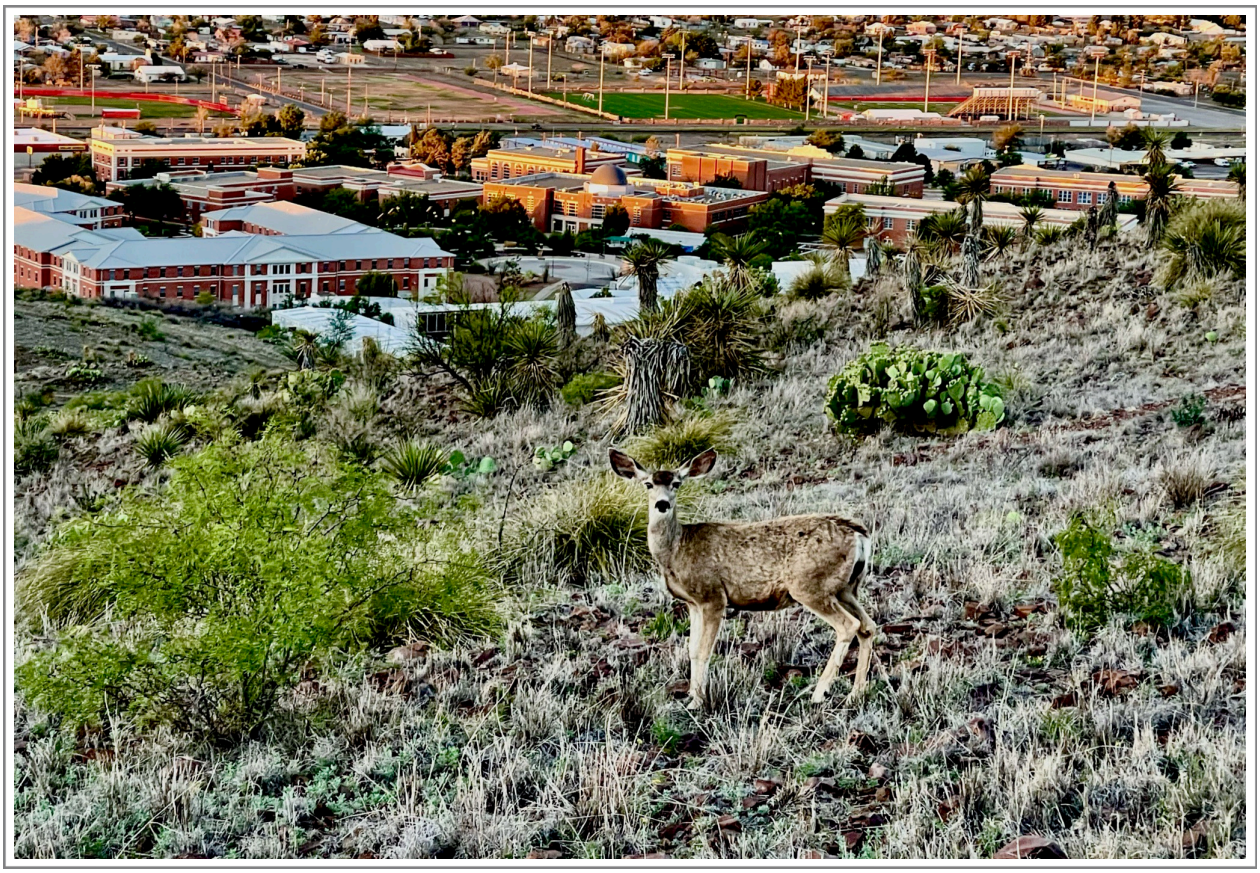
A REPORT TO THE LOBO FAMILY REGARDING

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT PETE P. GALLEGO

JUNE 4, 2020 - JUNE 4, 2022



Sul Ross State University

ALPINE | UVALDE | DEL RIO | EAGLE PASS

A RECENT HISTORY.

In June, 2020, the Honorable Pete Gallego, a former Member of Congress and the Texas House of Representatives, was named the 13th president of Sul Ross State University. President Gallego, a 1980 graduate of Alpine High School and 1982 graduate of Sul Ross State University, became the first Alpine, Texas, native and SRSU graduate to serve as president of the university.

President Gallego's two years at Sul Ross were transformative. He rebuilt the foundational elements of a successful university and modernized University business practices. He valued fiscal responsibility, prioritized students, faculty, and staff, pushed for closer ties to local communities, and created stronger bods even within the Lobo family itself.

An "outside the box" thinker, President Gallego restored Lobo traditions, enhanced existing traditions, and created new ones. The Homecoming bonfire made a comeback. A cattle drive through campus became the first known college rodeo pep rally of its kind in the nation. Basketball season began with campus-wide "Basketball Madness." Robust intramural activities for students and staff, a wellness program, and mental health services were added or significantly enhanced.

SRSU employees whose primary salary was less than $100k per year saw a $320 increase in their paychecks received on December 1, 2021 (before the holidays), and January 1, 2022 (after the holidays). Employees making less than $50k per year saw their salaries permanently increased. Student employees, including graduate assistants, received their first pay increase in years, as will adjunct faculty members.

On a personal level, President Gallego - more commonly known as "President Pete" - led weekly early morning wellness walks, served as the announcer for Lobo volleyball and basketball games, regularly hosted staff and student groups for dinner in the backyard of the President's Home, and even taught a federal government course each long semester.

Student retention rates and employee morale - especially low due to the effects of the pandemic - increased significantly. Highly visible, easily accessible to students and employees, and ever enthusiastic about SRSU and its potential, no one ever doubted that Pete Gallego loved Sul Ross.

President Gallego had such an impact on the trajectory of the University that many now refer to Sul Ross history as "Pre-Pete" and "Post-Pete." He was unlike any president the University had ever had. Here are a few of the highlights . . .

A WALK THROUGH SRSU OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Pete P. Gallego, President

June 3, 2022

To the Board of Regents, System Administration, and the Lobo Family:

It is has been my privilege and pleasure to serve as President of Sul Ross State University over the last two years. My family and I have a long history with Sul Ross. My parents met here as students in 1946. My sisters and I all went to school here. I hold a Bachelor's degree from Sul Ross. For me, the job was not just fulfilling, it was personal and meaningful.

Like many small colleges and universities across the nation, Sul Ross faced a crisis of confidence. Restoring the faculty, staff, and students' trust in the institution —and in themselves — as well as the local community's faith in the university was a paramount objective. There were a myriad of other challenges that had also built up over time.

The urbanization of Texas and decline of rural populations impacted the university in a real way. Other factors, like an inability to react quickly to changing times and demographics, magnified the challenges. Fear set in as enrollment fell. The onset of the pandemic also brought additional complications - and multiplied the fear.

The philosopher Laozi said that "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." Due to my lifelong association with Sul Ross, my steps were quick, bold, and decisive; at a speed few were accustomed to. We quickly developed a methodical, science-based approach to COVID-19, increased online options, reinforced our role as an asset to local communities, and reassured our employees.

Sul Ross has now begun to embrace who and what we are and to play to our strengths. Our rural location in the high desert of Far West Texas and along the US/Mexico border is an advantage. Our small size allows us to be a laboratory for innovative and cutting edge ideas. Our core programs are well known and well respected. However, we have also recognized that we cannot be all things to all people. Flexibility is key to adapting to and prospering in an ever changing environment.

The job is not yet done, but SRSU's journey toward a brighter future has begun. I leave the university I love better than I found it. Sul Ross is on the cusp of great things. I am proud to have played a part in stabilizing the University's course and setting it on a firm path for its second century of service.

My thanks to the members of the Board of Regents and the Chancellor, Dr. Brian McCall, for giving me this opportunity. I will be forever grateful. May God bless Sul Ross State University! Go Lobos!

With much gratitude,

Pete P. Gallego
Sul Ross State University, Class of 1982

PETE GALLEGO (PPG) | SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
HISTORICAL INDEX

Year PPG's Parents Met at Sul Ross (outside Lawrence Hall) - 1946

Year PPG's Father Received a College Degree From Sul Ross - 1949

Year PPG Graduates from Alpine High School - 1980

Year PPG Graduates from Sul Ross - 1982

Year PPG Graduates From Law School - 1985

Year PPG Marries María Elena Ramón - 1990

Year PPG Elected to Represent Sul Ross in the Texas House - 1990

Number of Alpine, Texas, Residents Ever Elected to the Texas House - 8

Number of Alpine, Texas, Residents Elected to the Texas House in the last 100 Years - 4

Number of Sul Ross Graduates Ever Elected to Texas House - 2

Number of Latino Alpine, Texas, Residents Ever Elected to the Texas Legislature - 1

Number of Latino Sul Ross Graduates Ever Elected to the Texas Legislature - 1

Year PPG takes office as first Latino to represent SRSU in the Texas House of Representatives - 1991

Year first-ever Regent from Sul Ross appointed by Governor Ann Richards - 1991

Year PPG Appointed to Appropriations Committee - 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001

Years PPG Appointed to Joint House | Senate Conference Committee on the State Budget - 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001

Year Lawrence Hall Renovated with Legislative Appropriation - 1994

Year SRSU Gets a New Building in Uvalde - 1994

Year New SRSU Building in Del Rio Dedicated By Governor Ann Richards - 1994

Year PPG Teaches First State Government Class as Adjunct Professor at SRSU - 1995

Year SRSU Gets New Building in Eagle Pass - 1994

Year SRSU Gets New Building in Uvalde - 1994

Year SRSU Gets Additional New Building in Eagle Pass - 1996

Year Morgan University Center Constructed with Legislative Appropriation - 1997

Year Ferguson Hall Renovated with Legislative Appropriation - 1999

Year Sul Ross Receives Legislative Appropriation to Build the Pete P. Gallego Center - 1999

Year Wildenthal Memorial Library Renovated, Rebricked, and Third Floor Added - 2000

Year Pete P. Gallego Center Constructed with Legislative Appropriation - 2001

Pete P. Gallego Center Dedicated by Texas House Speaker Pete Laney - August 31, 2001

Year Warnock Science Building Renovated with Legislative Appropriation - 2003

Year Turner Animal Science Building Renovated with Legislative Appropriation - 2003

