



Sam Houston State University

# Enrollment Management

Strategic Enrollment & Innovation



# STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

2026-2029

**21k**  
BEARKAT STUDENTS

**53%**  
OF BEARKATS  
ARE FIRST-GEN  
STUDENTS

**9**  
COLLEGES

**1,000+**  
NEW UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENTS FROM  
LOCAL COUNTIES  
ENROLL PER YEAR

**90+**  
UNDERGRAD  
DEGREES

**72%**  
OF STUDENTS RECEIVE  
SOME FORM OF  
FINANCIAL AID

**9.3%**  
OF STUDENTS ARE  
MILITARY AFFILIATED

**20+**  
DEGREES  
AVAILABLE  
ONLINE

**140k**  
BEARKAT ALUMNI  
AROUND THE WORLD

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**Dear Colleagues & University Partners,**

We are thrilled to introduce the 2026-2029 Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan for Sam Houston State University (SHSU).

Our leadership team has conducted a comprehensive and inclusive process to collect and curate feedback and data from partners and stakeholders across the SHSU community, including all academic colleges (e.g., deans, associate deans, chairs, faculty), student leaders (i.e., SGA, RAs, SAMbassadors), student affairs offices, custodial teams, administrative leadership, student service offices, and the enrollment management team.



The 2026-2029 SEM Plan is an interactive, collaborative, and measurable document reflecting enrollment as a core component of the entire university. It is the living-breathing, driving force for operations, goals, and strategy levers to establish and achieve SHSU's enrollment targets for the next three academic years, which will allow SHSU to thrive as we continue to work together.

**With Enthusiasm & Gratitude,**



**Dr. Jason L. Meriwether**  
*Vice President of  
Enrollment Management*



**Megan St. Vigne**  
*Associate Vice President of  
Enrollment Success*



**Dr. John Jordan**  
*Associate Vice President of  
Enrollment Services*

**The 2026-2029 SEM Plan focuses on nine key goals, each aligned with the University's Strategic Plan priorities:**

- Improve Recruitment and Yield
- Streamline and Automate Enrollment Operations
- Create and Develop Sustainable Partnerships
- Create a Cohesive Student Journey for Targeted Student Types
- Enhance Enrollment Marketing's Capacity and Brand Visibility
- Establish Student Communication Life Cycle
- Demonstrate a Commitment to a Culture of Student Completion
- Establish a Strategic Financial Student Support Structure
- Create a Culture of Data-Informed Decision Making

Each goal is supported by a descriptive objective and a set of initiatives that will be measured and tracked as we work toward our desired enrollment outcomes.

We welcome your partnership as we endeavor to serve all prospective and currently enrolled undergraduate, polytechnic, and graduate students in all in-person and online programs, ensuring that SHSU excels as a "student-centered, community engaged institution" for many years to come.

# 1. IMPROVE RECRUITMENT & YIELD

SHSU will enhance recruitment effectiveness by increasing yield across all student types, elevating transfer enrollment, and fully integrating faculty into the recruitment life cycle. By redesigning recruiter territories, strengthening campus partner understanding of enrollment processes, and launching academic department-specific yield campaigns, we will create a more coordinated and competitive recruitment ecosystem. These efforts will expand academic messaging, deepen relationships, and improve conversion at every stage.



- Improve recruitment and student yield processes to boost recruitment numbers and yield rates across all student types (e.g., *Transfer, International, SamPoly, Graduate, Online, Veterans*)
  - Integrate faculty into the recruitment life cycle
  - Educate campus partners on Enrollment processes, terminology, and timelines
  - Redesign recruiters' roles based on key geographic areas, enhancing their presence and relationships with key enrollment partners to better represent SHSU
  - Redesign recruiter training, to be done each term, with a greater focus on academic department and program updates
  - Develop shared processes for monitoring and supporting recruiter outreach and campus visit efforts to foster stronger student engagement and community partnerships
  - Achieve recruitment accountability through the creation and continued assessment of recruiter specific goals by zip code and school-by-school
- Launch academic department-specific yield campaigns through automated messaging and "hands-on" recruitment from faculty
  - Integrate and enhance faculty recruitment opportunities (e.g., *high school visits, community college visits, fairs, Academic Preview Days, tours*)
  - Increase campus visit conversion rate (*visit → applied → enrolled*)
  - Ensure each major and certificate has a program-specific recruitment sheet
  - Use current students and recent graduates to act as ambassadors in the recruitment process at their former high schools and community colleges
  - Enhance collaboration between Admissions Recruitment, SHSU Online, and Enrollment Marketing and Communications to strengthen yield
  - Collaborate with academic colleges and departments to create and track 3- to 5-year enrollment targets by academic program

# 2. STREAMLINE & AUTOMATE ENROLLMENT OPERATIONS

This goal focuses on simplifying and modernizing the enrollment experience for students and staff. By automating communication flows, eliminating manual processing, optimizing admission applications, and implementing transcript-reading automation, SHSU will create faster, clearer, and more user-friendly pathways into the university. These improvements will reduce delays, increase consistency, and support greater scalability.



