Preparing leaders to impact a diverse and evolving world.
The College of Education is excited and proud to introduce its first Annual Report, an opportunity for us to share a wealth of information about what we do, who we are, and how we continue to make a positive difference in the state and nation by producing exceptional teachers and educational professionals. With almost 750 graduates this year, our Bearkat impact grows and expands in exciting new directions and opportunities. In addition to our national recognition from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, our teacher retention rate is more than 15% higher than the state average. Our charter school and innovative classrooms provide opportunities for educator candidates to have meaningful tools for successfully reaching tomorrow’s learners. Our various graduate programs produce some of the state’s most outstanding school administrators, counselors, librarians, diagnosticians, reading specialists, higher education administrators, and more. The College of Education also promotes the development of future scholars, researchers, and experts in some of education’s most critical fields through our now six doctoral programs. Built on the pillars of integrity, innovation, inclusion, inquiry, and impact, the College of Education has a positive effect on education in a multitude of ways, and it is our pleasure to share the highlights of this year’s accomplishments with you.

As part of our Annual Report, we are also excited to introduce the new College of Education vision statement: Preparing leaders to impact a diverse and evolving world. This vision and its corresponding belief statements undergird the decisions, priorities, and planning that guide our College on its continued journey to creating the best educators possible.

Thank you for sharing this journey with us.
Stacey Edmonson is dean of the College of Education at Sam Houston State University, where she has been professor of educational leadership since 2000. During her 24-year career in education, she has also served as a teacher, principal and central office administrator in Texas public schools. She is a Board of Examiners chair for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and has been an officer and board member in several state, regional and national organizations, including current service as president-elect of both the Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities and the Texas Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. She has published five books and more than 85 articles on education topics including trust, stress and burnout, legal issues, and ethics. She earned her bachelor’s degree in English from Texas A&M University and her master’s and doctoral degrees in educational administration from Texas A&M University-Commerce.  

Jannah Nerren is the associate dean for planning and assessment at Sam Houston State University. She previously served as the associate dean of assessment and accountability and professor of early childhood education at Stephen F. Austin State University. She holds a Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary studies and Master of Science in early childhood education from Stephen F. Austin State University, and a Ph.D. in professional studies in education from Capella University. Nerren taught elementary school and served as a teacher and administrator in early childhood settings. Prior to her career in Higher Education, she has served in leadership positions with two American Educational Research Association Special Interest Groups from 2006 to the present—the Constructivist Theory, Research and Practice SIG and the Service Learning and Experiential Education SIG. She presents regularly at professional conferences at the international, national and state level. She recently published “Many pathways, one destination: Examining the various routes to becoming an early childhood educator” (2017) in Early Years: Journal of the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, “Language stimulation techniques for three-year-old and four-year-old children: Patterns of language development” (2015) in NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field and “Leaping the language gap: Strategies for preschool and Head Start teachers” (2015) in Journal of Child Care and Education Policy.  

Debra Price (Debbie), associate dean for research and graduate studies, holds degrees from The University of Colorado in Boulder, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and a Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin. Prior to pursuing her doctoral degree, Price taught elementary school for 13 years. She served in the role of professor and director of the doctoral program in literacy in the Department of Language, Literacy and Special Populations at Sam Houston State University for 17 years. During that time, Price taught courses in literacy and special education at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral level. She has authored numerous articles and has presented at several national and international conferences on the topic of literacy. In 2014, Price was named associate dean for research and graduate programs in the College of Education. In that role, she serves as a liaison between the six doctoral programs, 15 master’s degree programs and university graduate studies department. Additionally, she leads and facilitates graduate programs in the college and advocates for graduate programs at the university, state, national, and international levels. She works closely with the centers within the college and sponsors activities to promote research across all departments.  

