DIGITAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM OF TEXAS

Ensuring Equity through Collaboration

DIGITEX
DIGITAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM OF TEXAS

STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2024
Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to share the new strategic plan of the Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas (DigiTex). Founded in 1998 by the Texas Association of Community Colleges as the Virtual College of Texas, DigiTex assists Texas community colleges in providing Texas learners an education without barriers, focusing on digital educational opportunities, resources, and services.

Since our inception, we have hosted a statewide inter-institutional platform for course sharing among community colleges. The changing nature of online learning and other needs at our member institutions to serve students (following a nationwide trend) necessitated, a decade ago, an expansion of our services. For example, while we have continued supporting course sharing, we also now lead the Texas Quality Matters Consortium, which provides research-based tools for implementation of quality in online course design.

The passing of our twentieth anniversary has seemed an opportune time to again evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of our services, and this strategic plan represents the culmination of that six-month process. Its goals and strategies, and the metrics to measure their success, are ambitious, but I think they will help support a more sustainable future for DigiTex.

The rapidly shifting landscape of higher education requires bold action. I am honored to be able to lead this action to, as our new tagline states, ensure equity through collaboration.

Judith Sebesta, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas

Mission

The Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas assists Texas community colleges in providing learners an education without barriers through high quality digital educational opportunities, resources, and services that help students succeed. DigiTex does this by functioning as a consortium that:
  • Provides members with access to research and emerging best practices in technology-enhanced education.
  • Helps members identify and implement innovative solutions that will make higher education more affordable and accessible for all Texans.
  • Facilitates collaboration among Texas community colleges.
  • Leverages the collective power of Texas community colleges to improve institutional efficiency.
  • Provides stakeholders with relevant and timely information on Texas community college online education.

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Ensuring Equity through Collaboration

The Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas (formerly Virtual College of Texas) believes that education is transformative and is committed to helping its member institutions adapt to a rapidly changing higher education landscape that prioritizes learner equity. DigiTex will be the “go to” source to analyze optimal digital education outcomes, ensure quality, and boost learner success. We will be recognized across the state and nation for our excellence in service, innovation, and collaboration.

Values

Quality
We believe that all Texas community college students should have access to high quality courses and programs.

Learner success
We are committed to assisting Texas community colleges as they enhance their internal capacity to help learners succeed.

Community and collaboration
Because we believe that Texas community colleges are stronger together, we are dedicated to developing and maintaining a community where educators can learn from and support each other as well as work together to leverage digital resources to best serve Texas learners.

Organizational and institutional efficiency
Because we believe accountability is critical, we are committed to being good stewards of our resources by being as efficient as possible and helping Texas community colleges more effectively leverage state resources.

Innovation
We believe that technology is always changing and are committed to helping Texas community colleges understand the most promising innovations.

Service
Because we exist primarily to serve Texas community colleges and their students, all of our efforts should answer a core question: “Does this help Texas community college students succeed?”
Goals

GOAL ONE: GUIDE TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED EDUCATION THAT RESULTS IN STUDENT SUCCESS.

Key Strategy 1.1: Develop a collaborative environment in which members can share resources and information on best practices for student access and success.

1.1.1 The DigiTex web site will provide members with a variety of resources related to learner access and success.
KPI: By 2020, a reconfigured DigiTex website will include a routinely updated section that connects members with information on the latest research on technology-assisted learner success.
KPI: By 2021, the majority of surveyed DigiTex members will report using the website to access information and research on technology assisted learner success.

1.1.2 By participating in DigiTex-sponsored discussion boards, listserves, and other electronic platforms, members will share resources and promising practices on improving student access and success.
KPI: By 2020, DigiTex will regularly publish at least one case study a year that highlights promising practices around student access and success utilized at Texas colleges and universities. The emphasis will be placed on those practices that focus on learning technologies.

Key Strategy 1.2: Provide members with access to professional development opportunities that will improve the quality of technology-enhanced education at Texas community colleges.

1.2.1 DigiTex will assist members in understanding the role of open educational resources (OER) in improving student access and success.
KPI: By fall 2019, DigiTex will begin providing member institutions with access to professional development on how to best develop and/or deploy open educational resources as a way of improving student access and success.
KPI: By fall 2019, DigiTex will begin hosting an annual statewide conference on OER.
1.2.2 DigiTex will determine the largest professional development needs for technology-assisted instruction and will have created a professional development strategic plan designed to provide institutions with high-quality, on-demand professional development opportunities, including the possibility of microcredentials leading to a statewide certificate.

KPI: By fall 2020, DigiTex will have determined the greatest professional development opportunities at member institutions. Utilizing these prioritized opportunities, DigiTex will have a list of digital professional development resources, including through partner organization STARLINK.

KPI: By fall 2021, DigiTex will begin offering a series of webinars on best practices in technology-assisted instruction and digital education resources.

KPI: By 2022, DigiTex will develop and offer at least one online microcredential on best practices in technology-assisted instruction.

GOAL TWO: ADVOCATE THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND THE NATION FOR TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED EDUCATION THAT WILL IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AT TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

Key Strategy 2.1: Regularly assemble and disseminate research on the state of online education at Texas community colleges.

2.1.1 DigiTex will assemble and publish an annual report on the state of online education at Texas community colleges.

KPI: Starting in spring 2020, DigiTex will publish its first annual report on the state of online education at Texas community colleges.

Key Strategy 2.2: Tell the story of how Texas community colleges are using technology to improve educational quality, affordability, accessibility, and student success to meet the state’s higher education strategic plan, 60x30TX.

2.2.1 DigiTex staff will present on projects and initiatives at state and national conferences and meetings.

KPI: In 2019, the Executive Director and staff will present on DigiTex projects/initiatives at two state conferences and three national conferences.

KPI: Starting in 2020, staff will present on DigiTex projects/initiatives at six state or national conferences each fiscal year.

2.2.2 DigiTex staff will author blogs, articles, and other publications that highlight DigiTex activities, projects, and/or initiatives.

KPI: In 2019, the Executive Director will author at least one national blog post on DigiTex activities/initiatives.

KPI: Starting in 2020, staff will author at least three national and/or state publications on DigiTex activities/initiatives each fiscal year.
GOAL THREE: LEVERAGE ECONOMIES OF SCALE AND COLLECTIVE RESOURCES TO HELP TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PROVIDERS OF HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

Key Strategy 3.1: Develop strategic partnerships with non-profits and other organizations that can assist members in offering affordable, high-quality programs that improve student access and success.

3.1.1 DigiTex will annually evaluate its strategic partnerships to ensure they are effective use of resources that meet the needs of its members.
KPI: In 2019, DigiTex will re-evaluate the Host-Provider Model for inter-institutional sharing of courses and explore a partnership for increased efficiency and ROI for statewide course-sharing.
KPI: In 2019, staff will develop and implement an annual evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of all DigiTex organizational and business partnerships.
KPI: Starting in 2019, DigiTex will enter into at least one strategic partnership each fiscal year.

Key Strategy 3.2: Collect and disseminate research on best and promising technologies and practices that will improve both the affordability of education and student success.

3.2.1 DigiTex will provide members with information on open educational resources (OER), the benefits of adopting OER, and best practices in developing and implementing an institutional OER policy.
KPI: In 2019, DigiTex will begin sponsoring and publishing a bi-annual survey of OER creation, adoption, usage, and policy across Texas.

3.2.2 DigiTex will provide members with information on best and promising technologies and practices that will improve both the affordability of education as well as student success.
KPI: Starting in 2020, DigiTex will publish at least two white papers on best and promising technologies and practices that will improve the affordability of education and student success each year.

3.2.3 DigiTex will provide information, resources, and assistance to members as they work towards developing high quality and sustainable learning models.
KPI: By 2021 60 percent of Texas community colleges will be actively participating in the Texas Quality Matters Consortium, and by 2022 75 percent of Texas community colleges will be actively participating.
KPI: By December of 2020, the Texas Quality Matters Consortium will include at least ten public or private non-profit Texas four-year colleges or universities.
KPI: By 2021, DigiTex will develop and implement a grant program to support the development of high-quality open educational resources for career and technical education created by Texas community college faculty.

KPI: DigiTex will develop and launch a new initiative focused on the development, usage, and sustainability of high quality open educational resources by 2022.

KPI: By 2023, Texas community colleges will offer at least 10 “zero textbook cost” certificates or degrees using OER as a result of DigiTex support/programs.

GOAL FOUR: BECOME A DATA-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION THAT IS A GOOD STEWARD OF ALL OF ITS RESOURCES AND THAT EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATES WITH ITS MEMBERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.

Key Strategy 4.1: Develop organizational capacity in research and data analytics that supports organizational data-driven decision making.

4.1.1 DigiTex will develop internal capacity in data analytics.
KPI: By fall 2019, DigiTex will hire a staff member with expertise in educational research methods and data analytics.

4.1.2 DigiTex will review and align all internal data collection with research best practices.
KPI: By December 2019, DigiTex will have completed a review of all internal data collection policies and procedures and will have a comprehensive organizational data policy in place.
KPI: By July 2020, DigiTex will have aligned all internal data collection policies and procedures with best practices.

Key Strategy 4.2: Utilize research and data to identify and acquire multiple revenue streams that amplify Texas’ investment in DigiTex.

4.2.1 DigiTex will complete an environmental scan that will provide analysis of the state of digital consortia.
KPI: By July 2019, DigiTex will have completed an environmental scan of the state of digital consortia in the United States that includes recommendations for strategic action.

4.2.2 DigiTex will diversify its revenue streams.
KPI: By the end of FY 2020, DigiTex will add at least one new revenue stream and at least two additional streams in FY2022.
Key Strategy 4.3: Ensure that DigiTex staffing is adequate and aligned with its mission.

4.3.1 The Executive Director will annually assess current staffing capacity and needs to assure that human resources are best leveraged for organizational success.
KPI: By July 2019, the Executive Director will complete a review of existing staff capacity and organizational needs.
KPI: By October 2019, the Executive Director will take any measures needed to realign human resources with organizational needs.

Key Strategy 4.4: DigiTex will effectively communicate and market its activities to its membership and other key stakeholders across the state and nation.

4.4.1 Texas community college leaders and other key stakeholders will be aware of DigiTex activities and the role and value that DigiTex provides Texas community colleges and students.
KPI: By July 2019, DigiTex will create an Advisory Council of community college leaders to advise and assist the Executive Director on the consortium’s policies and activities, to advocate for the community colleges which comprise the membership, and to increase partnership and collaboration among member institutions.
KPI: By December 2020, the Executive Director will have met individually with senior leadership at a majority of Texas community college districts to discuss DigiTex’s mission, vision, and strategic plan.

4.4.2 DigiTex will have a comprehensive marketing and communication plan in place that will be reviewed annually for effectiveness.
KPI: By September 2019, DigiTex will have completed a rebranding process that will include a new name and logo.
KPI: By November 2019, DigiTex will have a new website which will result in both increases in usage and user satisfaction.
KPI: By January 2021, 50 percent of Texas community college presidents and other key stakeholders will report familiarity with DigiTex’s mission and vision, and 35 percent of Texas community college presidents and other key stakeholders will see value in membership.

For more information, please contact:
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