



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM
FOURTEEN INSTITUTIONS. UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

in support of

Making a Quantum Leap in Student Success

RESPONSE DUE: APRIL 28, 2017

RFP TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
Tuesday, March 21	RFP Launch
Friday, March 31	Info Session Teleconference: 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m., CT
March 21-April 21	Consultation available from System Staff, including preliminary review of proposals
Friday, April 28	Final Proposals are Due
Friday, June 16	Announcements

- Please bring your questions about the RFP process to a 2-hour info session from 1:00-3:00 p.m. CT on March 31 hosted by Dr. Rebecca Karoff, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and other UT System staff. You can be present in Ashbel Smith Hall 206, or participate via teleconference by calling (877) 226-9790; Code 8360023#. All questions and System responses will be posted on the U.T. System Office of Academic Affairs website by Wednesday, April 5.
- To schedule consultation on proposals between March 21-April 14, please contact your assigned System Student Success Partners or Jocelyn Greves, Senior Administrative Associate in the Office of Academic Affairs, at jgreves@utsystem.edu.
- Email your proposal to Dr. Rebecca Karoff as ONE pdf document by 5:00 PM on Friday, April 28.
- "Student Success Quantum Leap Proposal: Your Institution" must be in the email subject line.
- Late proposals will not be accepted.
- All RFP materials are available on the UT System Office of Academic Affairs website at: <http://www.utsystem.edu/student-success-rfp>.

Email Proposals to: Dr. Rebecca Karoff at rkaroff@utsystem.edu

Opportunities for Funding of Institutional Student Success Projects

In February 2017, the University of Texas System Board of Regents approved \$10,000,000 to be awarded to U. T. System academic institutions in support of Chancellor McRaven's Quantum Leap on student success.

Funding will be awarded to the U. T. System academic institutions through a competitive process and along two funding tracks: 1) **Keystone** and 2) **Institution-specific Projects**. The Keystone projects, described below, are a set of promising and game-changing common projects for which institutions may seek funding.

Each proposal must make a compelling case for how it is "Quantum Leap-worthy," i.e., an innovative project that moves institutional approaches to student success in new directions, takes risks, and/or scales up proven initiatives to make dramatic progress in student outcomes. Additionally, all funded projects are expected to address one or more of the three research-identified pillars that form the foundation of *Making a Quantum Leap in Student Success*: Finances, Advising, and Belonging.

**** PROPOSALS MAY ONLY BE SUBMITTED BY ACADEMIC PRESIDENTS AND PROVOSTS.**

Background and Purpose: Making A Quantum Leap in Student Success

In July 2016, Chancellor McRaven identified Student Success as one of his [Quantum Leaps](#), part of a bold set of initiatives designed to strengthen The University of Texas System's ability to provide the citizens of Texas the very best in higher education, research and health care. In recognition that too many students enter U. T. academic institutions underprepared and that certain student outcomes across the U. T. System have remained stagnant and troublingly low, Chancellor McRaven called for a new student success framework by which U. T. System academic institutions and U. T. System Administration would overturn orthodoxies, suspend habitual explanations for why the needle does not move on certain outcomes, take some risks, and problem-solve with unprecedented levels of collaboration, institution-wide engagement, and shared responsibility.

The result is a new blueprint for *Making a Quantum Leap in Student Success*. The design rests on a solid foundation of *quality* and *equity*, ensuring that each and every U.T. student is prepared and positioned to succeed in high-quality learning environments, supported by three pillars that are continuously reinforced with data:

- **Finances:** The University of Texas System will do everything in its power to ensure that no student drops out of college because of finances.
- **Advising:** Every U. T. student will receive the advising needed to follow clear pathways to degree completion and beyond.
- **Belonging:** Every U. T. student will feel like they belong in college. No student would be unable to persist or graduate because of a lack of engagement or a sense of not belonging.

In alignment with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's *60X30 Plan*, the U. T. System will (1) graduate more students, and (2) motivate and facilitate more students' earning degrees *on time*.

The blueprint entails an intentional, collaborative process that includes the convening of Affinity Groups focused on metrics and best practices, more systematic professional development and institution-wide

engagement, and providing resources in support of bold campus projects.

This is a completion agenda with a difference—formulated around commitments we are making to students in the areas of finances, advising and belonging. As such, we are committed to *measuring what we say matters*, so we will expand our metrics and go beyond retention and 4- and 6-year graduation rates.

At the same time, the U. T. System must move the needle on low graduation rates. Funded work must be data-driven in terms of practice and results in order to fulfill the Chancellor’s mandate that we do some things differently, and to make dramatic improvement in student success outcomes.