Sandra Stewart currently serves as the associate dean for teacher education at Sam Houston State University. She leads and facilitates undergraduate curriculum, partnering with districts and colleges at SHSU to develop new degrees and certifications and innovative programs in teacher education, student admissions in the educator preparation program, and staff support in the field experience office. Stewart earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership, a master’s in Mid-Management Administration with principal certification and her bachelor’s degree in Elementary 1-8 and ECHE. Stewart has been in education for 27 years as a teacher, principal and central office administrator in K-12 schools and assistant/associate professor and associate dean in higher education. As a faculty member from 2006-2012 in both elementary education and educational leadership at Stephen F. Austin State University. Stewart taught literacy and early childhood courses and facilitated internships for teacher candidates in literacy and taught in the principal preparation. Her research interests include social justice, literacy, diversity, and leadership. Stewart has published and presented on moral leadership, best practices in literacy, social justice in education, and effective leadership practices.
The institution now known as Sam Houston State University was created by the Texas Legislature in 1879. Sam Houston Normal Institute’s stated mission was, “to elevate the standard of education throughout the state, by giving thorough instruction and special training to as many as possible of our present and future teachers.” Sam Houston was the first normal school, or teachers training school, in the state of Texas.

In 1918, Sam Houston Normal Institute offered its first bachelor’s degree. By 1936, Sam Houston Normal Institute offered the first master’s degree in education.

In 1964, the various colleges were grouped together and the College of Education was born. For over 135 years, Sam Houston State University’s College of Education has been preparing highly qualified professionals for public school and a variety of other agencies. Today, the college continues its tradition of excellence as one of the leading institutions for not only the exemplary preparation of teachers, but also for the quality preparation of leaders in counseling, administration and school librarianship. Currently the college offers 45 certification programs, 16 master’s programs and six doctoral programs.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FACULTY AND STAFF
87.7% 5-Year Retention Rate for SHSU teachers

Undergraduate

Student Enrollment—1458
Female – 82.5%
Male – 17.5%

Ethnicity
African American – 11.7%
American Indian – .4%
Asian/Pacific Islander – 1.2%
Hispanic – 19.1%
International – .6%
Multiple – 1.9%
Unknown – 1.9%
White – 63.2%

TExES average pass rate
94%

Graduate

Student Enrollment—1184
Female – 83%
Male – 17%

Ethnicity
African American – 13.5%
American Indian – 0%
Asian/Pacific Islander – 2.1%
Hispanic – 22.6%
International – .6%
Multiple – 1.7%
Unknown – .8%
White – 50.9%

Positions

Tenured & Tenure Track 91
Adjunct, Clinical & Other 100
Staff 24

Graduates

Undergraduate 331
Masters 372
Doctoral 44
According to “Performance Analysis for Colleges of Education,” a report by the Center for Research Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education (CREATE), Sam Houston State University’s teacher retention rate from 2012-2016 is 87.7 percent, compared to the state’s 72.5 percent.

SHSU was tracked along with CREATE public universities (79.4 percent), CREATE private universities (76.4 percent), for-profit Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs) (68.3 percent) and non-profit ACPs (63.3 percent).

“I really think that teachers staying in the field indicates quality,” Christina Ellis, director of Accreditation and Accountability Services at SHSU. “We typically don’t see teachers staying in the field that don’t enjoy doing what they’re doing and don’t really have a passion for it.

“Our teachers staying in the field could show they have found a career that they love,” she said. “We definitely want teachers in classrooms that want to be there. At Sam Houston State, we produce teachers who care about kids and love doing what they’re doing.”

There are multiple factors that play into teachers deciding to stay in the profession or seek out other career options, according to Ellis.

“A lot of it has to do with if they feel called into the profession or they have a dedication to serving these kids and their families,” she said. “It also has to do with the support they get from their principals, administrators and other teachers. Another big factor is how well they feel they’re doing once they get into the classroom, which is connected to how well prepared they are.

“If they get into the classroom and don’t feel prepared, they’re unlikely to stay there,” she said. “But, if they get in and they feel confident in what they’re doing then they’re likely to stay in the profession. I think that’s why you see retention in alternatively prepared teachers lower than teachers from universities. They get into a classroom and sometimes feel underprepared.