Year SRSU Gets Additional Science/Technology Building in Del Rio - 2004

Year SRSU Gets New Building in Uvalde - 2007

Year Nicolás Miguel Ramón Gallego Born - 2007

Year SRSU Gets New Building in Uvalde - 2008

Year PPG elected to US Congress - 2012

Number of Sul Ross Graduates Ever Elected to Congress - 3

Number of Latino Sul Ross Graduates Ever Elected to Congress - 2

Number of Alpine, Texas, Residents Ever Elected to Congress - 1

Year PPG Teaches First Federal Government Class as Adjunct Professor at SRSU - 2015

Year PPG's Mother Receives Degree from Sul Ross - 2019

Year PPG Named President of Sul Ross - 2020

Year PPG Enlarges University Executive Committee - 2020

Year PPG Cancels Construction of New Visitor Center on the Alpine Campus and Designates the Funding for Technology Upgrades on All Campuses - 2020

Year PPG Designates New Official SRSU Seal with 4 Stars (1 for Each Campus) Separated by "1917 (the Year of the University's Founding) replacing the words "Alpine, Texas" - 2020

Year PPG Initiates "La Vida Lobo" Service Program at SRSU - 2020

Year PPG Gets New SRSU Campus Master Plan Approved - 2021

Year First "La Vida Lobo" Service Awards Given - 2021

Year SRSU Launches New Website - 2021

Year PPG Initiates "I Love Sul Ross" videos - 2021

Year PPG Initiates First Ever SRSU Professional Development Program - 2021

Year SRSU Creates a STEM College (ALPS) - 2021

Year PPG Hosts Texas State University System Board of Regents Meeting in Alpine - 2021

Year Congress Reauthorizes Earmarks - 2021

Year PPG Submits Resignation - 2021

Year SRSU Gets First Federal Earmark Since Reauthorization - 2022

Year PPG Initiates "Sul Ross Spotlight" Luncheon Lecture Series - 2022

Year PPG gets New SRSU Strategic Plan Approved - 2022

Year Department of Fine Arts becomes Department of Visual and Performing Arts - 2022

Year PPG Named "President Emeritus" of Sul Ross - 2022

Year PPG Leaves Office at Sul Ross - 2022

Campus Statistics for PPG'S Two Year Tenure (2020-2022):

Net Percent Improvement in SRSU's Financial Position - 208.3%

Net Dollar Improvement in SRSU's Financial Position - $8,300,000.00

Net Percent Growth in SRSU Endowment - 25.6%

Net Percent Growth in Annual Giving (During COVID) - 7.6%

Net Percent Growth in Scholarships Available for Students - 86%

Average Percentage Faculty Salary Increase (Alpine) - 7.7%

Average Percentage Faculty Salary Increase (RGC) - 6.5%

Net Percent Growth in Faculty Research Expenditures - 6.8%

Increase in SRSU Operating Budget - $1,555,957.00

Net Percent Increase in SRSU Operating Budget - 3.15%

Net Percent Increase in Operations and Maintenance Expenditures - 30.6%

Net Percent Increase in Institutional Support Expenditures - 49.8%

Net Increase in Grant Funding - 6.1%

Improvement in SRSU Default Rate - 20.9%

Salary Increases for University Police Officers - $3,000.00

Salary Increases for Lowest Paid Employees - $3,000.00

New Minimum Wage for Student Employees - $8.25 per hour

Holiday Cheer Salary Supplement added to Certain Employee Salaries - $640.00

New Money for Center for Big Bend Studies - $1,000,000.00

Percent Increase in Rate of First Time in College Students Achieving 30 Semester Credit Hours - 37.1%

Percent Increase in 1st Year Retention Rate - 1.8%

Percent Increase in 2 Year Persistence Rate - 1.7%

Percent Increase in Total Degrees Awarded - 3.26%

Percent Increase in Degrees Awarded to Minorities - 22.5%

Percent Increase in Degrees Awarded to Hispanics - 13.9%

Percent Increase in Degrees Awarded to Adult Learners -5.2%

Percent Increase in Degrees Awarded to Economically Disadvantaged - 13.9%

Percent Improvement in First Time in College Student Average Years to Degree - 4.9%

Percent Increase in 4 Year Graduation Rate - 1.1%

Percent Increase in 6 Year Graduation Rate - 4.2%

Percent Increase in Transfer Graduation Rate - 6.5%

Percent Increase in Federal Female Student Graduation Rate - 7%

Percent Increase in Federal Women Athlete Graduation Rate - 10%

Percent Increase in Federal Male Student Graduation Rate - 5%

Percent Increase in Federal Male Athlete Graduation Rate - 8%

Percent Increase in Federal Overall Graduation Rate - 8%

Percent Increase in Overall Athletic Graduation Rate - 7%

Increase in Rate of Satisfaction From Graduates with SRSU (Alpine) - 10.1%

Increase in Rate of Satisfaction from Graduates with SRSU (RGC) - 4.3%

Percent Increase in Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty - 18.6%

Percent Increase in Minority Faculty - 8.6%

Percent Increase in Hispanic Faculty - 11.4%

Percent Increase in African American Faculty - 14.3%

Percent Increase in Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty Teaching Lower Division Courses - 17.6%

Percent Increase in Fully Online Semester Credit Hours Offered - 31.5%

Year PPG Initiates Campus Professional Development Program - 2021

Number of Professional Development Hours Submitted by Employees in 2021 - 7,439

Year PPG Initiates “I Love Sul Ross” videos - 2021

Year PPG Initiates Sul Ross Spotlight - 2022

Number of Women Serving on the Executive Committee - 5

Number of Latinos Serving on Executive Committee - 7

Number of Women Academic Deans - 4

Percent of Academic Deans who are Women - 100%

Number of Student Government Leaders Elected to Lead TSUS Student Advisory Board - 1

Number of Cattle Drives Through Sul Ross Campus - 1 (first ever)

Number of Rodeos won by SRSU Rodeo Team - 7 (first since 2002)

Number of Rodeo Athletes Qualifying for College National Finals Rodeo - 11

Number of National Championships - 1 (first since 1983)

Number of Number of National Championships in Bull Riding - 1

Number of Times Rodeo Team Set Annual School Record for Points Scored - 2

Number of Rodeo Team Academic All-Americans - 4

Percentage Rodeo Team Graduation Rate - 82%

Number of SRSU Rodeos Setting Record as the Largest Collegiate Rodeo in History - 1

Number of Miles of New Fencing Added to University Ranch - 21.5

Number of New Horse Stalls Built at Rodeo Arena - 96

Number of University Cattle Herds Begun - 1

Estimated In-Kind Value of Work, Materials and Livestock Donated to SRSU Rodeo Program - $1,500,000.00

Number of SRSU Student Athletes Honored by the American Southwest Conference - 342

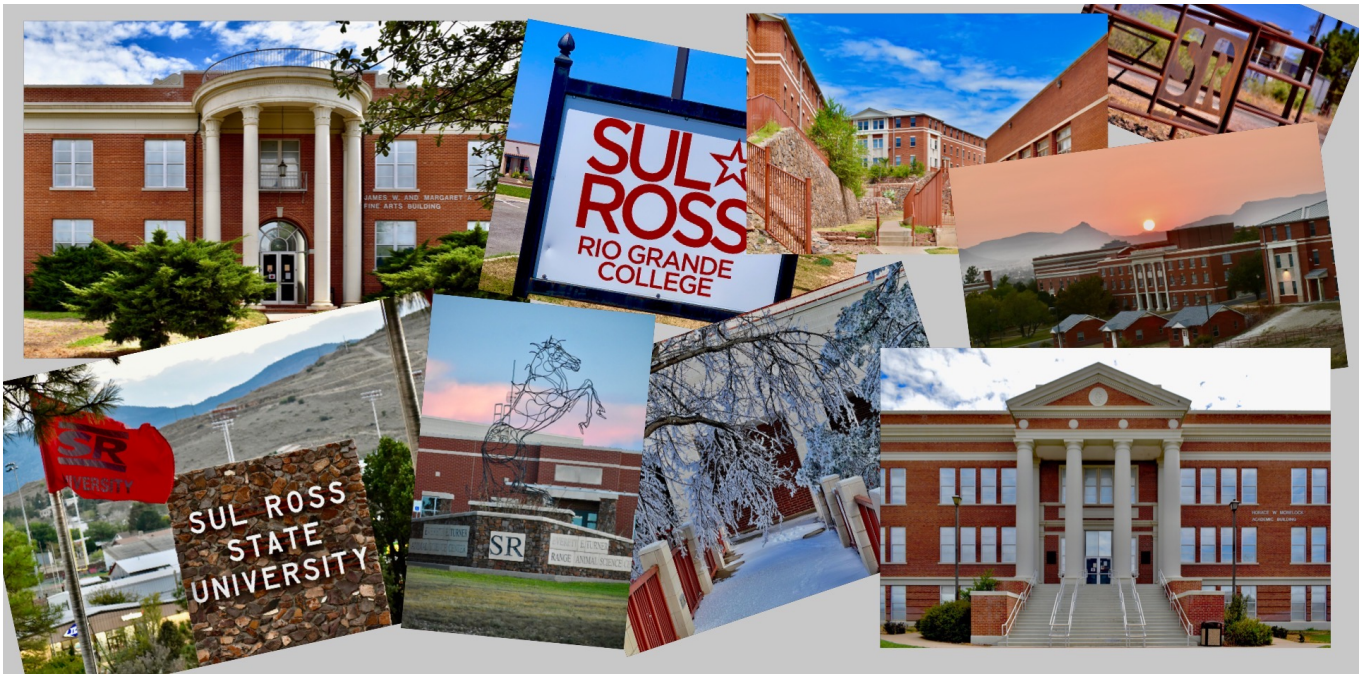
Number of American Southwest Conference Championship Tournament Appearances - 9

Number of Years Ultimate Frisbee Club Sports Team was Nationally Ranked - 2

Number of New Trees Planted on Campus - 238

Number of Murals Added to Campus - 2

Number of Courses Taught Each Long Semester - 1



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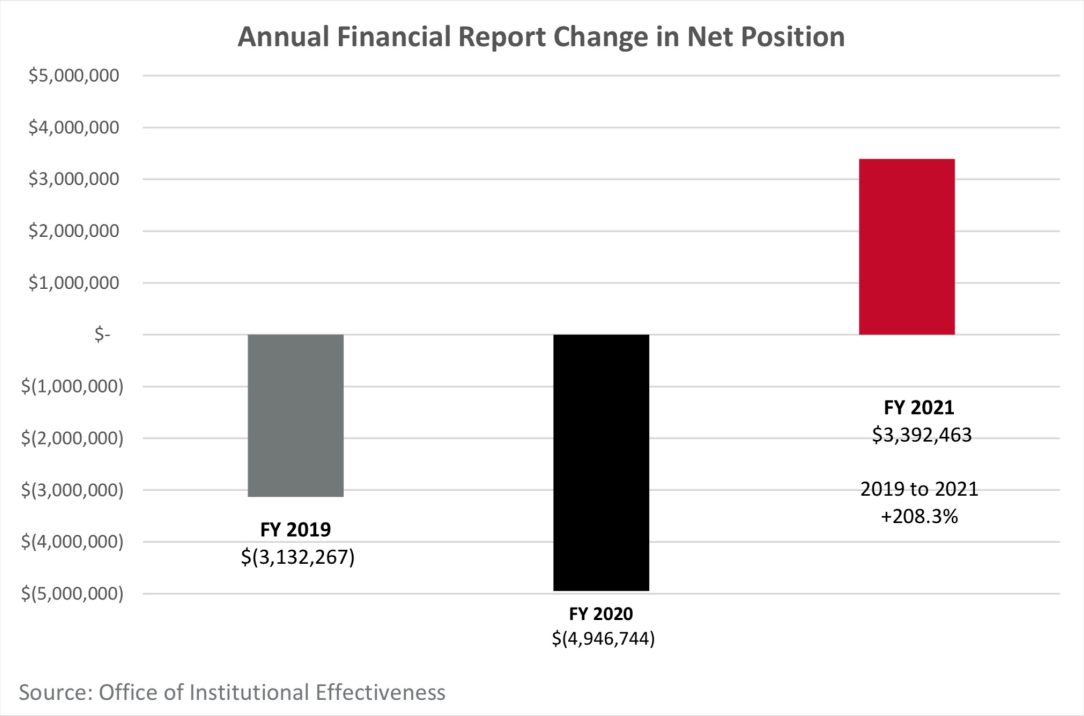
A WALK THROUGH SRSU FINANCES
OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

(a) The Annual Financial Report - Over two years, Sul Ross's financial position improved approximately 208.3% and moved from a net negative low of $4.9M to a positive $3.4M - a change of approximately $8.3M. By any standard, an impressive feat.



A difficult situation always provides an opportunity to shine. President Pete Gallego shone brightest in the area of finance. A long-time legislative appropriator, Mr. Gallego knew his way around a state budget. The SRSU Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year which began prior to President Gallego's arrival (FY 2019) reported a net negative position of -$3,132,267.03. By the time President Gallego arrived on campus, much of the spending for FY 2019 had already been made and much of the FY 2020 budget was already obligated. The FY 2020 Annual Financial Report showed a net negative position of -$4.946,744.33.

Though able to have some impact on the FY 2020 budget, the FY 2021 Annual Financial Report was the first report based entirely budget decisions made by the Gallego Administration. The FY 2021 report will show a net positive position of $3,392,463.28. These data are derived from the annual financial reports which every state agency is required to file and which is available to the public.

The entirety of the leadership at Sul Ross, administrative and academic, deserves much of the credit. They worked closely and cooperatively with President Gallego to put the University on firm financial footing and cut spending where appropriate.

(b) The APC: Faculty Involvement in the Planning Process - President Gallego instituted a university-wide and faculty-driven process to plan the University's response to fiscal challenges arising from a budget shortfall, the Covid-19 pandemic, static or declining enrollment, and declining state support. An academic planning committee (APC) made many difficult budget recommendations.

The formation of the APC followed the recommendations of a separate committee, known as the Second Century Committee. The Second Century Committee, also appointed and convened by President Gallego, was made up of both faculty and staff and was also convened to examine budgetary measures, both academic and administrative, and to improve the fiscal health of the University.

The APC made recommendations and findings about demand for classes in specific academic disciplines, potential abolition or consolidation of academic departments or programs and appropriate numbers of faculty positions allocated to each department or program and other suggestions for academic reorganization. The recommendations were controversial - but they forced a conversation on the direction and future of Sul Ross and highlighted the need to do things differently. Vacancies created simply through generation of the APC report contributed substantially to savings at the university.

The conversation about about the direction and future of the University was necessary and healthy. It underscored that spending decisions should be guided by one basic question: Does this help Sul Ross attract and retain students, faculty and staff?

(c) Building a Budget Process and Getting "Buy In" - On arriving at Sul Ross, President Gallego initiated an open and transparent budget discussion and asked administrative and academic departments to provide a list of wants and needs and to propose their own budget. This bottom-up approach was unheard of in the University's recent history.

In place of the old system which concentrated authority in the hands of few people, Mr. Gallego enacted a process similar to that used by the Legislative Budget Board. A campus-wide presentation on how the process would work was held before individual departmental hearings were held.

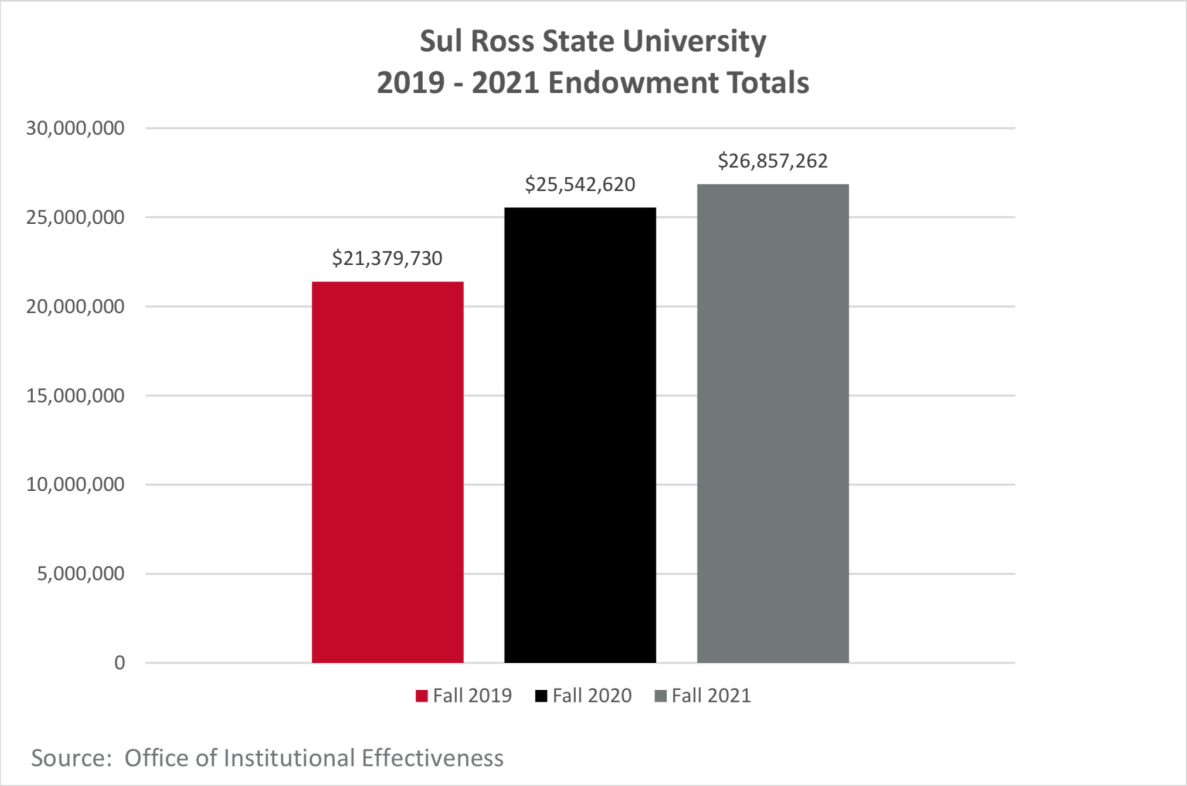
"The biggest difference here has been the president. He has completely changed the atmosphere on campus. Why is he leaving?"

- Campus Environment Survey, Spring 2022

SRSU employees are now more invested in the University's budget due to participation in the process and ability to give input. All departmental budget managers can now, for the first time, see their budgets online using the University's Banner system.

Other budgetary tools available on the Banner system were put to use for the first time. The University has streamlined processes for online purchasing, electronic personnel action forms, salary planner, and budget development by using the additional Banner options. Data can now be more easily pulled for both decision making and transparency.

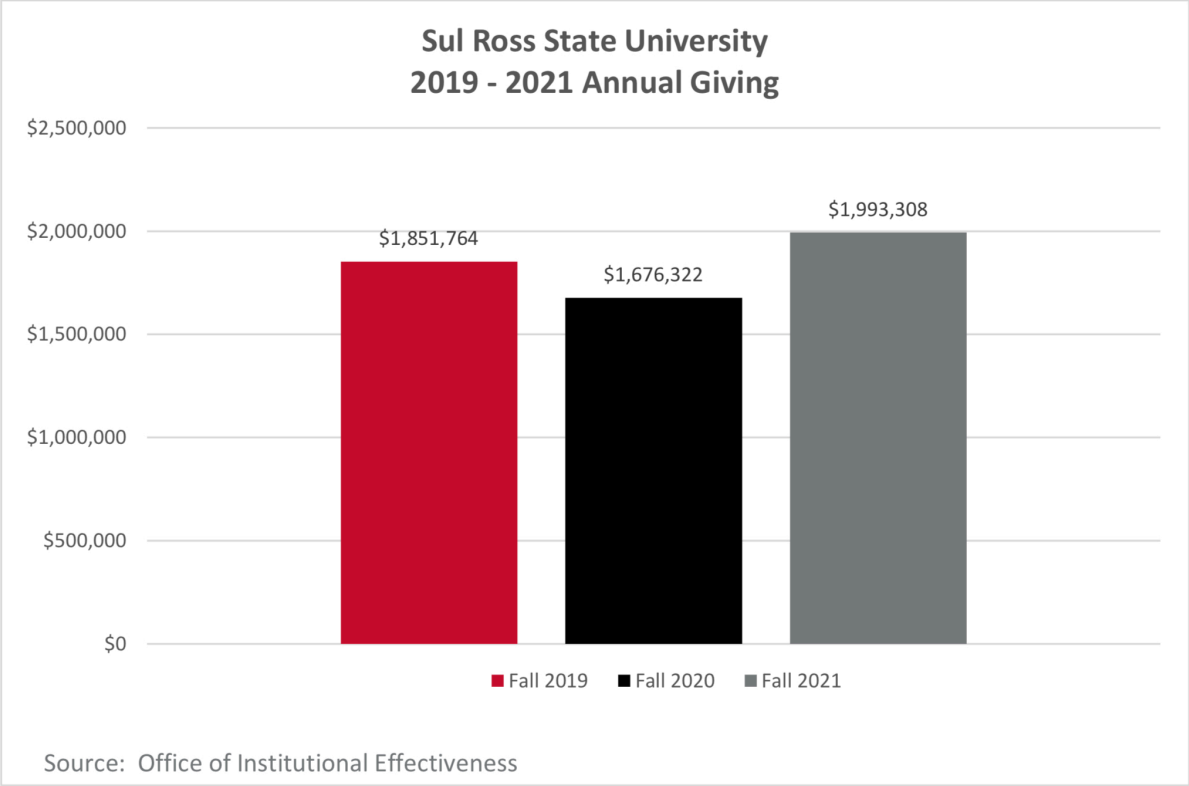
(d) Endowment Growth and Annual Giving - During President Gallego's short presidency, the SRSU endowment fund grew by over 25% - from $21.3 million before he arrived to approximately $26.8 million at the end of his administration - the largest two-year percentage growth of the SRSU endowment in the University's history. Annual giving to Sul Ross increased by 7.6% in the same time period.



