

**LOOK
NORTH**
UNT 2030

DEVELOP | DISCOVER | DRIVE



WHO WE ARE

UNT's Division of Student Affairs enriches the student experience by offering programs, services and opportunities that support student success in and out of the classroom. With a focus on holistic development, we provide resources that enhance student well-being, foster community engagement, and empower students to thrive academically, socially and professionally. From leadership programs and peer mentorship to wellness initiatives and career readiness, we are committed to helping students grow as individuals while preparing them for success in their future careers. The Division of Student Affairs is a vital partner in shaping the complete student journey at UNT.



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Executive Summary

Strategic Direction Through 2030

In five years, the Division of Student Affairs will assign a mentor to all first-time-in-college (FTIC) and transfer students in their first year, intentionally ensure support for at-risk students, integrate experiential learning and career readiness, and prioritize prevention efforts by removing basic needs barriers for students. Students who have a connection with a person on campus are more likely to stay in college and feel like they belong. These initiatives are specifically created to increase the engagement and retention rates for students. The Division of Student Affairs wants students to engage in career and experiential learning opportunities to enhance post-graduation employment opportunities both by landing a job and having the essential skills to perform well in the job. We believe these bold goals will retain and graduate students who are ready to contribute to the workforce while increasing their social capital.

Unique Role, Contribution, and Strengths

Starting college is one of the most important and transformative moments in a person's life. While the classroom delivers academic instruction, Student Affairs ensures students are supported in every other dimension of their experience. Decades of higher education research consistently show that students who are engaged on campus — through involvement, mentoring, leadership opportunities, and support services — are more likely to persist, earn higher grades and graduate. Simply put, when students feel connected and supported, they succeed at higher rates.

From a student's first visit to campus through graduation and beyond, Student Affairs creates opportunities for connection, discovery, and success — and our data supports our work.

Between freshmen and transfers, over 10,000 students attend Orientation sessions over the course of a summer. In just the last year, 96% of students who attended Freshman Orientation enrolled, with 93% of transfers enrolling as well. That early sense of connection matters because when students feel welcomed and informed, they are more likely to start strong and stay on track.

We intentionally meet students where they are and support the whole student through targeted programs and services. Over 5,200 students connected with the First-Generation Success Center through one-on-one meetings and programs. Those students who engaged had a higher average GPA and retention rate, 12 percentage points higher for FTIC students. Students in programs like Emerald Eagle Scholars and ACCESS Mentoring demonstrated retention rates as high as 93-95%, reinforcing the impact of sustained engagement and peer connection.

Housing and Residence Life facilitated more than 27,000 student interactions designed to build community and support academic success, an important factor, as research shows students who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to remain enrolled.

At the same time, we address our students' basic needs. Programs like the UNT Food Pantry presented by Kroger provide the food security students need to stay focused on their education. They also have access to on-campus health and wellness facilities, including free student counseling.

Equally important, we help students find their place, their niche. With more than 450 student organizations, leadership programs, and service opportunities, students can connect with communities that reflect their interests and ambitions.

And to help students prepare for life after graduation, UNT's Career Center offers individualized coaching, hands-on experiences, and access to employers. With 28 embedded career coaches across campus and thousands of workshops, appointments, and events each year, students are equipped to turn their education into meaningful career pathways.

For the Division of Student Affairs, our contribution is grounded in practice and evidence. When students are supported, engaged, and connected, they are more likely to thrive academically, persist to graduation, and succeed beyond their UNT journey.

Navigating External Forces, Trends, and Contexts

UNT is experiencing budget constraints linked to declining student enrollment. While our division relies less on central funding than some others, many of our programs are supported through student fees, which are resources entrusted to us by the students we serve. As enrollment decreases, the resources generated through these fees also diminish, and we take seriously our responsibility to ensure every student has access to the support they need to thrive at UNT and beyond. In response, the division is proactively realigning funding with priorities, expanding external funding partnerships, and strengthening revenue-generating initiatives to ensure continued support for students.

Strategic Goals (2026-2030)

- **Every student has a person they can turn to.**
- **Every student graduates with the skills their industry demands.**
- **Every student has the resources and support needed to thrive.**

Key Outcomes & Metrics

We establish clear metrics for each goal, building checkpoints to assess progress along the way and adjusting our approach as needed when the evidence calls for it.

Core Metrics: Established Benchmarks that Define University Performance

1st to 2nd year retention

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **77%** | UNT Target (2030): **90%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Every FTIC and transfer student has a mentor in their first year.
- Support holistic student wellbeing by removing basic needs barriers so students can focus on learning, growth, and connection.

4-year graduation rate

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **42%** | UNT Target (2030): **65%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Every FTIC and transfer student has a mentor in their first year.
- 90% of FTIC students and transfers will complete at least one documented, skill-based experience before the end of their first year.
- Support holistic student wellbeing by removing basic needs barriers so students can focus on learning, growth, and connection.

