

# College of Health Sciences

FY 2026 Strategic Plan Alignment and Budget Presentation

Dean Ryan Zapalac

# College of Health Sciences

## Academic/Division Departments

- Department of Human Sciences
- Department of Kinesiology
- Department of Public Health
- School of Nursing
- SHSU Food Pantry
- Tripod's Thrift & Reba Bock Career Closet

*Coming Fall 2025*

- Department of Physical Therapy
- Department of Physician Assistant Studies and Athletic Training

## Centers

- COE-COHS Research Center



# FY 2025 Accomplishments

## Priority 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access

### College of Health Sciences – Accomplishments (FY25)

- Established the Master of Health Administration (MHA) – launching Fall 2025.
- Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) and Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs - Program Directors and initial faculty were hired.
- The Dept. of Physician Assistant Studies and Athletic Training and the Dept. of Physical Therapy were approved for Fall 2025.
- SHSU Food Pantry: 4,359 visits, distributed 55,094 pounds of food, hosted several Farmer's Market events across campuses, and hosted Beryl Disaster Relief and Holiday Food Distribution events.
- Tripod's Thrift: 1,740 unique visitors for clothing, footwear, and hygiene items.
- ACE course options (115) included 60 instructors (60) with 1,821 students.
- With IMC and CLC, the Fashion Merchandising program sent their fifth student to the UofNYFW program and engaged in a new partnership with Gucci North America to provide access to the Gucci Program for Scholars (GPS).

# FY 2025 Accomplishments

## Priority 2: Embody a Culture of Excellence

### College of Health Sciences – Accomplishments (FY25)

- We launched the 2024 – 2027 COHS Strategic Plan.
- Student Awards
  - COHS BRIDGE Scholar, Cary Wood (mentored by Dr. Kevin Randall) won first place in a research competition at the National Social Science Association.
  - Skyler Van Voorhis was the 2025 Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) Major of the Year by the Society of Health and Physical Educators of America (SHAPE).
  - Trista Alvarado, a Human Performance and Wellness Management major, was named Major of the Year for Texas American College of Sports Medicine (TACSM).
- American Heart Association Awards
  - Dr. Kathleen Gilbert received “The Heart of Nutrition” and “Chamber of Discovery” Awards.
  - Dr. Tabbetha Lopez received the “All Heart Award”.
  - Both were also selected for the AHA College Pantry Regional Advisory Board.
- Dr. Gilbert was also selected to serve on the Swipe Out Hunger Leadership Council.
- The School of Nursing (SON) completed a complete curriculum overhaul and will implement the revised curriculum beginning Fall 2025 with built-in supports for student academic success and resilience grounded in competency-based education.

# FY 2025 Accomplishments

## Priority 3: Elevate the Reputation and Visibility of SHSU

### College of Health Sciences - Accomplishments (FY25)

- The SON average first-time pass rate on the national licensure exam (NCLEX) was higher than the Texas and U.S. averages.
- The Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) double major with Education achieved “Fully Recognized” status in their accreditation status by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), formerly the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).
- The \$6.1 million Department of State Health Services (DSHS) grant focusing on vaccine hesitancy and the Texas Vaccine Landscape concluded. COHS and COE faculty and staff presented their work at public events in Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio.
- The Interior Design program launched its inaugural professional advisory board, consisting of licensed interior designers, architects, industry partners, and alumni.
- Debra Balandran, a graduate MPH student, was elected Secretary of the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE).
- The Fashion Merchandising (FM) program joined the National Retail Federation (NRF) and had Luisana Fonseca serve as SHSU’s NRF Student Ambassador.

# FY 2025 Accomplishments

## Priority 4: Expand and Elevate our Service to the State and Beyond

### College of Health Sciences - Accomplishments (FY25)

- The SHSU Food Pantry received a \$100,000 grant from the Powell Foundation to support expansion of its services.
- Dr. Kathleen Gilbert and Dr. Tabbetha Lopez helped establish the Walker County Food Coalition, which is comprised of local food pantries, healthcare and emergency response units, as well as the AHA and Houston Food Bank.
- The SON received \$999,500 from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to further expand the Shared Nurse Academic Practice Partnership Initiative (SNAPPI), a statewide project designed to reduce the Texas' nursing shortage.
- Dr. Devon Berry served on the Governor's Task Force on Health Care Workforce Shortages, Workgroup 2: Modernizing the Production Model, which focused on determining whether established competencies best prepare Texas students for the new and future realities of the health care workplace.
- Dr. Brent Estes, Prof. Natalie Foley, and Dr. Braden Norris led the graduate Sport Management students to another successful SHSU Night with the Rockets. Students' efforts raised almost \$20,000 to donate to the Big Love Cancer Care Foundation.
- The Department of Public Health has established itself as a leader in the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), significantly advancing this vital health resource.
- Over 50 Interior Design students, along with faculty, attended the Texas State Capitol on March 18, 2025, in partnership with the Texas Association of Interior Designers (TAID) to advocate for interior design-related legislation.