“Within the first couple of years, they find another career path.”

Having a program that offers diverse experiences helps keep teachers in the profession, according to Ellis.

“We have a great emphasis on making sure our students have diverse experiences,” she said. “They have a range of experiences in the field that start as early as the second semester of their sophomore year in the field.

“When they choose to teach in a high-needs school, they know what that looks like and are prepared when they get there,” she said. “We really focus on making sure our students are prepared for whichever schools they select.”

While Conroe ISD hired 37 SHSU teachers in 2015-2016, Houston ISD, the closest urban district to SHSU, only hired 14. The program is working to get student teachers more
experience in Houston earlier in their careers to feel more prepared and connected to the school district.

“Typically, when students have field experiences in a district, including student teaching, they tend to go and work there,” she said. “Houston is very interested in getting more of our student teachers and field experiences so students are excited about teaching there.

“I think a lot of our students don’t know the amazing experiences they can have in urban settings,” she said. “Many of our students come from rural schools, and may have misconceptions about the schools in big cities. We are starting to see more and more students choosing urban schools.”

A higher number of teachers became elementary school teachers (122) and held a higher retention rate (89.3 percent) than high school, 75 teachers with an 82.7 percent retention rate.

“We have a large and well-recognized elementary program,” she said. “We’re one of the top producers of elementary teachers in the state. The middle school and high school programs are where we see the majority of students getting alternatively certified. There’s a perception in teacher education that in order to teach middle school and high school, all you really have to know is the content area.

“For example, some might think, ‘if I want to be a math high school teacher, then all I really need to know is math,’” she said. “But, if I want to teach elementary school, what I really need to know is how to teach.’ I think that’s a false perception. Because of this, we see more people who get their alternative certification after getting their bachelor’s degree from a university at the middle school and high school level.

“I think that hurts them in the long run because they could have majored with us in their teaching area and gotten a minor in secondary education and had a richer experience than getting alternatively certified, but they don’t see it that way. Secondary programs, although we’re recruiting for them, tend to have lower numbers. I think it’s just because of a false perception of how much preparation in teaching they need.”

The number of SHSU African American certified teachers has increased by 86 percent in five years.

“We believe that students need to see teachers that look like them,” she said. “They need to have relationships with teachers in which they can see themselves, so it’s really important to us to have a diverse teacher population. We’ve really worked to recruit students of color and students from economically challenged backgrounds so that we’re preparing teachers that more closely mirror the students they’re serving.”

The high teacher retention rates are an indication that Sam Houston has a strong program, Ellis said.

“What these numbers don’t show is that we have this 87 percent still teaching over the five years, but a significant portion of those 13 percent have gone on to become other educational professionals like principals, counselors or librarians,” she said.

“We produce great teachers who love kids,” she said. “We are the premiere teaching program in the state and have a great reputation, and I don’t think that’s by accident. We have students that really love what they’re doing and intend to make a career out of education.”

The Center for Research Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education is grant funded and housed at the University of Houston. It’s a multi-system educational research consortium of 58 institutions across Texas and focuses on issues of teacher preparation and teacher quality.
## Nationally Accredited Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC-6</td>
<td>ACEI Association for Childhood Education International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Diagnosticist</td>
<td>CEC Council for Exceptional Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Leadership-Principal</td>
<td>ELCC Educational Leadership Constituent Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Leadership-Superintendent</td>
<td>ELCC Educational Leadership Constituent Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology EC-12</td>
<td>NASPE National Association for Sport and Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 4-8</td>
<td>AMLE/NMSA Association for Middle Level Education/ National Middle School Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Specialist</td>
<td>ILA/IRA International Literacy Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Librarian</td>
<td>ALA American Library Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 Mathematics</td>
<td>NCTM National Council of Teachers of Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>CEC Council for Exceptional Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Facilitator</td>
<td>ISTE International Society for Technology in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 Life Science</td>
<td>NSTA National Science Teachers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator Preparation Program</td>
<td>NCATE National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education/ CAEP Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Counselor Education</td>
<td>CACREP Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Ed. Special Education- Low Incidence Disabilities and Autism</td>
<td>BACB Behavior Analyst Certification Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each dot represents a school district with one or more SHSU educator.