Sul Ross and universities in the Texas State University System (TSUS) pooled their assets in a unitized endowment fund in order to invest larger cash balances, get higher interest rates, and maximize interest earned on investments. President Gallego appointed a staff member to work with TSUS investment staff on governance of the unitized fund. The unitized endowment fund was able to move quickly to take full advantage of market conditions and earn Sul Ross a significant return on its investment.

Depending on the intent of the donor, additional money raised can be used to grow the endowment and/or provide immediate funding of student scholarships or other educational needs. In the past three months alone, over $100,000.00 in endowed scholarships for the Teacher Education Program was donated to SRSU. Another $50,000.00 is in the process of being finalized.

In 2022, President Gallego added the first-ever fundraising golf tournament in El Paso, the area of origin for a significant number of both former and current Sul Ross students. The El Paso golf tournament is dedicated to raising scholarship funds to recruit and retain more El Paso area students. The SRSU Alumni had, in cooperation with the Athletic Department, for years held a golf tournament fundraiser in San Antonio to raise money for SRSU Athletics.

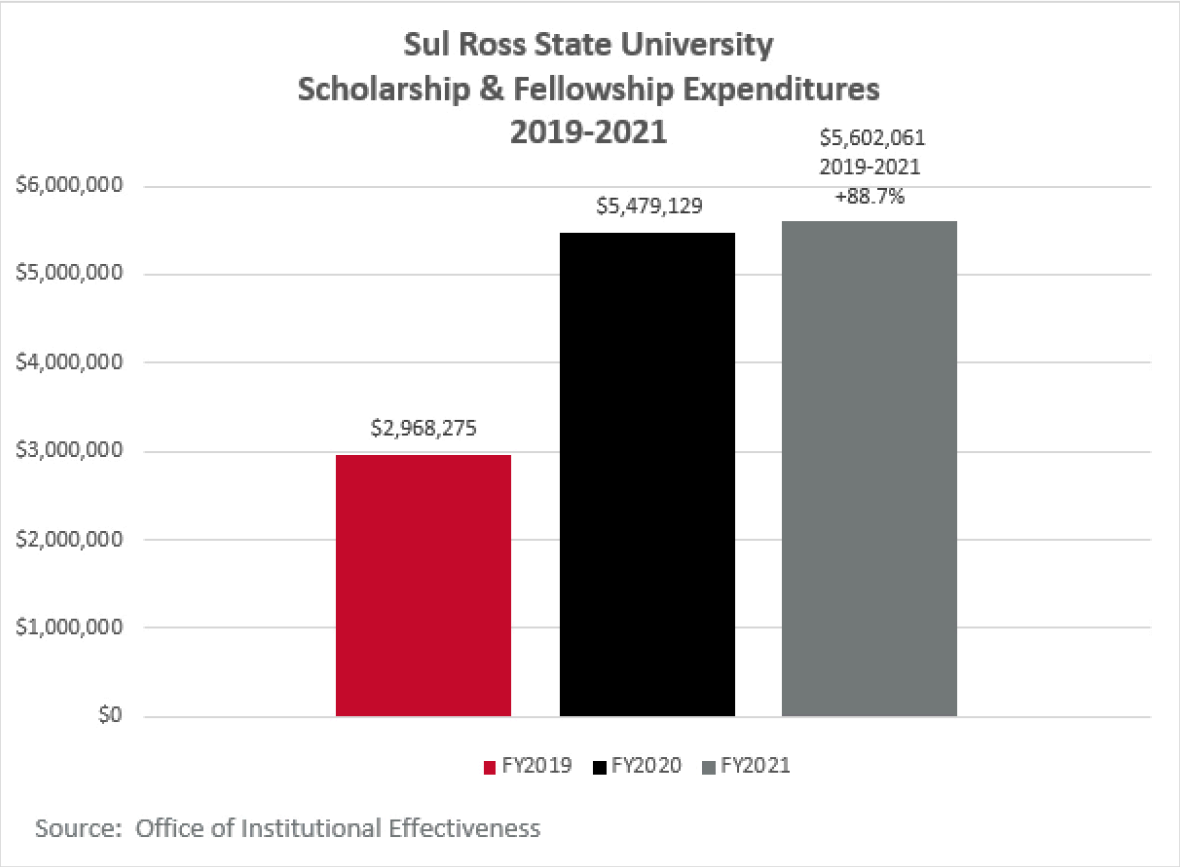


Unfortunately, the pandemic and other challenges severely limited the amount of time President Gallego spent on fundraising. Knowing it was a difficult economy for donors, he re-engaged the alumni community, strengthened relationships with and between the Agriculture and Natural Resource Science (ANRS) and Rodeo Exes Association and the SRSU Alumni Association, and reorganized the development office.

As a former candidate for elected office, Mr Gallego understood fundraising. At Sul Ross, every dollar counts — and President Gallego understood that, too.

(e) Scholarships and Fellowships - Scholarship opportunities at both the Alpine and Rio Grande College campuses increased by an astounding 88.7% during the Gallego Administration. Each scholarship means additional help to get a student to Sul Ross. A complete inventory of SRSU scholarships also yielded significant findings in terms of unused scholarship and additional available revenue. This information was shared with relevant academic departments who were thrilled to learn of additional scholarship resources in their areas.

President Gallego added an additional $50,000.00 for Rodeo scholarships and allocated $20,000.00 for SRSU Honors Program scholarships with an additional $20,000.00 to be matched by the Sul Ross State University Foundation. An endowed scholarship was created in honor of Irma Garcia and Eva Mireles, two Sul Ross graduates killed defending their elementary school students in a tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.



The University initiated a program of providing summer housing scholarships for new students and providing “promise” scholarships for students on the cusp of graduation, but who for whatever reason failed to re-enroll. These two new scholarship programs will have a significant impact on recruiting and retention over time. A scholarship now also provides assistance to students serving as the Lobo mascot during athletic and other school events. Several other scholarships were also enhanced.

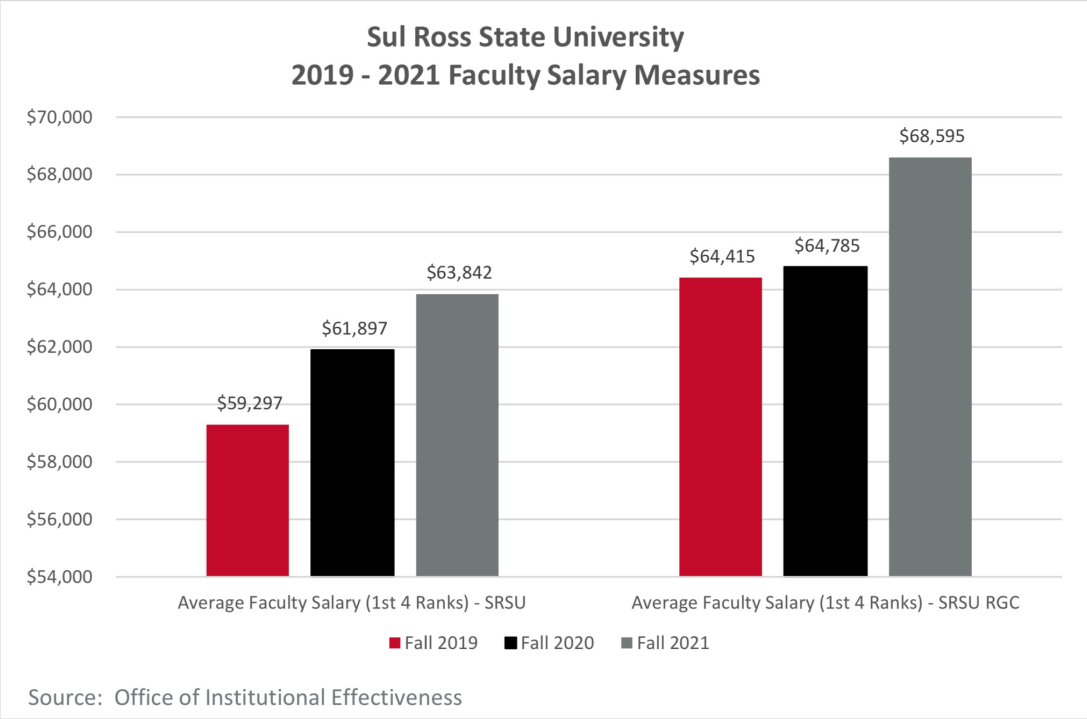
Further, departments with jurisdiction over a particular scholarship were informed of the existence of the scholarship, the amount or amounts available for distribution, the criteria to be used in awarding the scholarship (if specified by the donor), and other pertinent information. Scholarship money began to flow to students. The Music Department at SRSU, which has the largest endowment, and

the Geology Department, which has high potential for growth, began to actively use scholarships in their recruitment efforts.