Two Funding Tracks

- 1) **Keystone Projects** are a set of evidence-driven common projects that have proven effective at universities across the United States and Texas, and for which U. T. System institutions may decide to submit proposals. While designated as U.T. System projects, they are customizable and can be branded by each participating institution. These projects include:
 - a) **Student Success Compacts:** This project will pilot student success compacts or graduation agreements. Common among small, private universities, these agreements are most often articulated as “four-year graduation guarantees” that guarantee students can graduate in four years if they satisfy a number of requirements including: taking thirty semester credit hours per year; maintaining a certain GPA; regularly meeting with their advisor; following a pre-approved degree plan, and additional requirements. In return, students are guaranteed graduation in four years; otherwise the university pays for the additional tuition expense. If students are unable to graduate on-time due to the unavailability of a course, most programs allow college deans or department heads to waive that course requirement, or to propose a reasonable substitute (e.g. independent study). While these programs generally target first-time, full-time freshman, participating U.T. institutions will be encouraged to develop agreements for other student cohorts, including transfer students.
 - b) **Student Engagement Initiatives:** This project will enable participating U.T. institutions to intentionally build up and work to scale high-impact practices for more of their students. High-Impact Practices (HIPs) are engaged learning experiences that occur both in and beyond the classroom, and that have proven to improve student retention and completion while deepening student learning and engagement. When designed and delivered well, these curricular and co-curricular practices have been shown to narrow the achievement gap between racial-ethnic groups. The more common HIPs include learning communities, service learning, on-campus employment, internships, undergraduate research, capstone experiences, and study abroad, among others.
 - c) **Emergency Aid Programs:** In this project, participating U. T. System institutions will allocate emergency aid in the form of grants and other financial assistance to aid students in times of fiscal emergency. While some emergency aid programs are structured to cover education-related costs (tuition, fees and books), others extend to students experiencing personal financial emergencies such as unforeseen auto repairs, medical expenses or evictions. Research suggests that emergency grant aid improves both retention and graduation rates, as well as provides

students with a psychological boost from receiving support from their institution during a time of crisis.

NOTE: In addition to the three Keystone Projects above, and in response to institutional interest, the U.T. System Administration will develop a systemwide proposal to award funding to every academic institution to fund Graduation Help Desks. The funding for the Graduation Help Desks will be subtracted from the total \$10M allocation.

d) **Graduation Help Desks:** This project will establish one-stop shops (virtual or brick and mortar) for students who encounter barriers in the path to timely graduation and have nowhere else to turn. Staff will help students graduate on time by connecting them to the right people and resources across campus. Additionally, establishing a centralized help desk system will allow institutions to identify barriers to graduation that might not otherwise be recognized by individual departments or colleges. This project is modeled after a successful program at U. T. Austin, which has shown strong results in a short period of time.

2) **Institution-specific Projects** are those developed by U. T. System academic institutions and are designed to address their specific needs, student populations, and contexts, identified through their data while also addressing one or more of the initiative pillars of finances, advising, and belonging.

Student Success RFP Timeline

- **RFP Launch:** Tuesday, March 21
- **Info Session:** Friday, March 31, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m., CT.
 - The info session will be led by U.T. System staff who will address questions from institutional representatives.
 - Institutions may participate in person in Ashbel Smith Hall 206, or via teleconference by calling (877) 226-9790; Code 8360023#.
 - All questions and System responses will be posted on the U.T. System Office of Academic Affairs website by Wednesday, April 5.
- **March 21-April 21:** Guidance available from System-Institution Student Success Partners, including preliminary review of proposals.
- **Proposals Due:** Friday, April 28 – email as a single pdf document to Dr. Rebecca Karoff at rkaroff@utsystem.edu.
- **Announcements:** Friday, June 16

Funding Parameters

- **Proposals may only be submitted by academic presidents and provosts.** Proposals submitted by other university offices or personnel will not be accepted.
- In preparing proposals, institutions should indicate clearly how they are “Quantum Leap-worthy,” address one or more of the three student success pillars, and denote whether or not they are one of the Keystone Projects.
- Institutions may submit multiple proposals for different projects, whether an institution-specific or one of the Keystone Projects.

- Additionally, System Administration will develop a shared proposal with funding designated to institutions to mount a Graduation Help Desk.
- Each proposal will be reviewed individually, based on its merits and how it meets the program criteria.
- Multi-year proposals will be accepted for up to three years of funding.
- In-kind institutional contributions will be required.
- Not all proposals will be funded, and some proposals may be funded at amounts lower than requested.
- This is not recurring funding, although both the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor hope to make funding available for institutional student success work annually.
- Project staffing needs can be supported with these monies
- Project infrastructure development can be supported with these monies
- Because of the source of the funding, the travel freeze will **not** impact any hiring institutions write into their proposals.

Proposal Format and Requirements

I. Proposal Format

- Proposals must be submitted on the Student Success Quantum Leap Proposal Template
- Font: Arial size 11
- Maximum page limit: 20 pages
- Page format: single spaced
- Submit as one pdf document
- Submit one proposal per project

II. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be submitted using the Student Success Quantum Leap Proposal Template, which includes the following sections. Detailed instructions are provided on the Proposal Template.

1. Project Definition

- Problem Statement/Issue Being Addressed
- Background & Rationale
- Project Description
 - Addressing the Challenge
 - Alignment to Student Success Quantum Leap
 - Quantum Leap-Worthiness
 - Impact on Students

2. Project Outcomes

- Project Outcomes
- Measuring Success
 - Assessment Plan

2.2.2. Measurements/and or Metrics

3. Costs and Resources
 - 3.1 Resources Needed
 - 3.2 Total Budget Ask by Fiscal Year
 - 3.3 Estimated Budget
 - 3.4 Project Risks
 - 3.5 Long-term Sustainability and Scalability
4. Project Planning
 - 4.1 High-level Timeline for Project
5. Project Participants
 - 5.1 Stakeholders Involved in the Project
6. Engagement Plan
 - 6.1. Engagement Plan

III. Optional Attachments/Supplemental Materials

Your proposal can include 3 additional attachments (in addition to the budget). Examples of supplemental materials include data and descriptions from existing initiatives that you seek to scale or adapt, a logic model as supplement to your assessment plan, and other documentation articulating why your proposed project is meaningful to student success.

RFP Materials on the Web

The materials contained in this document may also be found in the Student Success section of the U.T. System Office of Academic Affairs website at: <http://www.utsystem.edu/student-success-rfp>.

The following materials will be available as downloadable pdfs:

- Request for Proposals
- Proposal Template
- Review Rubric
- Glossary