**SHIPS**

The Sam Houston Innovative Partnership for Schools (SHIPS) is a partnership comprised of the educator preparation program at SHSU and the independent school district partners in the region of Texas that is served by the University. Our partnerships were established in order to create a mutually beneficial partnership between us that adds value to all of our establishments as well as our future teachers. The SHSU College of Education is proud to have 75 area districts in SHIPS.

**SBEC**

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) was created by the Texas Legislature in 1995 to recognize public school educators as professionals and grant educators the authority to govern the standards of their profession. The board oversees all aspects of the preparation, certification, and standards of conduct of public school educators.
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

AY 2016 Highlights

Enrollment—1458

Average GPA at time of admission to EPP—3.30

Number of students on President’s List—368 (23.2%)

Number of degrees—2
BA Interdisciplinary Studies
BS Interdisciplinary Studies

Certifications offered and produced
EC-6 Core Subjects—195
EC-6 Generalist, with Special Education—46
EC-6 Generalist, with Bilingual—23
4-8 Core Subjects
4-8 Math—25
4-8 Math /Science—9
4-8 Social Studies Composite
4-8 ELAR—18
Secondary Education Minor
  English Language Arts & Reading—14
  History—22
  Mathematics—11
  Biology/Life Science—1
  Composite Science
  Social Studies
  Speech
  Art—6
  Music—31
Kinesiology/Physical Education—25
Languages other than English-Spanish—3
Theatre—2
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources—19
Dance
Family and Consumer Sciences—2
Physical Science
Technology Education
Computer Science
Technology Applications
Basic Business—1
Health—2
Special Education—1
Early Childhood Education (non-cert) Minor
Special Education Minor
Human Services Minor

State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)

Certifications Offered—7
Counselor Education
  School Counselor CERT
Curriculum and Instruction
  Teaching, CERT
Educational Leadership
  Principal, CERT
  Superintendent, CERT
Language/Literacy/Special Pop
  Education Diagnostician, CERT
  Reading Specialist, CERT
Library Science
  School Librarian, CERT

State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)
GRADUATE STUDIES

AY 2016 Masters Highlights

Enrollment—975
Average GPA at time of admission to EPP—3.41
Number of Masters degrees—14

Graduate Finishers
Counselor Education
   Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MA—48
   School Counseling, MED—10
Curriculum and Instruction
   Comparative & Global Education, MED (new)
   Curriculum & Instruction, MED—66
   Instructional Technology, MED—21
   Teaching, MAT—6
Educational Leadership
   Administration, MED—38
   Higher Education Administration, MA—32
   Instructional Leadership, MED—21
Language/Literacy/Special Populations
   International Literacy, MED—19
   Reading, MED—8
   Special Education, MA—6
   Special Education, MED—32
Library Science
   Library Science, MLS—65

AY 2016 Doctoral Highlights

Enrollment—209
Number of Doctoral degrees—5

Doctoral Finishers
Counselor Education
   Counselor Education, PHD—7
Curriculum and Instruction
   Instructional Technology, EDD (new)
Educational Leadership
   Developmental Education Administration, EDD—5
   Educational Leadership, EDD—26
Language/Literacy/Special Populations
   Literacy, EDD—6

Certificates Offered -13
Academic Advising
Adult Education
Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician
Developmental Reading
Digital Literacy
Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Special Education
Educational Technology
Effective Online Instruction
Higher Education Assessment and Institutional Research
Second Language Instruction
Youth Services Libraries
# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

We are grateful to our 600 donors who have given $232,367 to COE.

