THE BURKHART CENTER FOR AUTISM EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
STRATEGIC PLAN 2005

MISSION STATEMENT
The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research provides research-based programming to enhance the quality of life for families and students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Additionally, the Center studies and disseminates best practice methods for transitioning individuals with autism spectrum disorders from secondary school to adulthood.

VISION STATEMENT
The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research strives to be the Autism Spectrum Disorder Resource Center of choice for families, professionals, and support networks.

VALUES
The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research identifies the following values:

1. The work of The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research will result in easy-to-use techniques and materials for families, current university students, and professionals.
2. Information developed for dissemination by The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research will student needs and strengths.
3. The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research will engage in research to determine if families, current students, and professionals are benefiting from products, programs, lectures, networks, and research.
4. Families, current students, and professionals will look to The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research as a leader in easily-accessed information, programs and networks.
5. The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research will establish partnerships within the Texas Tech University and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Centers to facilitate a combined effort of these resources to increase opportunities for families, current students, and professionals to obtain information in the most productive and efficient manner.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
Goal 1: Access and Diversity- To improve access to research-based, practical information concerning methods for educating and living with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Objective 1.1: To provide families with easily accessible, research-based information and techniques.
Objective 1.2: To involve community members in learning about methods for working and living with persons with ASD.
Objective 1.3: To engage students in the TTU system in developing knowledge about teaching and living with persons with ASD.

Benchmarks:
- Obtain positive feedback in the forms of surveys, interviews, and personal correspondence.
• Offer four events during the academic year.

**Strategies**

• Continue the Burkhart Lectureship and extended hands-on workshops funded through the Jim and Jere Lynn Burkhart Endowment in Autism Education and presented annually,
• Redesign The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research Website (currently operating as the Burkhart Project for Autism Education website),
• Increase capacity through graduate and undergraduate education courses emphasizing research-based practices for use with students with ASD,
• Create Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for inservice teachers using modules one, two, and three,
• Develop and disseminate of two additional modules (Executive Functioning and Transition to Adulthood) in addition to the three modules already developed or currently under development,

**Goal 2: Academic Excellence** -To prepare quality educators at the undergraduate and graduate level as well as in the community to educate individuals with ASD.

Objective 2.1: To develop CEU credits available online.
Objective 2.2: To create increased opportunities for undergraduate students to work directly with students with ASD.
Objective 2.3: To engage students in masters action research projects.
Objective 2.4: To implement the Burkhart Doctoral Fellowship to fund a doctoral student to study ASD.
Objective 2.5: To select the Burkhart Professor in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

**Benchmarks:**

• Develop three CEU courses.
• Identify and use ten classrooms with ASD mentor teachers.
• Complete 30 action research projects in five years.
• Support two doctoral fellows in five years.

**Strategies:**

• Engage masters students in action research concerning strength-based assessment or best practices in instruction in the public school through graduate scholarships,
• Fund a doctoral fellow to study autism education and produce dissertation research that detailing the practices of The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research,
• Develop the job description for the Jere Lyn Burkhart Endowed Professor,
• Seek a Jere Lyn Burkhart Endowed Professorship candidate.

**Goal 3: Resources and Infrastructure** -To obtain resources to achieve the mission and vision of the center through external funding.
Objective 3.1: To locate a physical room for the Center demonstrating College of Education support.
Objective 3.2: To identify private donors to obtain materials for Center.
Objective 3.3: To identify Foundations to obtain funding for staff for the Center.
Objective 3.4: To secure federal grants to obtain funding for staff for the Center.

Benchmarks:
- Establish the physical location of the Center.
- Obtain funding ($20,000) to furnish and supply the Center.
- Obtaining funding ($80,000 a year) to staff the Center.

Strategies:
- Develop request for funding and submit them to individuals and foundations.
- Seek a funding method through the products of the Center.

Goal 4: Engagement and Partnership -To provide a link between families, University students and professionals interested in learning about research-based strategies for working with individuals with ASD.

Objective 4.1: To continue support of the South Plains Autism Network.
Objective 4.2: To complete presentations concerning the Center’s work.
Objective 4.3: To disseminate through publications the research findings of the Center.
Objective 4.4: To create a written model for developing family groups based on the SPAN project.
Objective 4.5: To create modules for online access to research-based practical information.
Objective 4.6: To build a partnership between the community and the University to create an in-service teacher education mentoring group in local school districts.

Benchmarks:
- Development and dissemination of model for creating parent/professional networks.
- Creation of a mentoring group with Lubbock ISD, Frenship ISD, and other school districts for supporting inservice teachers.
- Number of publications and presentations concerning network/training.

Strategies:
- Create a handbook delineating the steps to developing network.
- Electronically archive presentations of current SPAN meetings as resources.
- Meet with local established partnerships.
- Provide consultation to newly developed partnerships.
- Submit manuscripts describing the partnership process.
- Participate in national conferences presenting information concerning the development of partnerships.
• Develop the Collin Burkhart Academy based on research-based practices to provide adult educational opportunities for persons with autism spectrum disorders after the age of 21,
• Create strength-based assessment protocols to examine the individual’s interests and skills,
• Design a model for establishing an Individual Adult Activity Plan for use in various community settings,
• Produce curriculum for the activities identified on the plans for dissemination to family members and caretakers,
• Establish continuing education courses for online instruction for individuals with high-functioning autism,
• Develop support plans for current or prospective university students with high functioning autism.

Goal 5: Recognition—To establish a nationally recognized center for researching and disseminating information about postsecondary educational opportunities for individuals with ASD.

Objective 5.1: Disseminate research concerning strength-based assessment success
Objective 5.2: Provide information on website
Objective 5.3: Disseminate the curriculum products
Objective 5.4: Disseminate research concerning success of strength-based activities
Objective 5.5: Provide strength-based assessment
Objective 5.6: Create strength-based plans
Objective 5.7: Establish a lab school
Objective 5.8: Engage in research to assess success of strength-based planning and intervention
Objective 5.9: Write curriculum support by strength-based planning and intervention

Benchmarks:
• Development of strength-based assessment protocols
• Dissemination of curriculum and strength-based assessment products.
• Dissemination of research findings through publications and presentations.

Strategies
• Develop the Collin Burkhart Academy based on research-based practices to provide adult educational opportunities for persons with autism spectrum disorders after the age of 21,
• Create strength-based assessment protocols to examine the individual’s interests and skills,
• Design a model for establishing an Individual Adult Activity Plan for use in various community settings,
• Produce curriculum for the activities identified on the plans for dissemination to family members and caretakers,
Establish continuing education courses for online instruction for individuals with high-functioning autism,
Develop support plans for current or prospective university students with high functioning autism.

Goal 6: Recognition- To establish a national reputation as the leader for connecting families and professionals in learning about ASD issues.

Objective 6.1: Disseminate model for family professional partnerships
Objective 6.2: Publish the model on the Center website and in professional journals.
Objective 6.3: Provide training sessions for individuals and groups.

Benchmarks:
- Obtain federal funding for a parent center.
- Be invited to present findings for support network development.

Strategies:
- Increase capacity in autism spectrum disorders through partnerships, educational opportunities, and research findings.
- Develop and disseminate a model for creating successful family/professional partnerships.
- Improve access to information about autism spectrum disorders through continuing Education Units, undergraduate and graduate courses, modules, and the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research website.
- Establish the Colin Burkhart Academy to develop quality of life transition planning and assessment.
- Increase research activity regarding the activities of the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research.