President Gallego himself gave to university scholarships. He contributed $1,500.00 monthly to a scholarship fund established by and now honoring his parents, Pete Almodova Gallego and Elena Paredes Peña Gallego.

As a student, President Gallego served as an officer of and was active in multiple student organizations. Thus, recipients of the Gallego scholarship are chosen by a committee appointed by the Vice President for Student Services. Any student active in extracurricular activities, including athletics, is eligible for a Gallego scholarship.

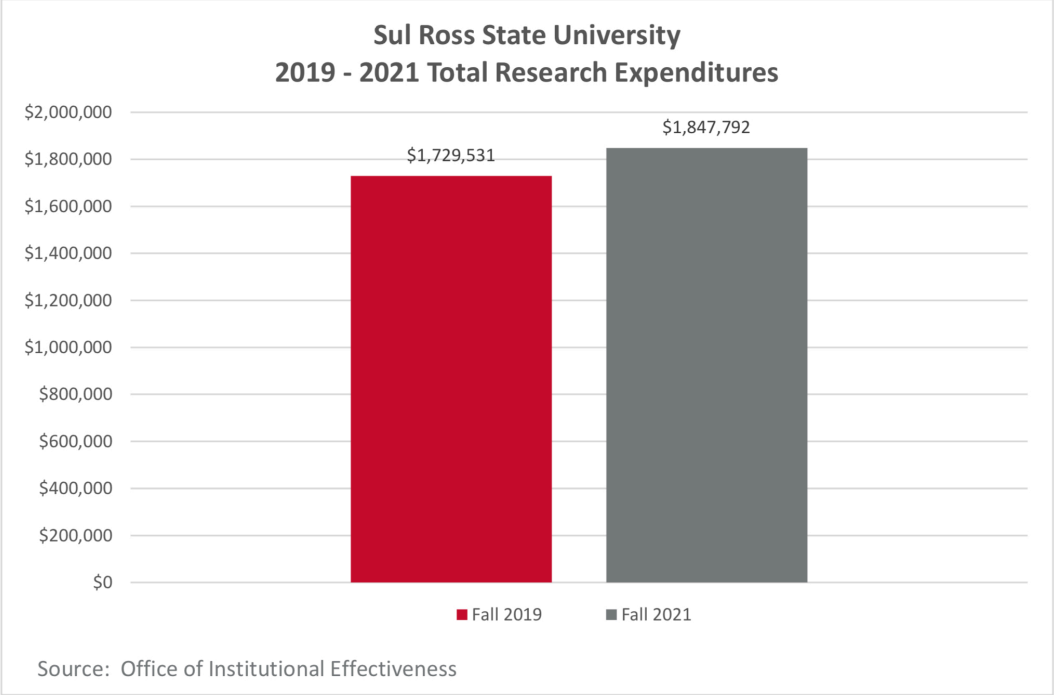
(f) Faculty Salaries and Support - Average faculty salaries on both the Alpine and Rio Grande College campuses increased while Pete Gallego served as President of Sul Ross. On the Alpine campus, faculty salaries increased by an average of 7.7% among the first four faculty ranks from $59,297.00 to $63,842.00. On the Rio Grande College campuses, the average faculty salary among the first four ranks increased by 6.5%, from $64,415.00 to $68,595.00.



In terms of percentages, these were the largest average faculty salary increases seen at Sul Ross in some time — and salary increases came even though university enrollment had been in decline for several years. While salaries must continue to increase to reach the state average, President Gallego left in place a framework for increasing enrollment and drawing down additional state revenue to provide for additional salary enhancements and made clear the connection between enrollment and salaries.

Increasing faculty salaries and support were among President Gallego's priorities. As a five-time member of the legislative conference committee responsible for the final version of the state budget, then-State Representative Pete Gallego kept faculty and staff salaries at Sul Ross at or near the state average. Once Mr. Gallego's service in the Legislature ended, salaries at SRSU fell behind salaries at other state universities, even those within the Texas State University System.

(g) Providing Funds for Faculty Research - Faculty research expenditures grew by 6.8% while Pete Gallego served as president. Several Sul Ross faculty members are nationally recognized in their fields. Others are on the cusp of such recognition. It is in the University's interest to incentivize and support faculty research. What makes the faculty look good also makes the university look good.

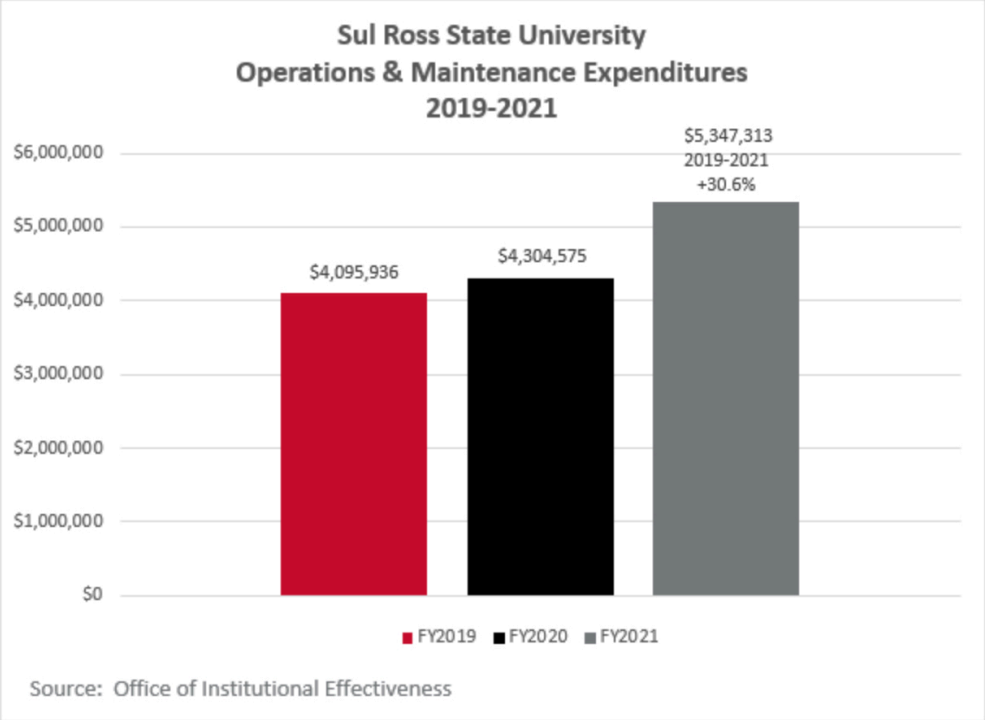


Previously, the University had no routine administrative practice to assist faculty members who authored textbooks in the publication of their work. Faculty members were left to pay for or raise the entirety of their own publication costs. After meeting with members of the faculty, Mr. Gallego instituted a policy of contributing $5,000.00 towards the publication of a textbook authored by a full-time member of the SRSU faculty.

Further, additional funds were budgeted for faculty research and travel. These funds are administered by the Office of the Provost in coordination with several committees of the faculty organizations on the Alpine and Rio Grande College campuses.

(h) Increasing Operational and Institutional Support in the SRSU Operating Budget - President Gallego believed in taking care of Sul Ross from the ground up. He increased spending on operations and maintenance services offered by the SRSU Physical Plant (which had previously been cut to the

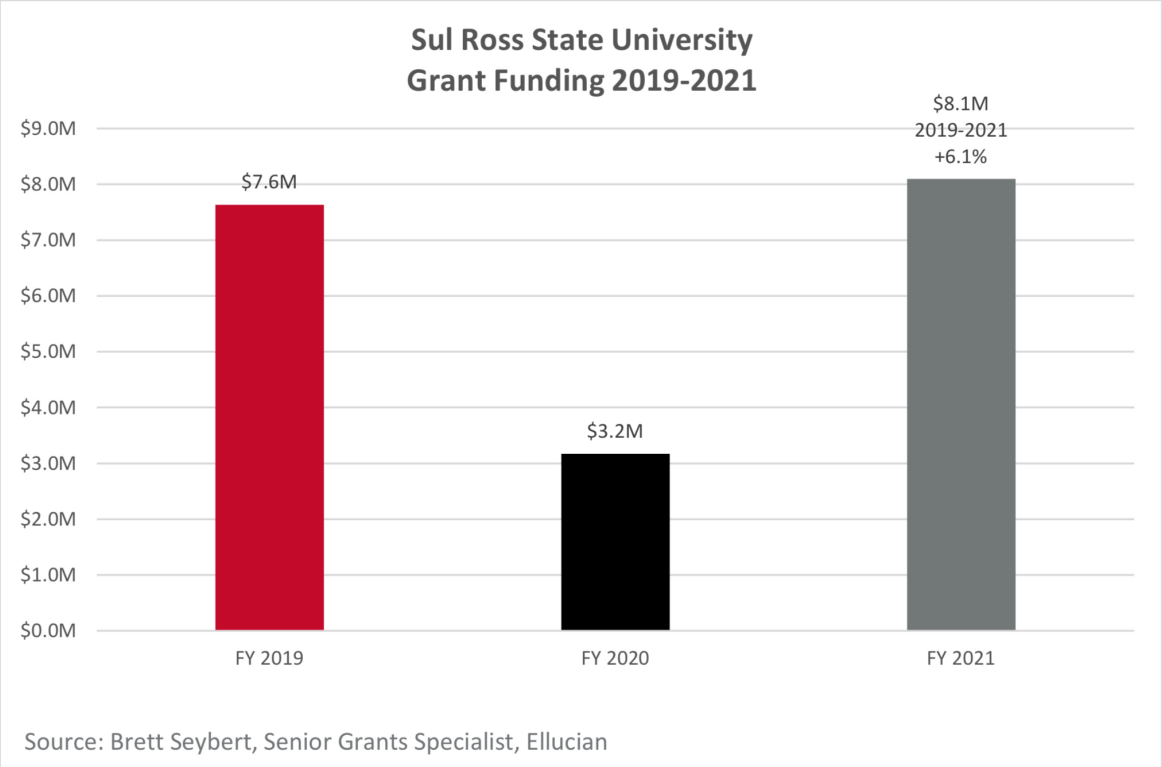
bone) by 30.6%. Items such as building maintenance, landscape and ground maintenance, repairs, and custodial services saw increases.