## 2015 Grants Awarded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AGENCY NAME</th>
<th>FUND TITLE</th>
<th>AMOUNT $</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nabors, Diana K.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston</td>
<td>Texas School Ready 2015</td>
<td>179,804</td>
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<td>Stuckey, Kelly G.</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Project Connect 2014</td>
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<td>Votteler, Nancy K.</td>
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<td>University Of Texas At Austin</td>
<td>Write for Texas Project Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>University Of Texas At Austin</td>
<td>Write for Texas Project Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creghan, Frank L.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Humble Independent School District</td>
<td>Excellence in Math and Science</td>
<td>27,895.91</td>
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$538,596.84

## 2016 Grants Awarded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AGENCY NAME</th>
<th>FUND TITLE</th>
<th>AMOUNT $</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hynes, James W.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Eurasia Foundation</td>
<td>Educational Practice</td>
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<td>Robles-Pina, Rebecca A.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Texas AgriLife Research</td>
<td>Global-Ready Agriculturist</td>
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<td>Stuckey, Kelly G.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>US Department of Education</td>
<td>TRIO SSS Program</td>
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<td>National Writing Project</td>
<td>2016 SEED Grant</td>
<td>1,263.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerber, Hannah R.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>ALAN Foundation</td>
<td>The New YAL Experience</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers</td>
<td>Approaches to Literacy Instruction</td>
<td>65.72</td>
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<td>Creghan, Frank L.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Humble Independent School District</td>
<td>Excellence in Math and Science</td>
<td>7,258.09</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

$271,913.72
Approximately 8.5 percent of the more than 5.5 million students in Texas schools receive special education services, such as support in general education classes and specialized instruction.

However, disability also impacts adult life. Many individuals with disabilities have difficulty getting a job, attending postsecondary education, or being independent adults. To help facilitate positive post-school results for students, federal law requires school districts and other public education agencies to provide transition services.

Recently, the Sam Houston State University College of Education received approval to establish the Eleanor and Charles Garrett Center on Transition and Disability Studies. The center will be the first of its kind in Texas to have a dedicated focus on the practitioner aspects of transition services and will serve as a dedicated gateway of information for transition team members including educators, students with disabilities, their families, and agencies and community partners.

“We saw the need in the state of Texas to have a center dedicated to transition services, which are services provided in public schools to support the education of children with disabilities and facilitate the transition from public education to employment, postsecondary education or training, and, if appropriate, independent living skills,” said Vickie J. Mitchell, the Eleanor and Charles Garrett Endowed Chair in Special Education at SHSU and the co-director of the Garrett Center.

“Although there are universities in Texas that have centers dedicated to the field of disability studies, research and even transition research, there is not a center dedicated to practitioner transition issues,” Mitchell said. “There is a lot of information, but no central place for individuals who must access a multitude of websites in Texas or across the nation. Our goal is to have our website up and running on September 1 and grow our website resources over time for stakeholders in any role of transition services.”

In addition to the website and other communication platforms, the Garrett Center will offer workshops and conduct research to improve services and outcomes for both children, youth and adults with disabilities. Currently, the Garrett Center has a Twitter account @GarrettCenter that is tweeting information regarding current bills in the legislature related to special education and transition.

Additional leaders at the Garrett Center are co-director Jaimie Betancourt Durán, associate director Corinna Villar Cole, and assistant director Leena Landmark.

“Public education is supposed to result in something for all children, including children with disabilities,” Mitchell said. “The goal of the Garrett Transition Center is to play a key role in supporting public schools to provide transition services, at all grade levels, that facilitate positive post-school results for children with disabilities.”

One of the first events, was the “18+ Symposium” on June 19. The one-day symposium is sponsored by the Eleanor and Charles Garrett Center on Transition and Disability Studies and was held at the Region 4 Education Service Center in Houston. Session topics ranged from how to develop the continuum of services for adult students ages 18-21 to lessons learned from the perspective of rural and suburban school districts.