- Eliminate all manual processing in enrollment functions, practices, and operations (e.g., *SamPoly, Graduate, Undergraduate*)
  - Automate Student Communication Life Cycle emphasizing the development of more targeted and frequent academic messaging
  - Implement College Vine for transcript reading automation to reduce articulation time to 7 business days or less
  - Review and revise admission applications for a more streamlined and expedited student application experience
- Implement integrated payment flow for university applications in Salesforce
  - Enhance the international student application process through the implementation of an I20 application software
  - Automate the recruitment and re-recruitment process through the utilization of Marketing Cloud in Salesforce
  - Automate and track all student-facing communications (*recruitment, billing, advising, retention, etc.*) released via incremental stages within Salesforce

### 3. CREATE & DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

SHSU will strengthen its reach by redefining “local,” deepening relationships with key counties, and building new community, school, athletics, and international partnerships. This includes refining transfer pathways, expanding internal pipelines from undergraduate to graduate programs, and collaborating more intentionally with the Global Engagement Center. Through diverse and consistent partnerships, SHSU will expand access, improve student mobility, and reinforce its position as a regional and global hub.



- Increase SHSU presence at community colleges and high schools (e.g., recruiter visits, advisor hours, events)
- Develop and follow through on local and community partnerships
- Redefine “local” for recruitment and form partnerships with Walker, Houston, Trinity, San Jacinto, Montgomery, Grimes, Polk, and Madison counties
- Increase applications and yield from local target counties and regions across the state (online and in-person)
- Establish recruiter visit tracking frameworks to enhance student engagement and community partnerships
- Promote and assess accountability for recruiter visits to enhance student engagement and community partnerships
- Increase athletics-linked high school engagement events and sponsorships
- Identify and develop new partnerships to promote the Global Engagement Center and to aid in the recruitment and retention of international students

- Refine community college partnerships, focusing on establishing and updating pipelines (e.g., 2+2, AAS to BAAS)
- Identify, build, and promote internal pipelines to improve enrollment and student degree attainment (e.g., SamPoly → bachelor’s, bachelor’s → graduate, transfer → bachelor’s → graduate)
- Establish 1–2 (minimum) formalized transfer pathways per major transfer partner
- Develop a unified campus-wide process to develop and track partnerships, contracts, agreements, and MOUs with employers, school districts, community organizations, and industry/corporate partners
- Create and maintain a directory of departmental contacts for enrollment-related questions

### 4. CREATE A COHESIVE STUDENT JOURNEY FOR TARGETED STUDENT TYPES

SHSU will create a streamlined, connected student journey that supports learners from first interest through enrollment and beyond. By improving tours, orientation, onboarding, event experiences, and data-sharing across the university, SHSU will deliver a more personalized, engaging, and predictable path for students. This coordinated approach will increase satisfaction, reduce melt, and strengthen belonging from day one.



- Strengthen student orientation, campus tours, and the initial onboarding experience
- Establish a data collection and sharing process for campus events and activities to better understand student experience and engagement
- Collaborate across campus to create a streamlined and comprehensive student journey from prospective to completed status
- Enhance and promote existing enrollment and engagement events (e.g., Bearkat Camp, Welcome Week, Bearkat Family Day, Saturday@Sam, Academic Preview Days)
- Identify and increase student satisfaction regarding campus events (e.g., Sammypalooza, campus tours, majors fair)

- Collaborate with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to optimize the student-facing tour experience, allowing for more prospective student traffic during peak times
- Align and optimize technology infrastructure to further enhance the student experience
- Collaborate with academic leadership to develop and implement a sustainable, student-centered and data-informed, long-term course planning strategy

## 5. ENHANCE ENROLLMENT MARKETING'S CAPACITY & BRAND VISIBILITY

This goal strengthens SHSU's marketing infrastructure to support timely, coordinated, high-quality campaigns. By reducing turnaround times, building transparent campaign and recruiter calendars, expanding staffing, and improving storytelling through rankings and student narratives, SHSU will elevate its visibility and brand cohesion. These improvements will empower academic colleges and campus partners to engage more effectively in recruitment efforts.