Campus custodians were on the front line of the fight against COVID. Preparing the classrooms by providing for social distancing, stocking rooms with sanitizer and shields, and making other preparations was an essential job; SRSU needed additional help in these efforts. Insufficient staff had already caused significant deferred maintenance issues.

President Gallego canceled construction of a new visitor center in Alpine partly on the theory that the University first had to be able to better maintain the facilities it already had. The decision to spend more money in operations and maintenance was widely supported.

(i) Getting Help: Looking for Grants - Pete Gallego enthusiastically supported efforts to seek additional grant funding for multiple causes all across the University. Grants amounts received in 2021 surpassed 2019 totals by 6.1% - and 2019 was a banner year for Sul Ross.



However, President Gallego approached grant applications differently. Ever a lawyer, he asked a lot of questions. Did the grant require a match? How much was the match? Did the grant end or would the University have to institutionalize the cost of the grant once the grant period ended? Did it cost more to administer the grant than the amount the grant would generate?

Many costs at SRSU began as grants, but the University absorbed the costs once the grant ended. This sometimes created friction on campus because grant employees can be paid more than non-grant employees - and even though a grant ended, the higher salaries did not. Again, ever a lawyer, the President tried to ensure that all SRSU employees were treated fairly and equitably.

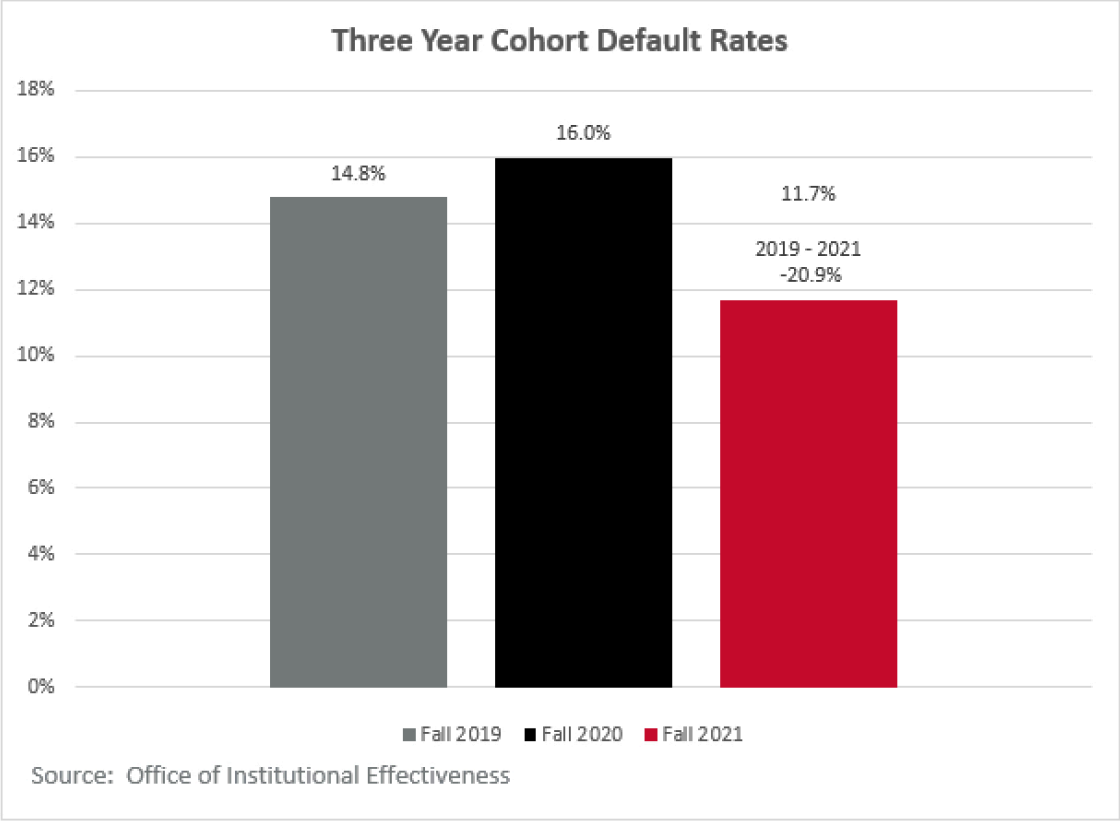
(j) Finding More Efficiency - President Gallego made Sul Ross a better steward of public tax dollars. He worked aggressively to change business practices and take advantage of economies of scale. University departments had previously purchased their own software systems (which might or might not integrate with the university-wide accounting system) and their own individual items (such as copiers or computers). Those purchases are now coordinated university-wide.

In addition, the university is updating its student housing system to more effectively track income and expenses. Residential students were frequently

frustrated with the University's inability to provide an accurate bill. And, the SRSU Accounting office now uses electronic fund transfers to deliver refunds owed to students directly to their bank accounts within 24 hours - instead of making students wait for paper checks (which previously were written only every other week).

Many processes used by the University are no longer manual. Purchase orders, personnel forms, time sheets, and other routine practices are now handled electronically. President Gallego set a goal of an entirely paperless administrative system - important due to the many transactions occurring between offices in Alpine and students on a Rio Grande College campus. The University is on its way to an entirely paperless process.

(k) Lowering Student Default Rates - The default rate for students at Sul Ross has improved by 20.9% - dropping from a high of 16% down to 11.7%. Sul Ross had among the highest student default rates in the nation at approximately 15%. A high default rate places a university in danger of losing its ability to distribute financial aid through the federal Pell Grant program or other federal financial aid programs. The University had written off millions of dollars in debt.



President Gallego made a concerted effort to lower the default rate. Students were required to sign a payment plan if they could not pay the entirety of their tuition balance or other expenses.

Student employees were allowed to have their payments deducted directly from their paychecks. Depending on the date of withdrawal, students who withdrew from school were required to pay back either all or part of any financial aid they had received.

"Positive changes since Pete came on board."

- Campus Environment Survey, Spring 2021

The default rate at SRSU is still high, but the significant drop in the default rate shows that the University is making every effort to be a good steward not only of state tax dollars, but of federal tax dollars as well.

As a consequence of President Gallego's actions, enrollment data at Sul Ross is now more accurate because it includes only students who are actually attending Sul Ross and have invested in their education here. Each student is now a paying student. The efforts to lower the default rate also translated into significant enhanced annual revenue for the University.

(I) Supporting "Essential" Employees - President Gallego raised the salaries of University Police and Office of Information Technology staff. University Police salaries were raised in recognition of long hours, a dangerous job, and the shortage of campus peace officer personnel. OIT staff salaries were raised in recognition of long hours spent upgrading systems or dealing with cybersecurity and other threats and a shortage of personnel.

All employees are essential — but these employees must stay on campus even as others get to leave. President Gallego, himself a former prosecutor and member of law enforcement community, saw the difference. As a result, he implemented raises for staff working jobs requiring more time or more dangerous work.

University Police salaries had previously been the lowest state or local law enforcement salaries in Brewster County. In order to better compensate officers and more successfully compete for job applicants in the local job market, President Gallego insisted that the University Police Department no longer be known for the lowest pay.

Vacancies in OIT were also nearly impossible to fill due to the insufficient pay and long hours. At the same time, demand for OIT services continually increased across the entire university. The result was extremely low morale in the OIT division.

President Gallego invested heavily in upgrades and improvements to current information technology systems,

services, software and hardware and appointed a new chief information officer. The additional work to bring the new upgrades and equipment online further justified both the salary increases and the additional positions in OIT.

Both the University Police and the Office of Information Technology were extremely excited about their raises, which were their first raises in quite some time.

"In the past, staff have been made to feel like they are not needed on this university. The only ones needed are faculty and students. The faculty and staff recognition that has been going on this year has been a welcome improvement. Please keep it up. Just little things make a big difference."

- Campus Environment Survey, Fall 2020

(m) Standing Behind Support Staff and Student Employees - President Gallego incrementally raised salaries for all employees earning less than $50,000.00. Employees earning the University's lowest salary of $17,029.00 received the largest raises. Salary scales were changed accordingly for all employees. The salary issue was and - in today's economy - remains a critical issue particularly at the lower end of the salary scale.

Student workers, including residential assistants (RA's) who had not seen a raise in many years but were in the front lines of the University's battle against COVID and graduate assistants (GA's) also received a salary increase. The minimum hourly salary for student employees was also raised from $7.25 to $8.25 per hour. Graduate assistants will also be offered a housing scholarship amounting to 50% of their room rates if they are willing to live in Fletcher Hall, subject to room availability.

(n) The Most Wonderful Time of the Year - In November of 2021, President Gallego introduced Sul Ross' first ever "Supplemental Holiday Cheer". Eligible employees received supplemental pay of $640.00 to spend in the local economy.

Research has found that the end of the year, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, tends to be among the most stressful periods of the year. For parents, in particular, that stress may be related to worries about being unable to provide well for one's children during what has become an increasingly commercial holiday.

In order to alleviate those worries and provide an extra boost to employee morale, "Supplemental Holiday Cheer" provided eligible employees with an additional $320.00 in pay checks received on the first of December prior to the holidays. The program also provided eligible employees with a second $320.00 infusion of additional revenue in paychecks received at the beginning of January.

Every employee whose total salary amounted to less than $100,000.00 was eligible to participate. Any employee whose salary was more than $100,000.00 was ineligible. The program was a huge success — and it had a great impact on morale on all four of our SRSU campuses.

(o) Center for Big Bend Studies: A Million Dollars - President Gallego helped obtain a federal appropriation of $1,000,000.00 for the Center for Big Bend Studies.

Mr. Gallego thrived in the Texas Legislature where “special items” of funding could be targeted to specific institutions such as Sul Ross. At the federal level, these were called “earmarks” — and they were disallowed by Congress until 2021. In 2021, the US House of Representatives reauthorized earmarks.

President Gallego immediately put Sul Ross in line to receive a federal earmark. Working with our local congressman, Tony Gonzales, Mr. Gallego put in a congressional request for $1,000,000.00 for the Center for Big Bend Studies. It also helped that, upon his swearing-in to the US House, Congressman Gonzales was appointed to the Appropriations Committee.

Congressman Gonzales shepherded the request through a complicated congressional process . . . but at the end, SRSU’s Center for Big Bend Studies came out with the $1,000,000.00 that President Gallego requested. It was the first federally directed earmark for Sul Ross in about a decade.