# FY 2026 Keep Doing

## **Statement:**

COHS Week was executed February 17 - 21, 2025 as an effort to engage students with their academic programs. It featured engagement events that were held for each department within the college, as well as Dean's Office and informational events for new programs. Feedback was positive on the events, and we are looking forward to using COHS Week as a retention strategy for our current students.

This action aligns with *Strategy 1: Prioritize student success and student access* and *Goal 1.1 - Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth*. We will be analyzing our retention metrics to determine the impacts created by COHS Week and other planned retention initiatives in achieving Pillar 2 - Retention.

## **Supporting Data:**

The purpose of this event is to improve retention throughout the College of Health Sciences. The event was created as a response to requests from the COHS Dean's Student Advisory Board to provide more engagement opportunities throughout the year. In total, over 250 students engaged in the events for the week. The Fall 2022 – Fall 2023 retention rate was 69.2% for the COHS and we are looking to improve through student engagement initiatives such as COHS Week.

## **Resources / Collaborations Required:**

Recruiting and Events Specialist requested; funds to expand the event to Fall and Spring; student support services (i.e., Academic Success Center, First Generation Center, SAM Center)

# FY 2026 Keep Doing

## **Statement:**

The COHS recently distributed its first COHS Academic Community Engagement (ACE) Funding Award in Spring 2025. We are planning on expanding this program to promote additional community engagement projects with our faculty, staff, and students. This will also continue to extend the positive community impacts created through these projects, thus elevating our community outreach efforts.

This action aligns with *Strategy 4: Expand and elevate our service to the state and beyond* and *Goal 4.4 - Establish community engagement as a signature high-impact practice and program for the university*. We will measure outcomes of projects funded through this initiative and will use that as an additional way to reflect college impact and created value in achieving Pillar 4 - Agility.

## **Supporting Data:**

The COHS currently has the largest number of ACE course sections (115) and instructors (60) in the university. As we continue to evolve our practices and ACE course delivery, we are interested in supporting new ideas and training.

## **Resources / Collaborations Required:**

Dedicated funding for ACE and community engagement events; support from the Center for Community Engagement; collaborative partnerships with community members



# FY 2026 Stop Doing

## **Statement:**

The College of Health Sciences plans to stop affiliation agreement decentralization because affiliation agreement management was being addressed through shared responsibility among the Dean and the two Associate Deans.

This action aligns with *Strategy 2: Embody a culture of excellence* and *Goal 2.2 - Align processes and resources, such as staffing, facilities, technology, and other assets to strategic priorities* and will reorganize the management of affiliation agreements into a centralized system. A dedicated staff member overseeing the agreements will make the process more efficient for our faculty, staff, and partners. Additionally, the COHS will evaluate software options that may provide even better management capabilities compared to our current system, which will help with achieving Pillar 3 – Completion.

## **Supporting Data:**

The COHS has a wide range of affiliation agreements and MOUs that require consistent routing and monitoring. This change will provide more consistent service, management, and communication with our faculty, staff, and partners.

## **Resources / Collaborations Required:**

A staff reclassification was completed in March 2025 (focusing more on affiliation agreements); software evaluations in collaboration with stakeholders and IT

# FY 2026 Start Doing

## **Statement:**

The College of Health Sciences plans to start Creation of an Assistant Dean of Interprofessional Education (IPE) because IPE efforts for the COHS have been crowdsourced from faculty members in our COHS clinical disciplines. With new planned Health Professions programs coming into inventory soon, the IPE needs are going to increase rapidly. Thus, creation of an official position to both manage IPE events and serve as a liaison with other programs is necessary.

