



TEXAS
The University of Texas at Austin

2021–2022 **ANNUAL REPORT**

LONGHORN CENTER FOR SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

DIVISION OF DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The University of Texas at Austin
**Longhorn Center for
School Partnerships**



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Leadership



Message From the Vice President

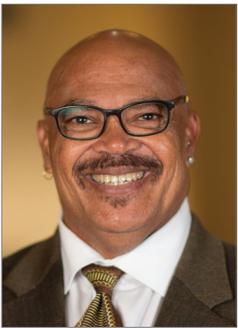
Since its inception, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) has been dedicated to helping ensure that K-12 students from all backgrounds have access to resources and activities at The University of Texas at Austin. The Longhorn Center for School Partnerships (LCSP) has been key to these efforts. The LCSP is home to five Youth Engagement Centers, the Neighborhood Longhorns Program and Advise Texas, all supporting underrepresented students at different points in their academic journeys. Students who participate in these programs are predominately from underserved schools and a majority are from low-income families. These programs have given students the chance to meet and interact with UT Austin staff and students, to prepare for the college application process, and to participate in activities that can help boost academic achievement and develop leadership skills. We are pleased at how successful the programs have remained throughout the years and the number of lives they have changed.

We hope you enjoy reading about the LCSP programs and how they help enhance the impact of UT Austin across the state. Our mission of service to the young people of Texas remains a focal point for the DDCE and crucial to student success for some of our most vulnerable, but deserving, bright students.

LaToya Smith, Ph.D.

Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement

Assistant Professor of Practice, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy



Message From the Assistant Vice President for School Partnerships

Within the Longhorn Center for Academic and Community Initiatives, the LCSP is a portfolio of programs that provide pre-college readiness services for underrepresented students, including college awareness initiatives. The integrated college awareness programs include Advise TX, Neighborhood Longhorns and the Youth Engagement Centers in Austin, Dallas, Houston, Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio. These programs in the LCSP served just shy of 50,000 students this past year.

Staffed by experienced professionals with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, the LCSP plays an important role in providing strategic direction for the division's pre-college and college programs that work collaboratively to create successful pathways for underrepresented students throughout the education system.

Patrick Patterson, M.Ed.

Assistant Vice President for School Partnerships

Advise TX, Youth Engagement Centers and Neighborhood Longhorns Program

ADVISE TEXAS

Our Mission

Advise TX, as part of the national College Advising Corps, works to increase the number of first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented students who apply, enter and complete college. We do this by placing recent college graduates from one of our partner universities as full-time college advisers in some of America's underserved high schools. Advise TX provides the support that high-need students require to navigate the complex processes of college admissions, matriculation and securing financial aid. The University of Texas at Austin chapter serves 16 schools in Central Texas, El Paso, the Rio Grande Valley, and Dallas.

Program Model

Near-Peer Mentoring

Advise TX advisers come from all fields of study and are chosen for qualities that enable them to easily develop peer and role model relationships with the students they advise. As recent graduates of UT Austin, they understand the current complexities of the college application process. Many advisers are first-generation and minority students themselves, reflecting the characteristics of the students whom they advise.

Intensive Training

The University of Texas recruits Advise TX advisers and intensively trains them for three to four weeks. Advisers gain the knowledge and skills necessary to guide their students, foster a college-going culture and become advocates in their communities. Advisers become knowledgeable about all education options, including certificate programs, associate degrees and baccalaureates. Training includes campus visits to colleges and universities throughout the state.

Whole School Service

Advise TX fosters a college-going culture within schools by serving any student at any grade level. Advisers collaborate with teachers and administrators to supplement, not replace, existing high school counseling staff. Advisers devise creative approaches to connect with students and host events and workshops at their campus.

Best-Fit Advising

Advisers are not recruiters for UT. They help high school students choose and enroll in the postsecondary option that is the best fit for their skills and interests—one where they will most likely succeed and complete a degree or meaningful credential— whether at a university, community college or technical college. Advisers help students weigh factors such as institutional characteristics, academic requirements, costs, financial aid and possible careers within a chosen field of study. Advisers encourage students to apply to three or more institutions so that they will have many options to choose from.