A WALK THROUGH UNIVERSITY SUCCESSES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

(a) Accreditation - University academic policies are now systematically reviewed to maximize success for students and prepare for SRSU's upcoming SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report. Already, some 53 of the university's academic programs have been updated and realigned.

The process entailed approximately 336 course changes prepared by faculty and approved by the Texas State University System Board of Regents. Most recently, the Board of Regents approved the alignment of the education degrees at Sul Ross. Previously, students at the Rio Grande College obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education, while students on the Alpine campus obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Going forward, the degrees are now aligned as Bachelor of Science degrees in Education.

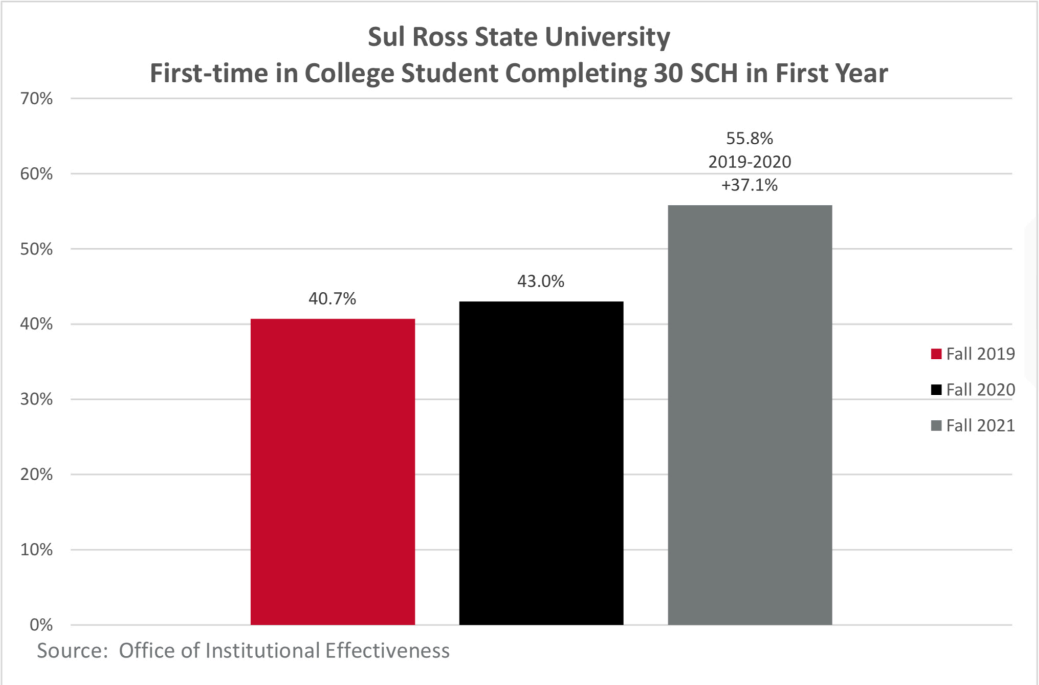
In addition, Sul Ross has rebuilt a standard course rotation schedule, created academic calendars several years in advance, and established a system of tutoring and professional degree advising using our Lobo Den for advising on core curriculum and faculty advising for upper division and graduate work. To support students, faculty also now publish and maintain regular office hours.

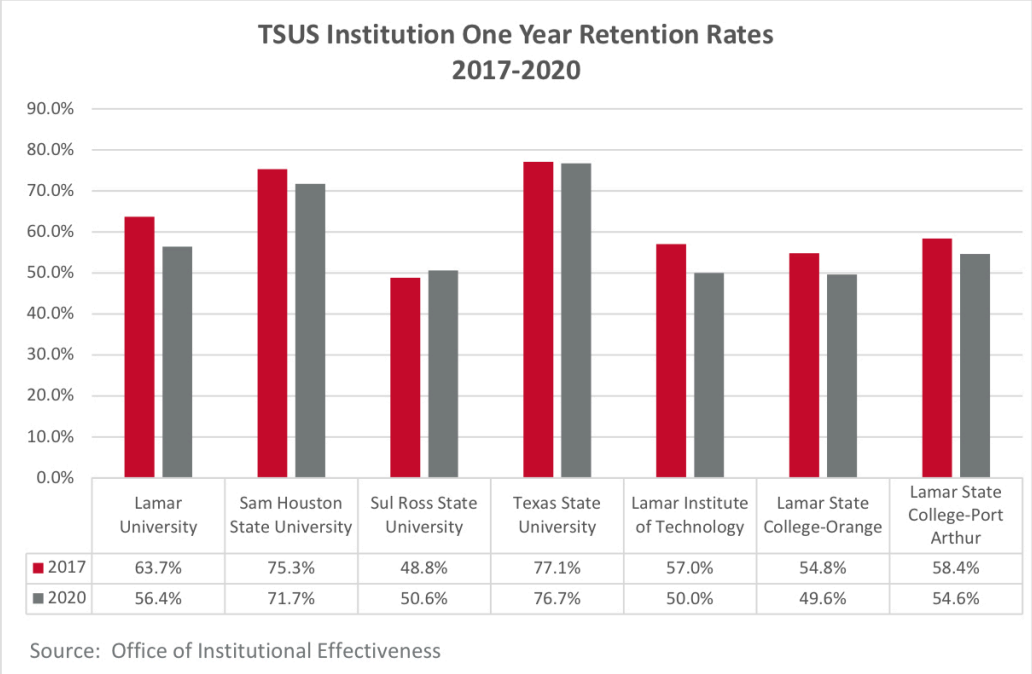
Faculty also have benefitted from redrafting of tenure contracts and establishing a clear remote work policy. The Faculty Assembly and Faculty Senate have worked more closely together in recent years, and faculty members of each organization sit on joint committees and councils together.

The University is now focused on achieving the smoothest and most successful SACSCOC visits and reaccreditation process.

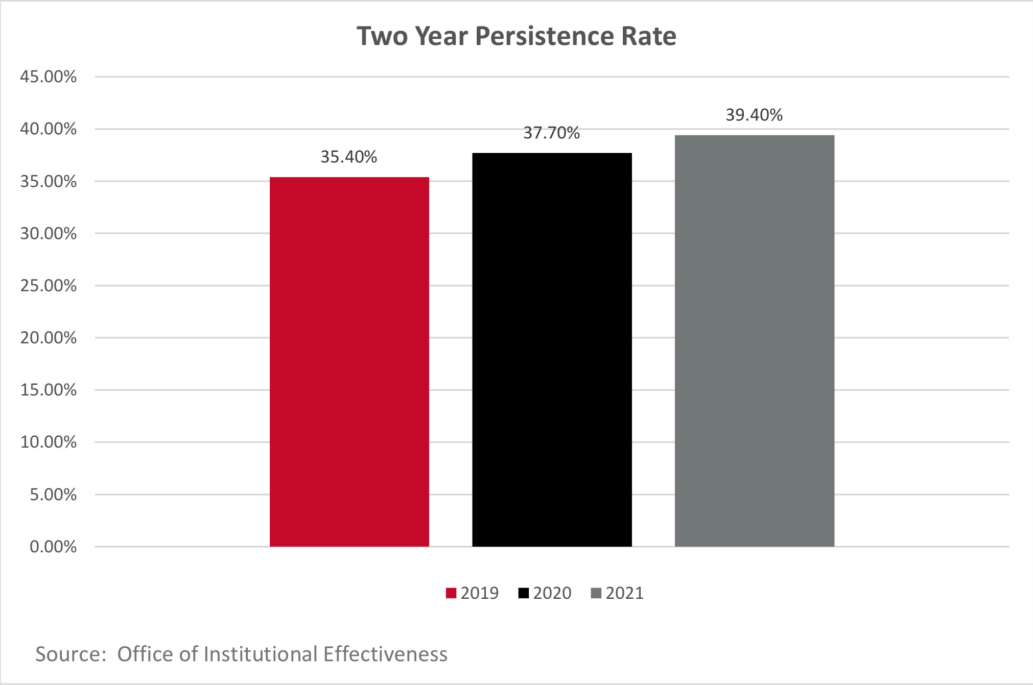
(b) Improved Retention - Retention rates began trending upward during the Gallego administration.

The rate of first time in college (FTIC) students achieving 30 semester credit hours in their first year surged to 55.8% - a gain of 37.1%. SRSU is the only Texas State University System institution to see any improvement in retention rates among first year students returning for year two. And, the two year persistence (retention) rate improved by 4%.





	Lamar University	Sam Houston State University	Sul Ross State University	Texas State University	Lamar Institute of Technology	Lamar State College-Orange	Lamar State College-Port Arthur
2017	63.7%	75.3%	48.8%	77.1%	57.0%	54.8%	58.4%
2020	56.4%	71.7%	50.6%	76.7%	50.0%	49.6%	54.6%



These rates are still too low, but President Gallego took the bull by the horns and committed the University to supporting every enrolled student with the goal of seeing them through to graduation. He prioritized and invested in student retention efforts in order to make every campus conscious of and more friendly towards every individual student. Personal attention and a welcoming attitude give students a feeling of belonging. That feeling makes them want to stay.