For more information, contact Vickie Mitchell at vmitchell@shsu.edu or call 936.294.3911.
**WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION?**

**GROW YOUR OWN**

**New Program to Help Prepare Future Educators**

The College of Education at Sam Houston State University is developing a program, Grow Your Own, which will help prepare future educators during their junior and senior years of high school.

The program will connect those students to the college sooner and give them professional development, enrollment into summer camps and opportunities for job security in their own districts.

“It’s an opportunity for us to work within a district and capture students that already know they want to be teachers in the future,” said Sandra Stewart, associate dean of Teacher Education. “In the past, we didn’t necessarily have the opportunity to have the relationship with our future teachers.

“Part of our goals are to make sure we have opportunities to not only inform, but work with students prior to them coming to us so we have lots of opportunities to prepare them,” she said. “We have many activities and we’re going to continue to develop those to meet the needs of the individual districts we’re working with.”

The college is currently collaborating with Huntsville and Houston ISDs.

“We will have professional development with those students, because in most cases, they’re not getting that until they’re in college,” said Katie Lowe, communication and recruitment coordinator. “It’s creating a sense of job security for them so if they don’t get scholarships and have to incur student loans, they know they almost immediately will have a job after certification.”

While there are other programs similar to SHSU’s Grow Your Own, the others don’t include the camps or internships aspect, which would be within the last summer session prior to student teaching.

“The students actually follow their mentor through the whole beginning process of the year, so they’ll be helping plan curriculums and working with the teacher on setting their classroom up,” Stewart said. “The districts will know they’re providing professional development and experiences that are aligned with their district, so they’re ready to walk in the classroom the first day.”

The program is still currently being set up. The outline is complete and an abbreviated version will begin this summer.

The idea behind creating the Grow Your Own program is that it’s best for the students and candidates, according to Stewart.

“The goal is to always improve what we do, the connections with our district partners and to make sure our students are as ready for their first year as they can be,” she said. “It’s a huge recruitment tool for them.

“The Grow Your Own program in both of these districts is essential for them as an imminent teacher shortage is coming in the next three-five years,” she said. “They need to plan for that now.”

The program also helps the enrollment numbers within the university.

“When the high schools are preparing students to go to college, they can prepare them to go to Sam Houston,” Lowe said. “By creating those relationships, the schools are helping employment for those school districts, as well.

“They know they’re going to get out of these students when they graduate from Sam,” she said. “By creating these summer camps, we’re keeping these students engaged from the beginning of their junior year all the way through graduation and straight into college, so they never lose that momentum.”
The students need to already be enrolled in a similar program at their high school to qualify for the Grow Your Own program, so they are already working in the classroom with teachers and other students.

The college’s goal is ensuring teachers are prepared for their futures as educators.

“The children of Texas deserve the best and most prepared teachers in the classroom,” Stewart said. “We have to find ways to help strengthen their understanding and knowledge before they get here. We want to also make sure they really want to be a teacher.

“Teaching is not what some people think it is—it’s hard,” she said. “We want them to have a real life, relevant experience for them to know, and engage the fact that they want to do this as a life-long career.”

The greatest benefits in teaching are knowing you’re preparing students for the future and making an impact in their lives, according to Lowe.

“You’re helping guide and mold them—and you don’t get that in many professions,” she said. “It’s definitely a calling that not everyone can do. If students have been in these programs during their junior and seniors years, by the time they get here, they’ll know if they want to be a teacher.

“By the districts offering these programs, whether it be Sam Houston’s or not, they’re creating a workforce that looks just like their students,” she said. “When you have a city like Houston that’s so diverse, you need the teachers to be just as diverse as the students.”

Based on the number of people retiring within the next three-five years, the Texas Education Agency has indicated there will be teacher shortages.

“Districts that are on top of it, want to be on the forefront to find ways to make sure they’re filling those spots,” Stewart said. “The important issue here is these districts don’t want to just fill a classroom. What they’re really trying to do is ensure they have quality teachers in the classroom in the future.”