Rigorous Data Collection

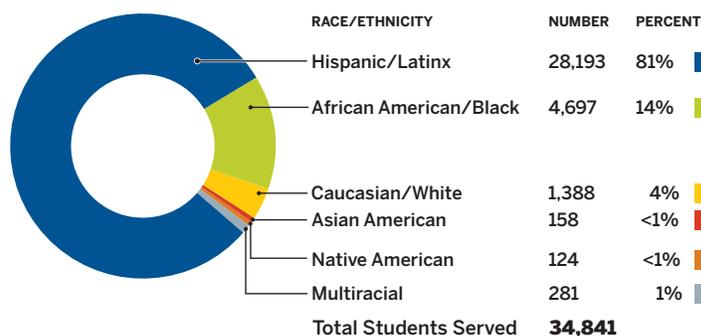
Advisers document their students' progress in the College Advising Corps' custom database, GRACE. This database contains detailed profiles on individual students, recording interactions with their adviser, FAFSA completion, college applications and more. GRACE also generates school-wide reports to inform advisers and administrators of their school's progress.

Participating High Schools

Austin ISD	Akins, Navarro, Travis
Charter School	Vanguard Academy
Del Valle ISD	Del Valle
De Soto ISD	De Soto
La Joya ISD	Juarez-Lincoln, La Joya, Palmview
Lancaster ISD	Lancaster
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	PSJA HS, PSJA North, PSJA SW
San Marcos ISD	San Marcos High School
Socorro ISD	El Dorado, Socorro HS

Population Served

While available to all students, advisers actively seek out low-income, minority students who are qualified to attend college but are at greater risk of not attending than their more affluent counterparts.



Lunch Status

Free or Reduced: **80%** Full Priced: **20%**

Performance of High School Seniors

Specific Interactions

1-on-1s: At least one **80%**

College Apps Submitted: **5,208**

UT College Apps: **692**, Accepted: **305**, CAP: **245**

FAFSA Submitted **73%**

Neighborhood Longhorns Program

Mission

The Neighborhood Longhorns Program (NLP) is the premier educational outreach program for the University of Texas at Austin offering educationally disadvantaged second- through eighth-graders the opportunity to envision attending college through incentives and scholarships. This is achieved through the involvement of UT students, volunteers and staff who provide tutoring and mentoring in participating Central Texas schools.

Program Objectives

- Provide college-experience opportunities for students in grades 2-8
- Create educational programs to encourage academic achievement
- Improve overall grade performance
- Improve reading, math, science and language art skills
- Increase student retention rates
- Provide scholarship awards for students to apply toward a college education

Program Overview

The NLP was established in 1991 as an educational incentive program operated in partnership between Texas Athletics, the City of Austin and Austin Independent School District. The program is now housed within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement in the Longhorn Center for School Partnerships. The NLP serves elementary and middle school students who attend Title I schools in the Austin area. NLP participants have opportunities to earn incentives to attend events on campus by participating in educational programs including:

- DIRT Leadership Program
- College for a Day
- Texas Premiere Football Camp
- Austin ISD Data Collection Accessibility
- Women's Basketball Diversity and Inclusion Program
- Texas Football Leadership Event
- Texas Orange/White Game
- Grand Slam Reading Program
- Academic Incentive Program

NLP students also have access to campus events including:

- Iron Spikes Baseball Clinic
- Hit a Homerun for Education
- Kappa Alpha Psi STAAR Carnival
- Project Come Together
- SpringJam!

University of Texas students and student-athletes serve as tutors at NLP schools, volunteer at NLP events and present eligible students with incentives based upon their academic achievements.

All NLP students participate in the educational incentive component and receive awards for their academics and reading accomplishments from the Whatajob Reading Program. In addition, students can also qualify for a savings account scholarship for each year they participate in the program. The scholarship is held in an account until the student graduates from high school and attends a college or university. If the student attends The University of Texas at Austin, the scholarship will be matched by the program.

By the Numbers

36 participating sites:

30 elementary schools

6 middle schools plus NLP office

Plus **4** additional Austin-area campuses

5,000 students served in 2021-22

988 UT student-volunteer service hours, including 850 tutoring hours by 214 UT students

Youth Engagement Centers

Mission

The University of Texas at Austin Youth Engagement Centers (YEC) target and serve underrepresented students by providing college readiness enrichment activities designed to help them graduate from high school and matriculate to institutions of higher education, including The University of Texas at Austin.

