

## ***STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES***

The overall strength of Texas Southern University lies in its ability to meet the needs of a diverse student population. The University provides a distinguished faculty, approximately 56 percent of whom hold terminal degrees. Further, the University has pioneered and continues to develop innovative education programs that offer students the opportunities to build skills in formal classroom settings and to utilize those competencies through engaging in research and service projects. These strengths are derived from the following:

### **Strengths**

- Having a diverse student body, faculty, and staff
- Providing significant comprehensive post-secondary educational opportunities for local residents of the metropolitan Houston area
- Awarding 4,059 degrees over the five-year period, with the majority of the degrees being awarded to African Americans
- Being one of only two Historically Black Colleges/ Universities with law and pharmacy schools
- Providing the largest pool of African-Americans with doctorates and professional degrees in pharmacy and law in the State of Texas
- Providing comprehensive educational services to an under-served population of African Americans and other minority students who have academic deficiencies

- Having access to renowned urban learning centers, such as the Houston Medical Center and NASA, which provide training opportunities for students
- Having a faculty with 56% holding terminal degrees
- Having diverse research projects and outreach centers that are major resources for the community at large, where partnerships encourage the discovery of new bodies of knowledge and bridge theory and application for the resolution of urban problems
- Having the capacity to provide an array of services required of both developmental education and professional education, which demonstrates the unique and continuing need for historically black universities, such as TSU

### **Weaknesses**

Institutional weaknesses have created several problems that encourage the University to work diligently with all of its constituencies to seek workable solutions to those problems. These identified weaknesses include:

- Financial aid issues resulting from non-compliance with federal regulations
- Fiscal issues resulting from audit findings
- Low cohort 6-year graduation rates
- Low retention rates of first-time freshmen
- Capital, deferred, and routine building maintenance

- Marginal level of available cutting-edge technological resources supporting the infrastructure

### **Opportunities**

- Inherent in the special purpose mission of TSU are unique opportunities to seek solutions to problems of the urban environment. Initiatives in the areas of research, community outreach, continuing education, and distance learning are sources of potential growth in enrollment and for the advancement of the University as a major educational resource for the City of Houston and surrounding communities.
- The further implementation and refinement of strategies and activities designed to enhance the intellectual environment in which students work toward undergraduate and graduate degrees in TSU's seven schools/colleges is also an excellent opportunity for growth. The primary goal of such an effort is to provide superlative instruction for capable students, as well as helping other students become acclimated to the pace of scholastic life through orientation programs, tutorials, and academic counseling services. In addition to helping students develop academic competencies, this intellectual climate will provide cultural experiences, increase the retention of sophomores, and foster goodwill to enhance the esprit de corps leading to increased alumni support.

- The opportunity to provide expert training to the Houston business community is also an area of potential growth. This opportunity is enhanced by the on-going nature of the following resources and activities:
  1. The new School of Business facility's, state-of-the-art technology.
  2. The provision of additional training for practicing pharmacists in order to meet the new Phar.D. requirements.
  3. The provision of Teacher re-certification training.
  4. Training and retraining opportunities in technologies that proliferate all areas of the workforce.
  5. The Development of innovative distance learning initiatives, which is currently one of the most promising areas for enrollment growth
  6. Access for students and community constituencies to the Thurgood Marshall Law School Library.
  7. Partnership agreements that enable TSU's students to engage in internships and co-op training programs.
  8. Joint research projects involving TSU's faculty and those of other institutions.
  9. Grants and contracts that provide students with research assistantships in university laboratories.

## **Challenges**

The University is also faced with several unique challenges that must be carefully managed and resolved over the next several years. Specifically they are:

- Maintaining a learning environment that will meet the needs of a diverse student population
- Reversing the present enrollment trend
- Resolving financial aid issues to end the reimbursement process
- Maintaining the quality of academic programs
- Recruiting faculty with terminal degrees
- Keeping pace with rapidly changing technology
- Increasing library holdings and fully equipping it with the cutting edge technology
- Managing a controlled environment to eliminate old audit issues
- Increasing private giving to the University
- Increasing the satisfaction levels of students and other stakeholders
- Demonstrating institutional effectiveness through programs, services, and management
- Upgrading and maintaining academic and non-academic facilities