varied expertise with a unified sense of purpose, there is nothing that can stop them from achieving their objective. Our time is now.

Similarly, we have five driving forces that we can use to ensure we are always working our most pressing priorities:

1. Secure (a) visionary donor(s) to ensure our facilities reflect our preeminence.
2. Enhance the prominence of the Architecture degree and right-size our other programs for the best quality and the right quantity.
3. Build on our industry relations success for DESIGN, as well as CONSTRUCTION.
4. Continue to grow innovative and impactful research for the right reasons.
5. Honor and expand Dr. Harold Adams’, ’61 legacy with an emphasis on interdisciplinary experiences that also bolster APRs and accreditations for continuous improvement and service to our disciplines/profession.

So, while we are facing a time of great uncertainty, I hope you follow the words of Rudyard Kipling’s poem above and “fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds’ worth of run, yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it.” Indeed, we will inspire the future generations to plan, design, and deliver. What’s more – our work and those we mentor will BUILD A BETTER WORLD.
Interim Dean Patrick Suermann initiated this strategic planning process almost as soon as he took office in January of 2022. Working with consultant, Dr. Mary Lea McAnally, a steering committee was formed, chaired by Executive Associate Dean Dr. Shannon Van Zandt.

The steering committee, working with the consultants, collected voluminous primary and secondary data to help guide analysis and decision-making. Further, the committee designed a one-day Summit, which invited more than 200 stakeholders--faculty, staff, students, alumni, and employers--to envision what the future School of Architecture might look like.

Held on Saturday, April 9, 2022, the Summit had over one hundred participants, and generated a robust set of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and expected Results (SOAR).

Using this input, the committee developed a vision and goals, which are presented here. Work to implement the plan continues with key stakeholder groups.

Lift the Earth Up
We are like fluttering leaves on the branches of trees in the forests of the landscape that surrounds us. If we could, for just a moment, flutter together, we could lift the earth up to be a better place.

By Dr. Jeff Haberl. Composed and performed during the Visioning Summit
Texas A&M University’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan embraces Texas A&M’s tradition of future-oriented preparedness, as well as our brightest potential. The strategic plan draws upon the University’s four strategic pillars: Transformational Education; Discovery and Innovation; Community; and Impact on the State, the Nation, and the World.

In keeping with these strategic pillars, the strategic plan for 2020-2025 also identified six priorities to guide the university and plan for the years ahead.

**ENHANCE** transformational education and student success  
**ELEVATE** graduate and professional education  
**STRENGTHEN** and harness our research enterprise  
**GROW** and support our world-class faculty  
**BE A BEST PLACE** to live, work, and learn  
**ENGAGE** Texas and beyond to enhance our impact

When Aggies see a need, their energy and their selflessness draw others into the cause, and good things happen.  

**JOE B. FOSTER ’56**
VISION

The School of Architecture will lean into Texas A&M University’s role as the premier land-grant institution in the nation to be a world leader among schools of architecture by engaging voices from within communities and constituencies to co-develop evidence-based solutions to the grand challenges facing the built environment, to advance equity, accessibility, resilience, health, and sustainability in our world.

The transition of our school from a four-department college to a three-department school represents a return to the essence of our disciplines and their associated professions. The University’s Path Forward plan calls for schools to have a greater focus on professional degrees and the development of industry and professional leaders.

PLAN > DESIGN > DELIVER. Build a Better World.

These verbs capture what the School of Architecture does to imagine and create the built environment that supports human activity and its interactions with the natural world. The continuum of these actions emphasizes the necessary integration of the disciplines and professions needed to create the structures and spaces that make a place, through planning, design, and delivery.

Each of these activities plays an integral role in creating places that reflect the social, economic, cultural, and ecological context in which they exist. They must work together to realize a place that accommodates a collective vision of the present and future.
CREATIVITY
Celebrate and convey our identity as designers, builders, creatives, visionaries, and makers, whose work brings a richer understanding and experience of the built environment.
INTEGRATED IMPACT

We become national leaders in the co-production of world-changing knowledge by partnering with industry and communities to identify and solve complex problems in the built environment.