For more information about the Grow Your Own program, contact Sandra Stewart at stewart@shsu.edu or 936.294.1103, or Katie Lowe at katielow@shsu.edu or 936.294.2629.

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**TAFE**

**Texas Association of Future Educators**

Sam Houston State University will lead the way in establishing one of the first chapters of the Texas Association of Future Educators at the higher education level in the fall of 2017. TAFE was created in 1984 to provide an opportunity for middle and high school students to explore and gain knowledge about the teaching profession and careers in education. As members of this organization, students learn the importance of service, leadership and strong character, which will assist them in becoming effective future educators. TAFE is sponsored by the Texas Association of Secondary Principals with a governing board comprised of students, teachers and principals. Additionally, TAFE supports Educators Rising at the national level. Students who have been a member of TAFE in their high school years will be able to extend their experiences as a member of the organization at the collegiate level. In addition, all students who aspire to be educators or want to learn more about the teaching profession are invited to become members of TAFE. This student led organization will encourage future teachers to learn the importance of becoming active members of professional organizations as a means of continual growth in their field. In February of 2018, Sam Houston State University will sponsor the annual TAFE conference with an anticipated attendance of over 2,000 students and advisors from middle and high schools throughout all regions of Texas. Our first chapter of TAFE will play an integral role in serving to make the annual conference at SHSU a success. Lory Haas, assistant professor in the Department of Language, Literacy and Special Populations is serving as the advisor for TAFE. Please feel free to contact Lori Haas for information at leh015@shsu.edu.
Let’s Start School!

After months of planning and preparation, the Sam Houston State University Charter School is scheduled to open on Aug. 21, 2017. The school was granted an “open enrollment” charter by the Texas Education Agency in 2016, and is currently hiring teachers and recruiting students. As I stated before, there are many advantages to beginning a charter school; when asked, my reply is still “we get to start from scratch.” We are building a model school with innovative curriculum and research-based practices that we believe our district partners will be able to incorporate into their own systems.

Creating the infrastructure for our school system has been a melding of TEA requirements and university operational systems. We have completed our financial systems policies and procedures, purchased state-of-art technology and interactive curriculum, drafted board and legal policies, and made employment offers to some of the highest qualified educators in our area. Most importantly, we have created an academic atmosphere so that we will be able to offer not only an exceptional education to our charter school students, but provide quality-learning opportunities for our SHSU College of Education students as they visit our sites.

To date, we have created six sites with our partner Childcare Centers in Houston, Humble, Klein, Pasadena, Spring, and The Woodlands. Many of these sites are recognized by the Texas Education Agency as Texas School Ready Pre-K sites. The quality of these programs enables many of our kindergarten students to come prepared on, or at, grade level. Our independent site owners have made many renovations to their facilities to accommodate our school and have been a strong advocate in their local communities for the SHSU Charter School system.

Meet Our Principal

We are extremely excited about our principal, who will help run our new school system next year. Renee O’Neal is an experienced educator that brings a wealth of knowledge.

While we have accomplished many things this past year, our best days truly are ahead of us. We look forward to seeing the bright shining faces of our newest and youngest Bearkats in the months ahead as they blaze the trail for our program. We invite you to visit our sites and welcome your questions as we continue to promote the core values of SHSU through this program.

Renee O’Neal, SHSU Charter School Principal

I am about to start my 26th year in education. I served as a teacher for eight years, and as an assistant principal in Aldine Independent School District for two years. For the last 18 years I have been in the Conroe Independent School District, where I served as an assistant principal for five years, and a principal for the last 13 years. I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree in literacy and superintendent certification at Sam Houston State University. I have three daughters. One is starting medical school this July at the University of North Texas medical branch in Fort Worth, my middle daughter is a sophomore at SHSU majoring in music, and my youngest daughter is a junior in high school. I am super excited about serving as the Sam Houston State University Charter School principal and I am looking forward to watching the program succeed and grow.