6-year graduation rate

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **61%** | UNT Target (2030): **80%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Every FTIC and transfer student has a mentor in their first year.
- 90% of FTIC students and transfers will complete at least one documented, skill-based experience before the end of their first year.
- Support holistic student wellbeing by removing basic needs barriers so students can focus on learning, growth, and connection.

Annual R&D expenditures

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **\$124M** | UNT Target (2030): **\$250M**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- N/A

Doctoral degrees awarded

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **286** | UNT Target (2030): **300**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- The Division of Student Affairs supports graduate student success by offering wellness services, emergency financial assistance, and opportunities to build professional connections, helping researchers stay enrolled, focused, and productive in their work.

Time to value

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **6 years** | UNT Target (2030): **Decrease time for programs over median**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- Every FTIC and transfer student has a mentor in their first year.
- 90% of FTIC students and transfers will complete at least one documented, skill-based experience before the end of their first year.
- Support holistic student wellbeing by removing basic needs barriers so students can focus on learning, growth, and connection.

Emergent Metrics: Important Dimensions of Our Success that Require New Approaches

Post-graduation placement: Percentage of graduates placed in high-demand occupations or graduate and professional programs

It is essential to have clear, real-world insight into what happens after graduation so we can move beyond assumptions and rely on data-driven evidence. Leveraging a technology platform turns graduate outcomes into actionable insights. At the institutional level, this insight strengthens decision-making and helps identify skill gaps, ensuring that what students learn, inside and outside the classroom, aligns with workforce needs.

From the student perspective, the information is equally powerful, allowing students to see how specific skills connect to industry and make more informed choices about their academic and co-curricular experiences. This supports stronger career readiness and helps students align their education with their goals.

Career-aligned learning: Percentage of academic programs that integrate internships, industry-sponsored projects, or other work-integrated learning experiences

We track both the number and percentage of students participating in internships using data from Handshake and the card swipe system, giving us a more complete view of student engagement. The Career Center supports this work by offering Career Readiness Journeys for the first and second years (third and fourth reside within the colleges), hosting career fairs and mock interviews, and providing individualized career coaching. Together, these experiences help students connect what they are learning in the classroom to real-world employment opportunities and career pathways.

Partnering with Student Success, we provide each student with a dedicated “One Team” — a coordinated network of support that works seamlessly across the entire student journey. This ensures guidance is continuous, connected, and never dependent on who a student happens to encounter.

Within this model, the academic advisor anchors academic planning and progression, the career coach connects experiences to future opportunities, and the peer mentor fosters a strong sense of belonging and persistence.

Awards and recognitions: Prestigious awards, exhibitions, and performances achieved by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni

We track staff achievements through awards received from national and regional associations, and we also celebrate internal excellence through the Division of Student Affairs Awards and Recognitions program at UNT.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: New ventures, startups, and public impact projects launched by students, faculty, and alumni

N/A

Student and alumni engagement: Perceptions of how well UNT prepares graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose

We draw on a comprehensive set of surveys that follow students from enrollment through post-graduation to better understand how effectively UNT prepares students to succeed in their careers and in life:

- Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) – Undergraduate and Graduate
- Strada – Opportunity Index Survey
- WISHES – Student Wellbeing Survey
- Project CEO – Student Leadership Survey
- National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE)
- First Destination Survey – Survey on Post-Graduation Plans
- Graduating Student Survey
- Admitted Not-Enrolled Student Survey
- Non-Returning Student Survey

Unit-Level Metrics: Other Important Priority Metrics Tracked at the Unit Level

- **Card swipe engagement data:** Card swipe data gives us a real-time, objective view of how students engage across campus, not just who signs up for programs, but who shows up, how often, and where. This helps us understand patterns of involvement and access. These swipes extend beyond DSA and include academic departments as well. We combine card swipe events, Handshake swipes for career events, and the Recreation Center swipes for wellness data.

The data becomes a powerful decision-making tool. We can see which student populations are highly involved and where gaps exist, allowing us to target outreach and reduce barriers to participation.

One result is the high support predictive retention model, allowing us to identify students at risk of stopping out or dropping out, and provide targeted early intervention.

The information is also used as a comparative year-over-year analysis to determine program success. By linking engagement frequency to outcomes like retention or academic performance, we can better understand a program's impact and invest accordingly. In addition, we're able to identify patterns in swipe data — like time of day, location, and repeat participation — helping refine programming, adjust schedules, and design experiences that better meet student needs.

- **Counseling Center and Student Health Center data:** Data from Counseling and Testing Services and the Student Health and Wellness Center provides a real-time view of student wellness trends across UNT, helping us understand both immediate needs and broader patterns over time. By tracking how many students use services and their reasons for seeking care, we can identify emerging trends and adjust outreach, programming, and resources accordingly.

