



Growin

In 2009, Chancellor Kent Hance and the Board of Regents at Texas Tech University approved a new strategic plan, which, among other objectives, set a goal to increase student enrollment to 40,000 by 2020.

When the goal was initially set, the total enrollment was recorded as 30,049 students. In order to reach this goal, enrollment would need to increase by nearly 1,000 students every year. During the 10 years prior, Texas Tech's enrollment increased by only 4,264.

To engage and accommodate the potential 10,000 new students joining the Red Raider family, Texas Tech had to develop more aggressive recruiting techniques and a plan.

"I think this is great because now, even more students will have the opportunity to earn a really good education through Texas Tech," said Dr. Courtney Meyers, assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications.

Increased enrollment creates more opportunities for students. Cindy Akers, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural

Recourses for the university, said that increased enrollment boosts funding, research opportunities, and graduate student positions.

Although increased enrollment is an excellent opportunity for Texas Tech, it has created some challenges.

"We have to think differently," Akers said. "We can't reach 40,000 students exactly like we are now. Changes have to be made."

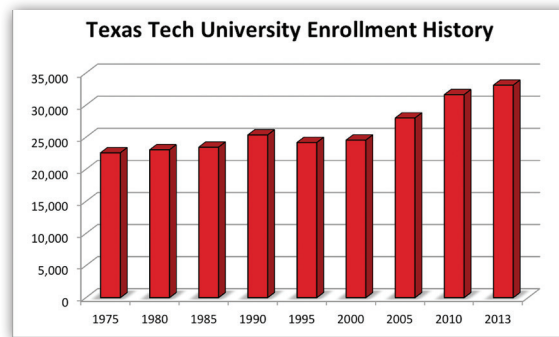
Among these challenges is having enough faculty and staff to support a larger student body.

Meyers said that in order to increase enrollment, new faculty and staff must be hired. She said that without this additional help, professors will not have the time to complete their research or meet the needs of each individual student.

In response to the larger demand of teachers, the university developed funds for hiring new faculty. Campus-wide, there have been approximately 130 faculty members hired. However, the Department of

Agricultural Education and Communication has not had the opportunity to increase faculty.

"If we do hire someone, we have no idea where we would put that person," Meyers said. "Space is always an issue."





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Not only is limited space a challenge for future faculty and staff members, but also for the classes held within the department. Many professors have moved their classes out of their traditional classroom, and occasionally even out of their traditional buildings to find classrooms large enough to accommodate students. Akers said that although agricultural students are not used to the idea of using other buildings, it is something that had to be done.

Students have also expressed some concern about the parking situation. Most CASNR students use the commuter west parking lot located south of the Animal and Food Sciences building. Unfortunately, due to the increase of vehicles on campus, many students did not receive a parking spot. The waiting list for commuter west compromises more than 1,300 students.

The city of Lubbock and Texas Tech have worked together to organize an effective bus system. Meyers said the bus system navigating to nearby apartments has become more efficient so more parking is available for those who do not live near campus.

Students have also shown concern about the availability of scholarships. With the increase in enrollment, students are worried that scholarship donations will be divided among all current students to allow funding for everyone.

“We are very proud of the fact that many of our students are on scholarship,” Meyers said. “An increasing number of students means that we have to



ramp up our scholarships and funding so that we have it to share with our wonderful students.”

The rapid enrollment increase is also creating exciting challenges. Akers said there has been discussion about the development of new degree plans. She said they may be a combination of current degree plans or may be completely new.

Texas Tech is continuing to grow. Although this is creating some new trials for CASNR and the department, administration intends to keep enforcing the per-established values and goals.

“One thing that we do stand for in CASNR is that you are not a number,” Akers said. “If we have to work harder to meet the needs of the increasing number of students, we will. We love doing it, and we aren’t going to stop.”

All in all, Texas Tech, CASNR and the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications are excited about the challenges, and the changes being made to accommodate them.

“I’m excited to work at a university and in a college where we have the opportunity to address the challenges pertaining to growth,” Meyers said. **T**

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