

# **HISTORY AND OPERATION OF THE UTB/TSC PARTNERSHIP**

The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College have entered into a bold new partnership to provide expanding educational opportunities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the state. This creative initiative is designed to improve the continuity, quality, and efficiency of the educational programs and support services offered by the University and the College.

It combines the administrative, instructional and support services of the upper-level university and the community college and eliminates the artificial barriers between them. Continued program development, new program implementation, systemic cooperation with local schools, and partnerships with other institutions of higher learning are major goals of this emerging partnership.

Texas Southmost College was created by the Brownsville Independent School District in 1926. It was the second community college to be founded in the state of Texas. Originally known as the Junior College of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, its name was changed in 1931 to Brownsville Junior College. Upon the establishment of the Southmost Union Junior College District in 1949, it was renamed Texas Southmost College.

The bill that created The University of Texas at Brownsville in 1991 also authorized it to enter into a partnership arrangement with Texas Southmost College. The partnership was created under the provisions of Chapter 51,

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Subchapter L of the *Texas Education Code*. The establishment of that partnership and its operational implementation in the Fall of 1992 began the history of The University of Texas at Brownsville in partnership with Texas Southmost College.

The Partnership has its foundation in the establishment of two higher education institutions: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College. The University of Texas at Brownsville and the Partnership were created by the Texas legislature in May 1991. The foundation for The University of Texas at Brownsville was laid in 1973 when Pan American University opened a Center on the campus of Texas Southmost College to teach upper-level and graduate courses. In 1977, the Legislature approved the establishment of Pan American University at Brownsville as an upper-level center. In 1989, Pan American University at Brownsville became a part of the University of Texas System as a consequence of The University of Texas-Pan American merger. This was the prelude to the establishment in 1991 of what is today - The University of Texas at Brownsville, a freestanding, upper-division university.

The governing boards of The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College each retain their statutory responsibilities. The University of Texas at Brownsville and the Partnership are governed by the nine-member Board of Regents of the UT System appointed by the Governor. The Southmost Union Junior College District is governed by a seven-member board elected at large from the ad valorem taxing district of the college, which includes most of Cameron County. Chapter 51 of the *Texas Education Code* also provided for the governing board of each institution to appoint members to a Partnership Advisory Committee which is composed of three members from each board. This committee makes recommendations concerning the development of coordinated programs and services to meet the needs of the communities served by the Partnership.

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The operation of the Partnership consolidates the administrative, instructional and support services of the two institutions. Under the provisions of the Partnership, Texas Southmost College retains all of its property and assets. The University of Texas at Brownsville leases needed facilities from the District. Through this unique partnership arrangement, The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College have embarked on a quest to provide the finest educational opportunities that their consolidated resources can create.