- Reduce time from initial material and content request to campaign launch for both EMC and IMC
- Provide academic colleges with a transparent marketing campaign calendar from EMC each academic cycle
- Incorporate and promote academic messaging and faculty involvement in recruitment marketing
- Provide campus partners with a calendar of recruiter schedules and locations along with established enrollment/recruitment events
- Measure ROI of digital marketing and present quarterly reports
- Increase staffing to support the broader campus needs and ensure timely completion of projects
- Enhance marketing materials by including student stories, campus rankings, athletic achievements, and other notable elements that set SHSU apart and above competitors

- Acquire prospective student information, work with early outreach, invest in local events, and partner with local high schools, colleges, and communities to increase the proportion of local students who choose to attend SHSU
- Develop a robust recruitment and yield campaign to target high-yield community colleges to promote student transfer and enrollment
- Cultivate a process to market and connect with partially submitted students (e.g., FAFSA only, transcripts with no application)
- Create school-specific and honors-specific plans to engage in increased academic messaging and brand awareness where applicable, including digital targeting, geo-fenced messaging, texting, advertising in school athletic facilities, publications, and dedicated fund allocation for sponsorships
- Create physical and digital pieces targeted by population with focus on academic quality and campus experience

## 6. ESTABLISH STUDENT COMMUNICATION LIFE CYCLE

SHSU will build a unified, automated communication lifecycle that accompanies every student from inquiry to enrollment and retention. This includes eliminating contradictory messages, expanding beyond email-only communication, and aligning the timing and content of touchpoints. The result is a more seamless, accurate, and engaging communication experience for all student types.



- Deploy a full lifecycle communication map covering *inquiry* → *applicant* → *admitted* → *confirmed* → *enrolled* → *retained*
- Reduce cases of misaligned or contradictory communication
- Track communication preferences and reduce email-only dependence by increasing text and physical material engagement
- Increase contact points with prospective students

- Incorporate prospective students identified by advisors into the admissions communication pipeline
- Introduce prospective students to campus amenities and student-facing services to support recruitment, yield, and student engagement
- Create a pipeline between Advising and enrollment to promote communication and outreach to prospective students

## 7. DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO A CULTURE OF STUDENT COMPLETION

This goal prioritizes retention, persistence, and graduation by strengthening academic support, improving student success metrics, and promoting consistent, student-centered service. SHSU will reduce DFWQ rates, increase 30-SCH completion rates, improve 4- and 6-year graduation rates, and proactively re-engage stop-outs through targeted outreach. Through shared expectations and coordinated engagement across departments, SHSU will ensure more students thrive from enrollment to degree.



- Improve first-year student retention rates
- Focus on a student service/engagement model for student interaction, fostering shared expectations and support for all departments that actively engage with students (e.g., *recruiters, advising, tutoring*)
- Increase persistence from fall to spring, and spring to fall
- Increase the number of students completing 30 SCH in their first year
- Promote cross-campus collaboration to reduce DFWQ rates in core courses

- Increase 4- and 6-year graduation rates
- Develop a model for re-recruitment of current/continuing students by developing a registration tracking dashboard and communication campaign to enhance semester-to-semester registration
- Reduce stop-outs among juniors and seniors through college-based outreach
- Create efficiencies that help deliver student services to create a positive, meaningful, educational experience for students

## 8. ESTABLISH A STRATEGIC FINANCIAL STUDENT SUPPORT STRUCTURE

SHSU will expand financial access by creating competitive, high-impact scholarship structures—including competitive and localized awards—to strengthen recruitment and retention. By aligning aid with strategic goals and regional needs, the university will reduce financial barriers and attract high-potential students. These efforts will reinforce SHSU's commitment to affordability and student success.