This action aligns with *Strategy 4: Expand and elevate our service to the State and beyond* and *Goal 4.1 - Promote career readiness and attainment* through experiences that facilitate personal and professional development and connections and will have IPE is a fundamental curricular objective and accreditation requirement for our current programs in Athletic Training, Dietetics, and Nursing, as well as our proposed programs in Physician Assistant Studies and Physical Therapy. Having an Assistant Dean assigned to coordinate these many activities will be extremely helpful with growing our IPE footprint and better preparing our students for the healthcare workforce in achieving Pillar 4 - Agility.

## **Supporting Data:**

IPE is a core requirement for accreditation for all five of our current (i.e., Athletic Training, Dietetics, and Nursing) or proposed (i.e., Physical Therapy and Physician Assistant) Health Professions programs. The COHS needs to establish IPE leadership as we evolve.

## **Resources / Collaborations Required:**

Budget has been identified to create the position; additional budget to support IPE events; collaborative relationships with IPE partners to achieve mutual objectives (particularly COM)

# FY 2026 Start Doing

## **Statement:**

The College of Health Sciences plans to start Development of a (1) HOSA Advisory Board and a (2) School Counselor Advisory Board. The COHS has promoted its programs at the HOSA International Leadership Conference over the past two years. HOSA has proven to be an excellent recruiting target for students interested in our programs throughout the COHS. Additionally, COHS faculty and staff have visited high schools in the past to recruit students to COHS programs. This Start seeks to advance these recruiting efforts through active participation of HOSA and high school counselors in advisory boards for our college.

This action aligns with *Strategy 1: Prioritize Student Success and Student Access* and *Goal 1.1 - Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth* and having advisory boards from these two groups will help us recruit students from their school districts while we are also able to learn more about their specific needs. They can also provide the COHS with real-time feedback on interests and trends, which will then shape our marketing and outreach efforts in achieving Pillar 1 - Enrollment.

## **Supporting Data:**

The COHS has attended HOSA International Leadership Conferences in 2023 and 2024 and received feedback that HOSA advisors would be interested in participating in an advisory board for our programs. Additionally, local school districts have also been interested. The COHS recently hosted an information day to lay the groundwork for the School Counselor Advisory Board. They have already requested COHS-specific content days, which we are investigating.

## **Resources / Collaborations Required:**

Funding; Support from wraparound services (Visitor's Center, Academic Success Center, Admissions, Career Success Center, etc.)

# FY 2026 Start Doing

## **Statement:**

The COHS has a wide range of students who are pre-health professions majors (i.e., pre-Nursing, Food Science & Nutrition (planning for MS in Dietetics), Kinesiology - Clinical Exercise Science, MSAT) who may not be accepted into their chosen programs. This issue is expected to increase with pre-Physician Assistant Studies and pre-Physical Therapy programs coming online soon. These students may then choose to leave their major, the college, or even the university if they don't obtain this acceptance. The COHS will construct a career counseling/engagement strategy that works with the students to design their next steps. This will help with retention efforts while also helping them plan for their next steps in their academic journey.

This action aligns with *Strategy 1: Prioritize student success and student access* and *Goal 1.1 - Recruit, retain, graduate, and empower students to drive sustainable growth*. The level of student disappointment following denial of entry into one of these programs is undeniable. The COHS wants to respond by helping provide better guidance to students on their next steps. The results should reflect an increase in retention and degree completions in undergraduate programs throughout the COHS in achieving Pillar 3 - Completion.

## **Supporting Data:**

The Health Sciences – Pre-Nursing track saw an enrollment increase of 23.7% from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024. While the SON's available cohort slots are expected to eventually increase by 70% (85 vs. 144), the number of students not being admitted creates a need to assist the students who were not accepted into Nursing or other similar health professions programs.

## **Resources / Collaborations Required:**

A staff reclassification was completed in March 2025 (focusing more on retention); SAM Center; Career Success Center

# College of Health Sciences Summary

## Keep Doing

**Keep #1:** COHS Week

**Keep #2:** Academic Community Engagement (ACE) dedicated funding support

## Stop Doing

**Stop #1:** Affiliation agreement decentralization

## Start Doing

**Start #1:** Assistant Dean of Interprofessional Education (IPE)

**Start #2:** HOSA Advisory Board / School Counselor Advisory Board

**Start #3:** Career Counseling Program for COHS Pre-Health Professions majors who are unsuccessful with gaining program entry.

# Questions?



Sam Houston  
State University

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM