

Happy Campus

Texas A&M University–Central Texas

Listening First, Driving Impact

When Dr. Richard Rhodes became president of Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT), he wanted a strategic plan the campus would use, not shelve. Prior experiences showed how hard it can be for internal teams to ask tough questions, build consensus, and turn ideas into action. TAMUCT needed a trusted partner who would listen first, engage deeply, and guide a process the entire community could embrace.

Partnership with CampusWorks

Following a competitive RFP, TAMUCT selected CampusWorks as the "best match" for its strategic planning journey.

What stood out:

- **Listening first:** CampusWorks began with the executive team to understand institutional context before broadening engagement.
- **Team-based expertise:** Multiple specialists brought fresh, cross-sector perspectives.
- **Independent facilitation:** Courage to surface difficult conversations while fostering trust and alignment.

A Collaborative Approach

CampusWorks guided TAMUCT through a three-phase process:

1. **Listen → Synthesize → Co-Create:** CampusWorks conducted listening sessions with leadership, faculty, staff, students, and community partners to develop a shared Vision (the Why), Mission (the What), and Pillars (the How).

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CENTRAL TEXAS

- **Public university in Kileen, TX with a majority military-affiliated student body**
- **Student population: ~2,200 students (~1,700 undergraduate)**

CHALLENGE

When Dr. Richard Rhodes became president of TAMUCT, he wanted to engage the campus community in developing a unified, actionable strategic plan that would transform vision into measurable progress and lasting impact.

CAMPUSWORKS PARTNERSHIP

TAMUCT partnered with CampusWorks to facilitate an inclusive strategic planning process—aligning people, purpose, and priorities to create a unified, action-oriented roadmap for the university's future.

RESULTS

- Three-year plan with bold new vision adopted campuswide
- Sustained enrollment growth
- +5.3% average salary increase
- Tuition flat ~5 years
- $2M industry donation
- Funded Military Talent Pipeline

2. **Clarify Ambition:** The team debated language and stretch goals—ultimately committing to become a national leader in serving military and regional partners.
3. **Activate the Plan:** The plan was distilled into a one-page Strategy Map used to open meetings, guide budget decisions, and ground every conversation in shared purpose.

A Bold New Vision: Strategic Plan 2028

The result was "A Bold New Vision: Strategic Plan 2028," a three-year roadmap built for adaptability and daily use. The plan focuses on five pillars:

1. **Academic Excellence:** Develop responsive, learner-centered programs aligned with industry needs.
2. **Student Success:** Strengthen belonging and engagement across the entire student journey.
3. **Employee Experience:** Become an employer of choice through competitive pay, development, and well-being.
4. **Community Collaboration:** Deepen partnerships with industry, education, and the military to expand opportunity.
5. **Awareness:** Elevate A&M–Central Texas' distinct value through creative, data-informed marketing.

Early Wins & Lasting Momentum

As a result of this partnership, TAMUCT is already operationalizing their new strategic plan:

- **Active Utilization:** The plan is referenced in meetings, budgets, and convocation events.
- **Enrollment Growth:** Strong gains following rollout.
- **Employee Investment:** Market comparisons led to a 5.3% average salary increase while tuition and fees remained flat for five years.
- **Community Partnerships:** Tokyo Electron donated $2M in semiconductor equipment; Centex Technologies and Trideum provide internships and co-designed learning.
- **Military Talent Pipeline:** With 51% of students military-affiliated, TAMUCT secured a legislative line-item to support five high-wage career pathways—cybersecurity, data analytics, STEM educator training, semiconductors, and law enforcement.
- **Adaptability:** When the U.S. Army increased investment in drone technology, TAMUCT quickly pivoted—adding new stackable credentials and partnerships without altering its vision or pillars. The flexible structure ensures the university remains agile as needs evolve.

Voice of the Client

Dr. Richard Rhodes
President,
Texas A&M University–Central Texas

BUILDING SHARED OWNERSHIP

"Our faculty, staff, students, and community felt heard—and felt like they actually shaped the plan."

BRINGING THE VISION TO LIFE

"It's been amazing to watch our plan come to fruition. I hadn't seen that level of activation at other institutions."

A TRUSTED PARTNER IN TRANSFORMATION

"CampusWorks would rank significantly higher than any firm I've used. They listened first, understood us, and helped our people own the plan."

THE POWER OF CAMPUSWORKS

The partnership between TAMUCT and CampusWorks is a powerful example of what's possible when an institution commits to listening first, engaging its community authentically, and turning strategic vision into a living plan that guides daily decisions, fosters collaboration, and drives measurable results.