- Create competitive, renewable scholarships for high-achieving students to improve recruitment, promote student financial security, and promote applications from key student types
- Create a renewable scholarship for high school graduates in local counties
- Identify funding sources to support strategic recruitment scholarship activities
- Evaluate and streamline scholarship application processes
- Track and increase FAFSA completion among admitted students
- Proactively optimize aid packaging to address student need in a timely manner
- Collaborate with campus to mitigate internal pain points

- Increase awareness of existing scholarships (e.g., *employee dependent, local scholarships, promise programs*)
- Improve student communication surrounding scholarship and financial aid awards
- Conduct scholarship analyses for transparent ROI metrics
- Research and implement a net revenue model for scholarship funding to improve strategic application, financial sustainability, and student opportunities
- Optimize aid packaging by increasing aid applications received by priority date to address student needs
- Research and plan for performance-based funding metrics to align university and enrollment goals

# 9. CREATE A CULTURE OF DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

This goal ensures that SHSU uses timely, transparent, and actionable data to guide recruitment and student success strategies. Through the development of enrollment and recruitment dashboards, campus partners will better understand trends, opportunities, and needs. By identifying causes of stop-outs and supporting coordinated outreach, SHSU will strengthen proactive intervention and evidence-based decision making.



- Develop and disseminate enrollment dashboards and recruitment/yield to campus partners to improve understanding of historical trends and current data
- Determine causes for student stop outs and create a streamlined outreach campaign supported by campus
- Review established dashboards and ensure duplicates are removed in a timely manner for all enrollment funnels (e.g., Graduate, Undergraduate)
- Achieve 100% alignment between Undergraduate/Graduate/SamPoly data structure for easier reporting

- Establish cadenced data literacy training for campus partners to improve understanding of tools, data use, and DADS departmental resources
- Provide enhanced application acceptance data in more “real time” to allow for more relevant and targeted outreach from faculty
- Coordinate with IMC and DADS to conduct a state, city, zip code, and school-by-school assessment of current saturation



# GLOSSARY

## 2+2

External academic transfer pathway; first 2 years are completed at the community college and the final 2 years at SHSU

## AAS

Associate of Applied Sciences

## BAAS

Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences

## DADS

Data Analytics and Decision Support

## DFWQ

Drop, Fail, Withdraw, Q-Drop

## EMC

Enrollment Marketing and Communications

## FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid; document required for federal student aid

## IMC

Integrated Marketing Communications

## Melt

Students accepted but who do not enroll

## MOU

Memorandum of Understanding

## RA

Resident Advisor, located in Residence Halls

## ROI

Return on investment

## SAMBassadors

Campus tour leaders

## SCH

Semester Credit Hours

## SGA

Student Government Association

## Student Type

Student populations at SHSU (e.g., First-Time in College Freshmen, Graduate, SamPoly, Online, International, Transfer, Continuing)

## Transfer Pathway

Pre-defined set of courses students take at a community college to ensure credits will transfer to a specific 4-year university and count toward a bachelor’s degree

## Yield

Rate at which applicants move from application to enrollment



# ALIGNMENT WITH SHSU STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

SEM PLAN GOAL → STRATEGIC PRIORITY

S1 – Improve Recruitment and Yield	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access
S2 – Streamline and Automate Enrollment Operations	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access P2 – Embody a Culture of Excellence
S3 – Create and Develop Sustainable Partnerships	P3 – Elevate the Reputation and Visibility of SHSU P4 – Expand and Elevate our Service to the State and Beyond
S4 – Create a Cohesive Student Journey for Targeted Student Types	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access
S5 – Enhance Enrollment Marketing’s Capacity and Brand Visibility	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access P3 – Elevate the Reputation and Visibility of SHSU
S6 – Establish Student Communication Life Cycle	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access
S7 – Demonstrate a Commitment to a Culture of Student Completion	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access P2 – Embody a Culture of Excellence
S8 – Establish a Strategic Financial Student Support Structure	P1 – Prioritize Student Success and Student Access
S9 – Create a Culture of Data-Informed Decision Making	P2 – Embody a Culture of Excellence



# SEM PLANNING STAKEHOLDERS & PARTICIPANTS

For the development of this SEM Plan, Enrollment Management leadership met with stakeholders from all over campus, ranging from students to executive leaders. Below is a list of offices and teams that supported SHSU in the development of this plan, without whose voices, experience, and expertise this would not be possible.

Admissions Recruiters  
Athletics  
College of Arts & Media  
College of Business Administration  
College of Criminal Justice  
College of Education  
College of Health Sciences  
College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
College of Osteopathic Medicine  
College of Science & Engineering Technology  
Custodial  
Enrollment Management  
FACT Team

Finance & Operations  
Graduate & Professional School  
Honors College  
Information Technology  
Resident Advisors  
SAM Center  
SAMBassadors  
SamPoly  
SHSU Online  
Student Affairs  
Student Experience & Retention Team  
Student Government Association  
Undergraduate Student Success Team

# STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

## 2026-2029



**Sam Houston**  
State University

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