



## LEAP Texas

### Statement of Purpose

**Mission:**

The mission of LEAP Texas is to provide a structure through which Texas public and private institutions of higher education can communicate, organize, and develop plans and policy recommendations that address their common interests of student success and the improvement of higher education in Texas.

**Vision:**

To provide Texas students with consistent, high-quality higher education through implementation of outcomes-focused general education, authentic assessment, high impact educational practices, inclusive excellence, improved access to higher education, and similar initiatives.

**Areas of Activity:**

The activities listed in Table 1 are examples of the types of issues that might be addressed by LEAP Texas through conferences, meetings, workshops, websites, chat-rooms, blogs, and other types of face-to-face or on-line communications as appropriate and feasible.

**Table 1**

<b>Areas of Activity</b>	
<b>LEAP Focus</b>	<b>Texas Context</b>
<b>Improve General Education</b>	<p><u>Leverage the state core curriculum for overall improvement in undergraduate education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alignment of learning outcomes</li> <li>▪ Course development</li> <li>▪ Orientation of faculty</li> <li>▪ Development and sharing of ideas and materials</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitate Authentic Assessment</b>	<p><u>Create capacity for inter-institutional collaboration in robust and authentic assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rubrics (VALUE, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Portfolio-based assessment</li> <li>▪ Strengthen common elements of assessment</li> <li>▪ Institutionally-based assessments</li> <li>▪ Program assessments</li> <li>▪ Course-based assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Foster High-Impact Practices</b>	<p><u>Embed high-impact practices in the undergraduate curriculum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First-year seminars</li> <li>▪ Common intellectual experiences</li> <li>▪ Learning communities</li> <li>▪ Writing intensive courses</li> <li>▪ Collaborative assignments and projects</li> <li>▪ Undergraduate research</li> <li>▪ Diversity</li> <li>▪ Global learning/study abroad</li> <li>▪ Service-learning</li> <li>▪ Internships</li> <li>▪ Capstone courses/experiences</li> </ul>
<b>Advance Inclusive Excellence</b>	<p><u>Support and improve existing Texas initiatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Closing the Gaps</li> <li>▪ Texas Higher Education Plan</li> <li>▪ Standardization of courses and programs to facilitate transfer</li> <li>▪ Low-producing programs</li> </ul>
<b>Address Underserved Student Achievement</b>	<p><u>Increase levels of participation in higher education state-wide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate transfer between 2-year and 4-year institutions</li> <li>▪ Encourage expanded funding of grants and scholarships</li> <li>▪ Integrate diversity, equity, and student success activities</li> </ul>
<b>Develop Outreach Plans</b>	<p><u>Challenge weak public support for public higher education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance state-wide dialogues with key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Increase public awareness of the economic and social importance of higher education</li> <li>▪ Develop means to inform the public and state office holders about key higher education policy issues</li> <li>▪ Initiate contacts with business leaders and public interest groups</li> </ul>

## **LEAP Texas Bylaws**

### **I. Membership:**

Membership is open to any institution of higher education in Texas, whether public or private, 2-year or 4-year. The Chief Academic Officer at each institution is responsible for establishing and renewing membership annually and for designating the institutional liaison, who will normally be the institution's voting member.

### **II. Representation:**

Each member institution may have one voting member of LEAP Texas. There is no limit on the number of non-voting representatives who may attend meetings or otherwise participate in LEAP Texas activities.

### **III. Officers:**

Officers of LEAP Texas are:

Chairperson

Vice-Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

Board of Directors comprised of 6 representatives from 2-year colleges and 6 from 4-year institutions. Elected officers function as voting members of the Board of Directors, except for the Chairperson, who votes only to break a tie. Elected officers also function as the Executive Committee of LEAP Texas.

### **IV. Terms of Office:**

Officers will serve 2-year terms with the option of reelection for one additional term.

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will serve terms beginning on 1 June of even-numbered years and the Secretary and Treasurer will serve terms beginning on 1 June of odd-numbered years. Board of Directors terms will be evenly divided between even numbered years (3 two-year and 3 four-year) and odd numbered years (3 two-year and 3-four year).

The terms of officers and members of the Board of Directors expire on May 31, with newly elected officers to assume office on June 1.

### **V. Elections:**

The LEAP Texas Chairperson should issue a call for nominations in January of each year with a deadline of March 1, with an election to be held no later than April 30. Each member institution is entitled to one vote per office. Candidates and members should be informed of the election results as soon as practicable after April 30. The Secretary prepares and distributes the ballots to member institution representatives and collects the returned ballots. Elections may be conducted by mail or via secure electronic means. The Secretary will convey the election results to the LEAP Texas Chairperson, who will inform the candidates and member institution representatives of the results. The timeline for elections is set up so that new officers come in at the beginning of summer. This gives them time over the summer to refine agendas and plan activities for the coming academic year.

A simple majority of the vote is required for election of officers. In the event there are more than two candidates for a position and no one receives more than 50 percent of the vote, there shall be a run-off between the two contenders who received the largest percentage of the vote.

In the event a vacancy should occur prior to the conclusion of a board member's term ends, then a special election may be called. If there are six months or more remaining in the vacated term, a special election should be called. Procedures for the special election are the same as those for a regular election, but with a compressed timeframe. Four weeks to gather nominations and an additional two weeks for voting.