Industry
- Leaders
- Workforce
- Clients/Consumers

University
- Faculty
- Students
- Public

Community
- Core Team
- Task Force
- Public

Mobilizing Application
Creating and Mobilizing Knowledge
Mobilizing Action

Social Innovation Impact
High Impact Service Learning and Engaged Scholarship
Collective Impact

From Texas Target Communities

Building the Right Team

"Movers & Shakers"
1/3 with power and assets

Industry Partners

"Moved & Shaken"
1/3 who lack power

Low-capacity communities

"Movers & Shakers"
1/3 who lack power

Low-capacity communities

Privileged and willing

Disconnected and unwilling

This is the bulk of the group we begin with

Modified from MDC, in Van Zandt, Masterson, Newman and Meyer, 2020
IMPACT

Champion our research enterprise to maximize our impact on the built environment; local, state, and federal policy; and professional practice

GOAL: Encourage, support, and incentivize research to impact the built environment, writ large

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Provide support to both individual researchers and research centers
- Pilot tangible innovative approaches (e.g., solar decathlon, construction field lab)
- Encourage and facilitate mechanisms by which faculty research can influence practice and policy to have lasting impact

GOAL: Engage undergraduate students in research

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Integrate engaged research into professional curricula
- Grow a robust undergraduate research program

GOAL: Partner with other units to pursue large, interdisciplinary, applied proposals

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Invest in research infrastructure at school level (data management, web-hosting)
- Promote community outreach, spatial/temporal modeling, and applied social science to other university colleges/units
- Turn annual Research Symposium to be outward facing
PARTNERSHIPS

Partner with both communities and industry/professions to build relationships leading to the co-production of knowledge that addresses complex problems of the built environment

GOAL: Cultivate closer ties with industry partners to enrich our research, teaching, and learning endeavors

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Engage professionals through studio or capstone sponsorships, internships, guest speaking, professional advisory board participation, and professional development
- Actively seek university-industry partnerships to take on real-world problems and projects, engaging students and faculty
- Develop an industry-sponsored fellowship program that supports faculty-practitioner exchanges

GOAL: Leverage our industry partnerships to enhance student career opportunities

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Expand and formalize internship programs in all departments
- Consolidate / coordinate career fairs across departments
**GOAL:**

Leverage Texas Target Communities to cultivate relationships in low-capacity communities across the state

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- Create a mobile Community Design Center to bring our expertise where it is needed across the state
- Expand TXTC’s capacity to reach underserved and low-capacity communities
- Develop a strong evaluation and communication approach to disseminate accumulated knowledge and best practices
- Partner with researchers to undertake engaged research which develops and tests solutions to community-identified research questions
RECOGNITION

Tell our story and attract people to us

GOAL: Expand our marketing and branding efforts to tell our story

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- Develop a clear brand for the school that is consistent with the University brand but conveys the essence of our school
- Create an innovative communications plan for reaching our peers and professions
- Develop a strong visual presence across campus that highlights creative design solutions and built work

GOAL: Showcase our talent

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- Use external high visibility awards and fellowships to elevate our students and faculty
- Encourage and support student participation in high-visibility events such as competitions and exhibitions, etc.
- Expand the evaluation of teaching/advising excellence to encourage team sponsorship
GOAL: Reach out to and engage prospective students

ACTION STRATEGIES:

- Develop a graduate recruiting program/plan
- Offer creative and engaging programs to attract and educate young people about the School’s disciplines and professions (building on Camp ARCH tradition)
- Develop clear materials that articulate pathways to professions and types of jobs available
- Provide permanent displays (virtual and/or physical) of the work of first-year, second-year students, etc. to educate visitors about the learning outcomes of each program
Reinvent interdisciplinary education across undergraduate and professional curricula to develop leaders across integrated practices in which professionals plan, design, and deliver built environments