In Student Counseling specifically, we also measure changes in symptoms over time, allowing us to assess how effective our interventions are. We track the number of students accessing services, and also whether students are experiencing meaningful improvement as a result.

Together, this data allows us to take a more proactive and evidence-based approach, informing decisions about staffing, services, and prevention efforts while ensuring we are addressing the most pressing wellness needs that directly impact students' ability to stay enrolled and succeed.

- **Logic model assessment (vary in method and metric):** Measurement is essential to understanding whether our efforts are making a meaningful difference for students. The use of logic models helps us map how our programs and services lead to specific outcomes, ensuring our work is intentional, aligned, and focused on impact, not just activity.

Across the division, we use more than 50 departmental and program-level logic models to guide this work. These models serve as a framework to intentionally connect our efforts to durable skills and the wellness wheel.

Aligning with competency frameworks ensures students develop the career-ready skills employers value — like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking — while incorporating the wellness wheel ensures we are supporting the whole student by addressing the physical, emotional, social, and financial factors that influence success.

Through this approach, we can measure what works and what doesn't, allowing us to continually refine programs and focus on those with the greatest impact. In addition, we can clearly demonstrate through evidence how Student Affairs contributes to student success.

Goals in Action

Develop the potential of UNT students, faculty, staff, and community members

Every first-time-in-college (FTIC) and transfer student has a mentor in their first year.

- Strengthen and expand existing mentoring programs across the division while identifying and addressing areas where support is limited, inconsistent, or not reaching the students who need it most.
- Ensure that all FTIC students identified as at risk — those who have a higher likelihood of not continuing their education — are connected to support systems and resources within their first semester.
- Enhance the existing intervention systems and data tracking practices to identify students in need of support and respond more effectively.
- Implement consistent, division-wide training to ensure staff have the knowledge and tools to support students at risk of withdrawing from the university before completing their education.
- Develop clear, outcomes-focused approaches to intervention that prioritize student success and measurable impact.

Support holistic student wellbeing by increasing use of and access to basic needs, resources, and education so students can focus on learning, growth, and connection.

- Deliver the bystander-intervention program for sexual assault prevention.
- Embed basic-needs screenings in coaching and mentoring sessions to proactively identify and address barriers to student success.
- Train faculty and staff to recognize signs of basic needs insecurity and make appropriate, timely referrals to support services.
- Use predictive modeling early interventions to identify students at risk of stopping out due to financial instability.
- Partner with local housing authorities to provide emergency short-term housing options for students experiencing instability.
- Establish relationships with regional food banks for regular on-campus deliveries in coordination with the UNT Food Pantry presented by Kroger.

90% of FTIC students and transfers will complete at least one documented, skill-based experience before the end of their first year.

- Centralize communication for all Student Affairs experiential learning opportunities to ensure students have clear, consistent access to available options.

- Leverage technology platforms like Salesforce to create a comprehensive student skills inventory, allowing the ability to track career-ready competency and skills, document student upskilling opportunities, and establish a quality control plan to ensure accuracy, consistency, and continuous improvement.
- Expand co-curricular project-based and micro-engagement opportunities and develop incentives to encourage student participation.
- Leverage technology platforms like card-swipe data and Salesforce to track how and when students engage with the Career Center, creating a more complete picture of their involvement over time. This allows us to connect each interaction to holistic career development support.

Discover new knowledge and insights that bridge traditional academic disciplines

We leverage a coordinated data infrastructure, including tools like Salesforce and engagement tracking systems, alongside division-wide logic models and program evaluation practices to generate meaningful insights into student success. Salesforce plays a critical role in this work by allowing us to track outreach efforts to students, particularly those at higher risk of not persisting, and monitor follow-up, engagement, and outcomes over time. This information helps us understand which outreach strategies are most effective and where additional support is needed.

Logic models guide how we connect programs and services to measurable outcomes, while ongoing evaluation helps us identify patterns, gaps, and high-impact practices. Engagement tools, such as card swipe data, further inform how and where students are engaging across campus.

We are also expanding access to post-graduation outcomes data through technology platforms like Steppingblocks, enabling deeper understanding of how student experiences connect to career pathways.

Together, these efforts move us beyond isolated data points to a more integrated, evidence-based approach, generating insights into what works and using that knowledge to continuously improve practice within the Division of Student Affairs and inform decision-making across UNT.

Drive creative advances, partnerships, and new models of higher education

The Division of Student Affairs will continue to pursue strategic grant partnerships that advance student success. We currently collaborate with funders such as Kroger to support our food pantry; the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board through the Texas Leadership Scholars Program and the Data to Action project (in partnership with the Urban Institute); and the Moody Foundation to empower students with experience in foster care. These initiatives represent just a few of the innovative, statewide partnerships driven by our division to enhance student support. We will continue to expand these relationships and refine our practices to center student development, wellbeing, and long-term growth.