For a vacancy that occurs with less than six months remaining in the term, then the position can be left vacant or filled by appointment. The decision to leave the position vacant or fill by appointment is left to the discretion of the Chair. If the Chair decides the position should be filled by appointment, then the Chair will make a recommendation, which would be approved by the Executive Committee of the Board.

#### **VI. Responsibilities of the Officers:**

The Chairperson of LEAP Texas is responsible for calling meetings of the Board of Directors, setting the agenda (in collaboration with the other Executive Committee members), and presiding over such meetings. The Chairperson may also call a meeting of the general membership at such times as the officers (including the Board of Directors) so request. The Chairperson will work with the other officers to identify activities that will further the interests of the organization and help to recruit individuals to take responsibility for those activities. The Chairperson is authorized to negotiate and sign contracts, memoranda of understanding, and other agreements between LEAP Texas and other organizations, institutions, businesses, and individuals, subject to approval of the Board of Directors.

The Vice-Chairperson is the Chairperson-elect and will assume that position when the current term of the Chairperson expires. The Vice-Chairperson presides over meetings in the absence of the chair and also performs other duties of the chair when so requested. The Vice-Chairperson supports the Chairperson in setting priorities for the organization's activities and facilitating their completion.

The Secretary takes minutes at Board of Directors Meetings and at meetings of the general membership and distributes those minutes to members of the Board and, when requested, to the general membership of the organization. The Secretary may also be called upon to communicate other types of information to the Board and/or the general membership such as meeting announcements, funding opportunities, news items, and other such items as requested by the Chairperson or the Board of Directors. The Secretary conducts the annual election of officers. The Secretary shall communicate regularly with the Webmaster to ensure that information on the site is current.

The Treasurer maintains the accounts of the organization. This includes collecting and depositing annual membership fees and dispersing payments as requested by the Board of Directors or its officers. The Treasurer keeps itemized records of all income and disbursements from the organization's accounts and prepares an annual financial statement to be distributed to the Board of Directors on or before January 31 of the succeeding year that summarizes the financial status of the organization. The Treasurer, in cooperation with the officers, will send invoices for the annual membership fee to all member institutions and prospective member institutions no later than September 1 of each year. The Treasurer is responsible for filing any Internal Revenue Service or other tax reports as may be required. The Treasurer will also maintain continuous communication with any outside institution with which LEAP Texas may have agreements for establishment and oversight of a dedicated account for receivables and expenses for the purpose of monitoring the status of such accounts.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the elected officers of LEAP Texas: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Executive Committee will set the dates for semi-annual meetings of the organization's Board of Directors and may authorize expenditures. The Executive Committee also reviews and provides preliminary approval (pending final approval by the Board of Directors) for any agreements with other organizations that may be negotiated by the Chairperson.

#### **VII. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors:**

1. Implement the Mission and Vision of LEAP Texas and the will of its membership through its approval, monitoring, and advocacy of the organization's services and programs.
2. Review the Mission and Vision statements periodically and recommend amendments as appropriate.
3. Ensure that the organization's resources are sufficient and effectively managed to support its normal operations, services, and programs.
4. Propose, approve, and evaluate the organization's policies, budgets, services, and programs.
5. Approve all contracts, agreements, and other relationships with public or private institutions, organizations, or other entities.
6. Prepare an annual report on the previous year's activities and lay out a plan for activities during the coming year. The plan should include a summary of the Treasurer's annual report to the board as well as a proposed budget to cover the cost of activities proposed for the current year. Approve appointment of a Webmaster, who is responsible for developing and maintaining the LEAP Texas web presence and related informational media for the organization under the general supervision of the Secretary

#### **VIII. Meetings:**

The Board of Directors meets no less than twice per year at a time and location to be designated by the Chairperson. Meetings of the general membership are held at least once per year at a time and location to be designated by the Chairperson. In addition to considering the business of the organization, general meetings may include a program of presentations and/or activities that further the agenda of LEAP Texas and its membership.

Activities intended to train or inform the membership, faculty from 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education, and others may be held at any time. These may be organized and conducted by members of the Board of Directors or they may be planned and conducted by any member institution or its liaison. All such activities must be approved in writing by the Board of Directors before sponsorship may be attributed to LEAP Texas.

**IX. Annual Membership Fee:**

**Table 2.**

Institutional Size	Base Fee + Fee Added	Total
<b>Small Institutions UG FTE &lt;10,000</b>	\$500 base + \$0	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Medium Institutions UG FTE 10,000-20,000</b>	\$500 base + \$500	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Large Institutions UG FTE &gt;20,000</b>	\$500 base + \$900	<b>\$1,400</b>

All memberships are institutional. To qualify for membership in LEAP Texas an institution must provide evidence of current accreditation status by an institution-level accreditor recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Fees are determined by undergraduate full-time-student-equivalent enrollment by accredited institution.

The annual membership fee is payable on or before September 30 of each year (invoices to be mailed no later than September 1).

**X. Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws:**

These bylaws, including the Statement of Purpose, will require a 2/3 vote of the member institutions. A similar vote is required to amend the bylaws.

Amendments may be proposed by the Board of Directors or by a group of ten or more member institutions. Proposed amendments must be circulated to the member institutions no later than two weeks before an election is held.

For voting purposes a member institution is one that has paid the annual membership fee for the current year and nominated an individual to serve as the institutional liaison.

Votes on amendments to the bylaws may be held at a called meeting of the membership (with provisions for absentee voting) or voting may be by mail or electronic ballot at any time.