**GOAL:** Design and deliver integrated professional curricula

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**
- Strengthen and articulate paths to licensure and certification as professionals of the built environment
- Integrate disciplines at strategic points throughout curricula at both undergraduate and professional programs
- Identify overlaps among disciplines and facilitate interdisciplinary units within curricula
- Offer thematic course sequences based on areas of faculty expertise

**GOAL:** Prepare students for the built environment jobs of the future

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**
- Equip students with cutting-edge data management, visualization, modeling, and production techniques and technologies

**GOAL:** Reach working professionals and underserved areas with training for current and future professions of the built environment

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**
- Develop low- or non-residential professional and continuing education programs to reach working professionals in our state and beyond
GOAL: Prepare students for positions of leadership and service

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Offer high impact, experiential learning
- Create a school-wide studio/capstone external juror program
- Infuse curricula with leadership training opportunities
- Develop a credential for extra-curricular professional development participation

GOAL: Connect students to the real-world problems and opportunities of the built environment, internationally and domestically

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Revamp and expand study abroad opportunities to expose students to wide range of cultures (developing and developed world); built environments, and interdisciplinary experiences
- Create a domestic field trip program to take interdisciplinary groups of students to different sites and built environments to better understand how the disciplines work together in the creation of place
To help focus and unify our interdisciplinary efforts, we will name bi-annual "grand challenges" in which courses across our curricula will work alongside or with each other to address a single grand challenge.

Grand challenges will also provide themes for the annual Research Symposium and school-wide lecture series.

- **CY 23-24**: Homelessness and Affordable Housing
- **CY 25-26**: Aging and Health
- **CY 27-28**: Climate Action and Equity
COMMUNITY

Both within our School and among the partners with whom we work, recognize and appreciate our differences, treat every member with respect, value all individuals for their contributions, and advance opportunities for each person to realize their full potential.

Foster an environment that is diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

**GOAL:**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- Emphasize the ways that diversity results in improved decision making.
- Reimagine and reframe [Aggie] tradition as a way of acknowledging the contributions of the past while still embracing an inclusive and diverse future.
- Increase transparency and communication of decision making.
- Set measurable goals to achieve a faculty, staff, and student body that reflects the demographic composition of Texas.

Respect and celebrate the unique contributions of every member of the school.

**GOAL:**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- Acknowledge and respect personal/family time, work-life balance, mental and physical health, neurodivergence, and self-defined identities.
- Enhance annual programs for recognizing and celebrating staff.
- Address pay inequities, meeting or exceeding campus or disciplinary averages.
- Assess and enhance our internal awards program for faculty research, creative work, teaching, and service; student excellence and leadership; staff achievement and leadership; diversity contributions.
Support the professional development of our staff and faculty

**GOAL:**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- Develop a more robust new APT faculty orientation program
- Help convene faculty interest groups to facilitate collaboration
- Bring staff and APT career development opportunities on par with tenure-track equivalents
CREATIVITY

Celebrate and convey our identity as designers, builders, creatives, visionaries, and makers, whose work brings a richer understanding and experience of the built environment

GOAL:
Elevate the importance of design, making, and creative work as a form of scholarship

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Identify aspirational venues for exhibition; encourage and facilitate submission
- Revise evaluation guidelines to include peer-reviewed creative work on par with peer-reviewed publications, and appropriately consider variations in quantity
- Highlight the current produced work (built, exhibited, sold, commissioned) of faculty and students
- Interject making into the curricula, through sketching, sketch models, model building, and other tangible creativity

GOAL:
Secure facilities that reflect our preeminence, provide visibility, and support world-class creativity and making

ACTION STRATEGIES:
- Identify a visionary donor(s)
Cultivate opportunities for making, craftsmanship, and creative expression among students, faculty, and staff

**GOAL:**

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**
- Encourage participation in and attendance at the Faculty Biennial Art Show
- Increase awareness and use of woodshop, makerspace, and Fab Lab for pedagogy and self-expression, both within and outside the School
- Actively seek opportunities to add to available equipment
- Encourage faculty, students, and staff to share their talents with others, through demonstrations, peer-teaching, social media artist accounts