Program Overview

In 1987, UT Outreach began its long-standing presence in five cities: Austin, Dallas, Houston, Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio. With a newly expanded scope for the centers, the DDCE changed the name of UT Outreach Centers to Youth Engagement Centers in the spring of 2020.

The Youth Engagement Centers will continue to provide a comprehensive college preparatory program for selected students in targeted high schools. Group and individual services are designed to enhance a student's academic success in high school and to increase admissibility to their chosen college. Staff members assist students by holding monthly meetings with them on academic subject requirements, SAT/ACT test preparation, college and student financial aid application assistance, as well as other college-related information.

UT YEC serves at least 30 students per grade level at target high school campuses. Eligible students who are selected for the program will receive college-readiness services that are specifically geared toward admission to UT Austin.

Program Elements

UT YEC staff members meet with participating students monthly during advisory periods (or another designated time during the school day) to provide college readiness workshops.

- Weekend and evening college readiness workshops are held at least once per month for all participants.
- Students participate in leadership development activities, community service opportunities, field trips and summer enrichment camps.

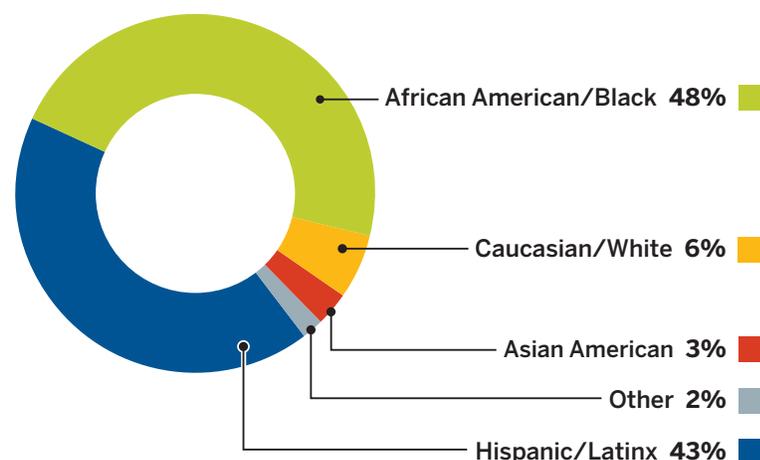
UT Youth Engagement Centers 2021–2022 Participant Demographic Information

UT YEC served a total of **8,164** students in **60** Texas high schools during the 2021-2022 academic year. Seventy-six percent of participants are first-generation college students and 75 percent are from low-income households.

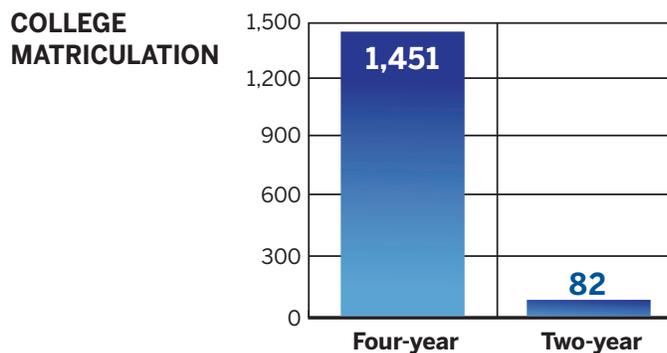
Participating Schools

CENTER	DISTRICT	CAMPUS
Austin	Austin ISD	Anderson, Austin, Bowie, Eastside, LASA, LBJ, Northeast, McCallum
	Pflugerville ISD	Hendrickson, Pflugerville, Connally, Weiss
	Round Rock ISD	Cedar Ridge
Dallas	Adamson, Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy, Carter, Gilliam Collegiate Academy, Jefferson, Cedar Hill, Cedar Hill Collegiate, DeSoto, Duncanville, Kimball, Lancaster, Lincoln, Madison, North Dallas, Roosevelt, Skyline, South Oak Cliff, Sunset, Molina, New Tech, Pinkston, Samuell, Spruce, Wilmer-Hutchins	
Houston	Kashmere, Madison, North Forest, Sam Houston, Waltrip, Washington, Wisdom, Worthing, Yates, Westbury, Sharpstown, Zina Garrison Academy, Spring Branch Northbrook HS, Spring Woods HS	
Rio Grande Valley	McAllen ISD	Memorial, Nikki Rowe
	Mission ISD	Mission HS
	PSJA ISD	Memorial Alamo HS
San Antonio	Brackenridge, Edison, Highlands, Harlandale, Lanier, STEM ECHS	