Eat ’em up Kats!
Cypress Trails Preschool & Childcare Center | Spring
Brighton Academy | The Woodlands
Greengate Academy | Spring
Precious Moments Learning Center | Houston
PALS Activity Center | Pasadena
Little Geniuses’ Academy | Humble
The university’s motto “The measure of a Life is its Service” reflects the culture at Sam Houston State University, where civic engagement is recognized as an integral component of campus life. SHSU has expanded curriculum, pedagogy, research, and service that includes civic engagement through volunteerism, outreach, academic community engagement, and community-based collaborative research—all of which support the overarching goal of preparing students to be active and productive citizens.

Academic Community Engagement provides students with opportunities to become civically involved through long-standing partnerships between the university and dozens of local non-profit organizations, agencies and businesses. Students apply the knowledge of their academic disciplines to define and address issues of public concern and advocate for change through collaboration in the community.

When the Center for Community Engagement began in 2010, there were 22 faculty teaching 40 ACE courses. We have seen tremendous growth to the ACE program in the past seven years. Presently over 250 faculty (representing every department and all seven colleges) teach these specially-designated courses with over 325 courses offered. In the College of Education, over 90 professors have taught over 175 course sections as ACE courses.

Schools are the heart of any community, but Huntsville Independent School District’s resource constraints mean that many needs of local students’ risk going unmet. As a result, SHSU partnered with HISD to create the Believe in Possibilities initiative. What started as a conversation between one 6th grade counselor, the superintendent and SHSU faculty has grown rapidly into a widespread effort to support local public schools.

Staff and administration at HISD recognized that local 6th graders would benefit from programming to better understand career options and the education/technical training needed to achieve them. This age group was identified for two main reasons: at this age, some students begin to disengage with school; and, academic choices in 7th grade may limit options in higher grades. The school developed curriculum to inform students about careers, and SHSU developed a yearly event for all 6th graders to visit campus. Every spring, children take a student-led campus tour, participate in a Q&A session with SHSU students, attend a class, and lunch in one of the dining halls. Assessments demonstrate that this project helps students broaden their career interests and clarify how school helps them prepare for future jobs.

Additionally, numerous local children need additional help with literacy. Many SHSU students and faculty volunteer their time and skills to tutor and mentor students from Pre-K through secondary school. SHSU education professors and their classes run the free literacy program at the public library, along with a number of other education-related engagement programs.

Each year, Believe in Possibilities is expanding the personal and professional horizons of thousands of local public school students, while enriching the college curriculum for hundreds of SHSU students through applied learning experiences. Believe in Possibilities empowers young people and makes our small rural community better and stronger.
The College of Education welcomed its first ever international cohort of students last year. A group of 10 students from Huaiyin Normal University (HNU) in China spent their junior year at SHSU, earning a local certificate in elementary education. Faculty from the College of Education also traveled to Huaiyin to teach the cohort before the students arrived in the United States.

The international students from HNU provided and will continue to provide numerous opportunities for staff and faculty to engage with another culture in a most fulfilling manner for everyone. Susan Hayes noted how the experience of hosting students provided her and her family with memories that they “will never forget and will hold in our hearts forever. We now have true Chinese grandchildren.” The first picture is of Susan and two students in Houston’s Chinatown celebrating the Chinese New Year. The students from HNU have had a positive effect on many of our students who have not had the opportunity to interact before now with international students. Several of our students, who have never been out of Texas, have remarked “We like the same things!”

Our faculty have had very positive experiences teaching at HNU. Andrea Foster found the “cultural experience enlightening.” Our faculty have noted how teaching in China has enhanced their capabilities as educators. Our understanding of the complex history of China is enlarged by visiting museums, shrines and engaging with colleagues whose background and education are often different from our own. Working in China allows us to note their attention to the complex detail found in their art, food and customs. These experiences enable us to incorporate new elements in many of the courses we teach. The second picture shows Dr. Foster with a group of students on the campus of HNU.
A hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove … but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

—Forest Witcraft