Program Participants by Ethnicity



Performance Outcomes for High School Seniors



Student Spotlights: YEC-Houston

Misha Bhakta

Junior/Natural Sciences

Misha Bhakta will never forget the day she first stepped foot on the UT Austin campus during her college tour with the Youth Engagement Program (YEC).

"This was my first time seeing UT, and I was completely in awe," says Bhakta, who traveled from Houston to Austin with her fellow YEC students from Madison High School. "So many memories from that day are etched in my mind. I remember seeing a brown girl just like me working on her master's thesis at the PCL. I even got the chance to speak to her and to learn that we came from similar backgrounds. Despite everything, she was able to graduate, and I know that I can do that too."

Now a junior in the College of Natural Sciences, Bhakta is following her career path in the field of health care. She attributes much of her success to her YEC counselors and advisors who guided her every step of the way.

"The YEC provided me with the advice I needed for my career—and for my life in general," Bhakta says. "They believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. Now I know that I can be the change that I want to be."

She is especially grateful for the help she received in securing financial aid and a University Leadership Network (ULN) scholarship.

"They recommended me for the ULN scholarship, which I am incredibly thankful for because it took away a huge financial burden," she says. "Essentially, they opened my eyes to a lot of different resources and opportunities that I otherwise wouldn't know existed."

She especially wants to thank her YEC adviser, Mr. Rose, for his guidance and encouragement throughout the entire process.

"He helped me so much, and I'm really glad he talked me into going on a college campus tour during a time of uncertainty," Bhakta says. "He told me that you have to see the campus to see your future—and he was absolutely right."

Looking toward the future, Bhakta plans to attend graduate school and later work in health care administration with the goal of eliminating persistent disparities that impact marginalized communities.

"It's important we not only focus on curing diseases and treating symptoms," Bhakta says. "When it comes to health care delivery, there are so many policies that affect how people of different demographics are treated. I hope to incorporate this knowledge into a hospital setting to change how we receive our health care."



Sydney Grisson

Sophomore/Natural Sciences

Ever since elementary school, Sydney Grisson was determined to be the first in her family to attend college. In her mind, it was never even a question.

"I remember sitting in assemblies and listening to people talking about college, and it struck me that I really needed to do well in school so I could get on this path," Grisson says. "It was never a maybe but always a certain."

While attending Worthing High School in Sunnyside, Houston, she joined the Youth Engagement Center (YEC) to get all the resources she needed to get through the complicated college admissions process.

"At first, I felt very lost because I didn't have anyone guiding me through this whole process, so this step-by-step help I received from the YEC really took a load off my shoulders."

Grisson is especially grateful for her YEC advisers who helped her through a critical step in the college financing process.

"They were always available to help me through the FAFSA process, which was tricky for me due to my family situation. "Ms. Lawrence was such a big help. She stuck with me through all the troubles, and it was just a comfort to know she was always there to help me out whenever I needed it."

Now, a sophomore in the College of Natural Sciences, Grisson is proud to be a Longhorn.

"The first week at UT was stressful and exhilarating at the same time," Grisson says. "I couldn't be happier anywhere else. I love the atmosphere—it's just so inviting and makes you proud to be here."

After graduation, Grisson plans to pursue a career in occupational therapy. Until then, she plans to soak in every minute of college life on the Forty Acres.

"I feel confident that I can accomplish anything on my own," Grisson says. "While I'm here, I'm going to make connections as much as possible and make the most out of my experience at UT. I'm just really enjoying my time here, and I feel like I've already made it."



Longhorn Center for School Partnerships

Advise TX • Neighborhood Longhorns Program • UT Youth Engagement Centers

Leadership Directory

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Please contact us for more information about the Longhorn Center for School Partnerships or visit us online:

<http://diversity.utexas.edu/schoolpartnerships/>

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