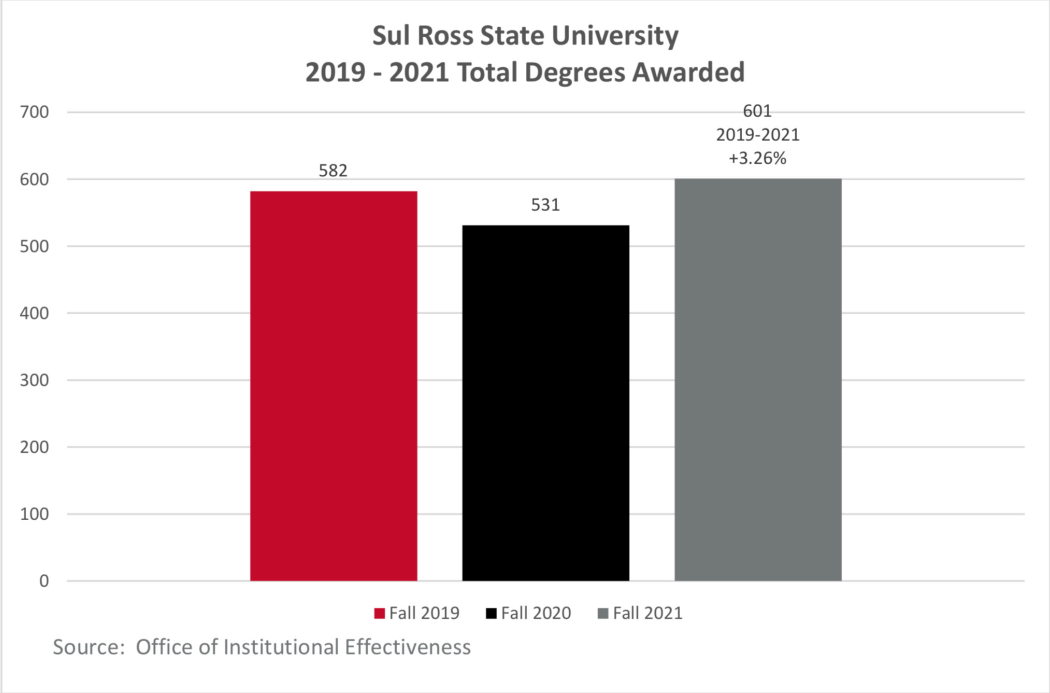
Many students, particularly from the West Texas region, enter Sul Ross planning to stay only for their core curriculum and intending to transfer after their first or second year. Yet, Mr. Gallego directed that an effort be made to convince these students to stay at Sul Ross as well. He called on everyone, staff and faculty, to be engaged in promoting student retention.

Several retention initiatives were launched including the Lobo Buddies program in 2020. Faculty and staff volunteered to be paired with incoming first-year students and make ongoing contacts with them throughout their time at SRSU; 218 students were matched with 62 faculty, staff, or student leaders. Everyone recognized that a personal connection is a powerful motivator for students to be successful.

President Gallego invested heavily in retention efforts because one of every two first-year Lobos didn't return to Sul Ross for the second year. As the President said regularly, "Students vote with their feet. If we don't provide a good experience, they leave." President Gallego was able to get the retention rate over 50% in a relatively short amount of time and build an infrastructure that should continue to retain students.

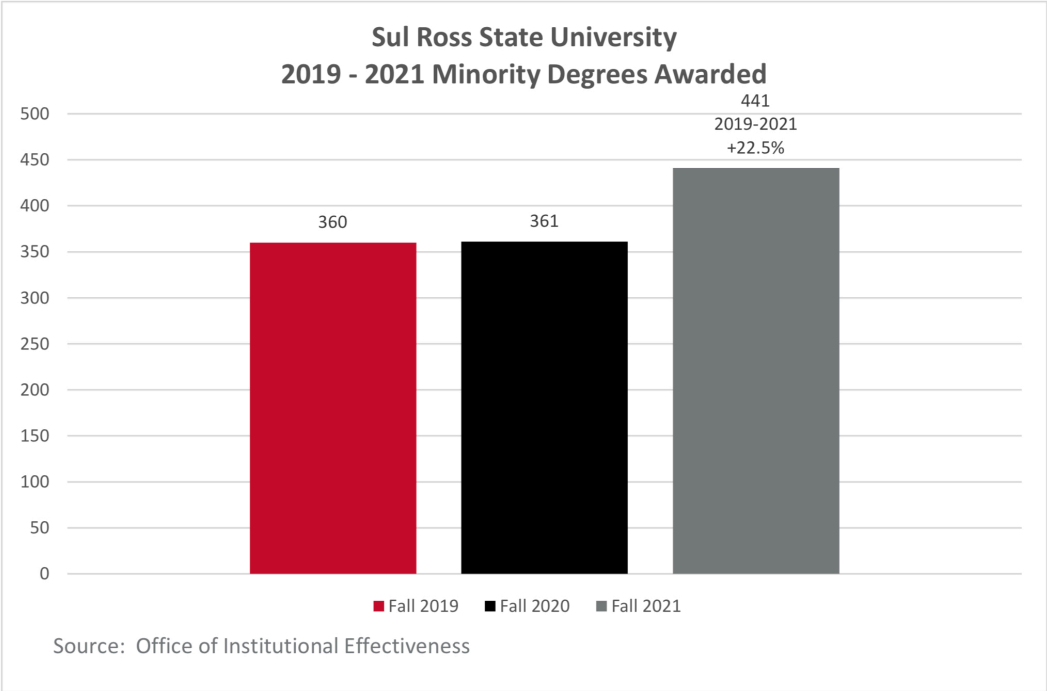
Further, surveys indicate a much higher level of comfort and satisfaction among students at Sul Ross. Improved retention has the capacity to increase SRSU enrollment by nearly 50% over a period of years. Taken together, there are strong signs that retention rates at the University will continue to increase - bringing about a corresponding increase in enrollment.

(c) Improved Graduation Numbers - The number of degrees granted by Sul Ross increased by 3.26% under President Gallego. Degrees awarded to minorities increased by 22.5%, to Hispanics by 13.9%, to Adult Learners by 5.2%, and to economically disadvantaged individuals by 13.9%.

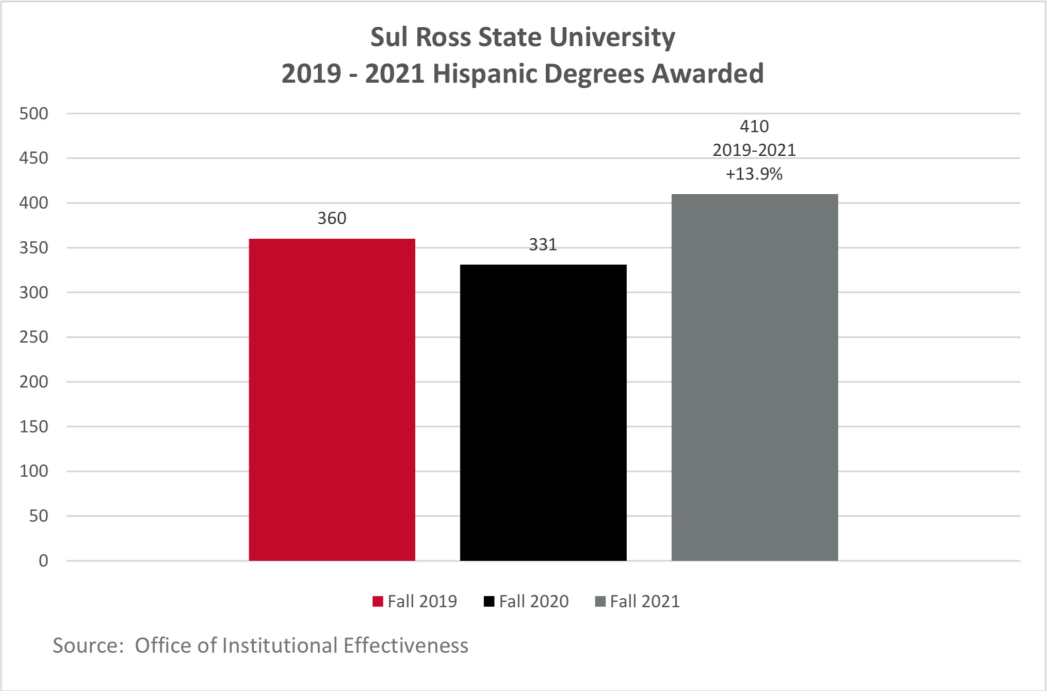


Graduation rates also improved. The first time in college student average years to degree improved by 4.9 %; the four-year graduation rate improved by 1.1% while the six year graduation rate improved by 4.2%. The graduation rate for transfer students improved by 6.5%.

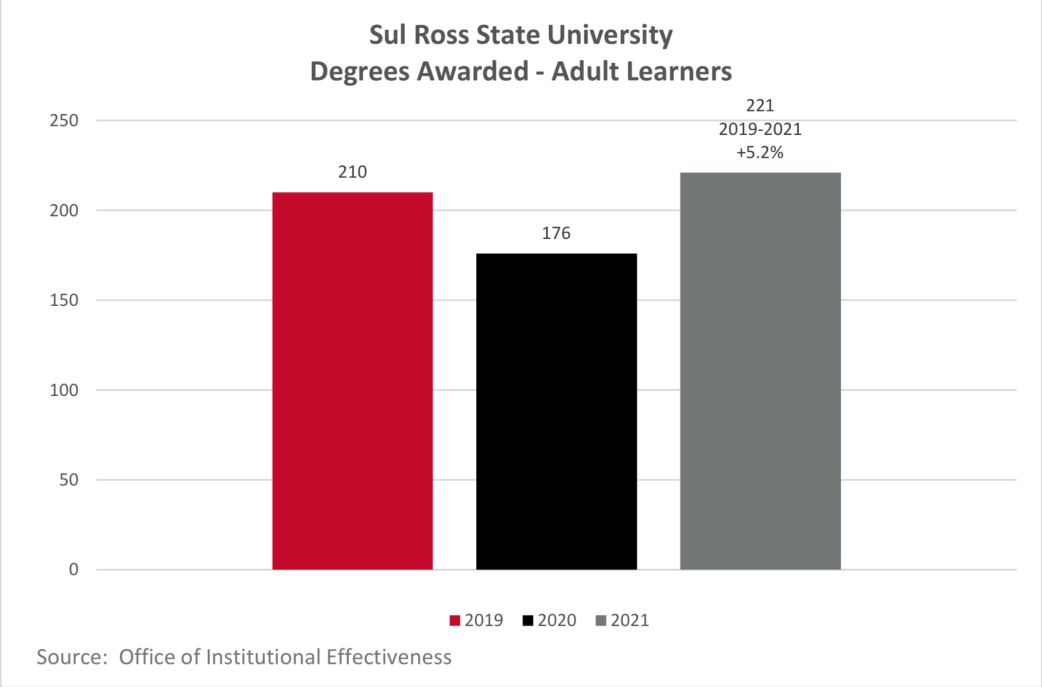
The federal female student graduation rate climbed 7% while women athletes showed a 10% increase in graduation rates. On the men's side, the federal male student graduation rate showed a 5% increase while the corresponding rate for male athletes showed an 8% increase. The federal overall graduation rate improved by 7%.



Graduation day is an extremely proud day for the graduates - helping people walk across the stage is one of the University's most important goals. President Gallego's favorite activity was also handing graduating students their diploma - and he was usually accused of slowing the process down because of his rapport with the students and their engaging him in conversation while crossing the stage and posing for pictures.



Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness



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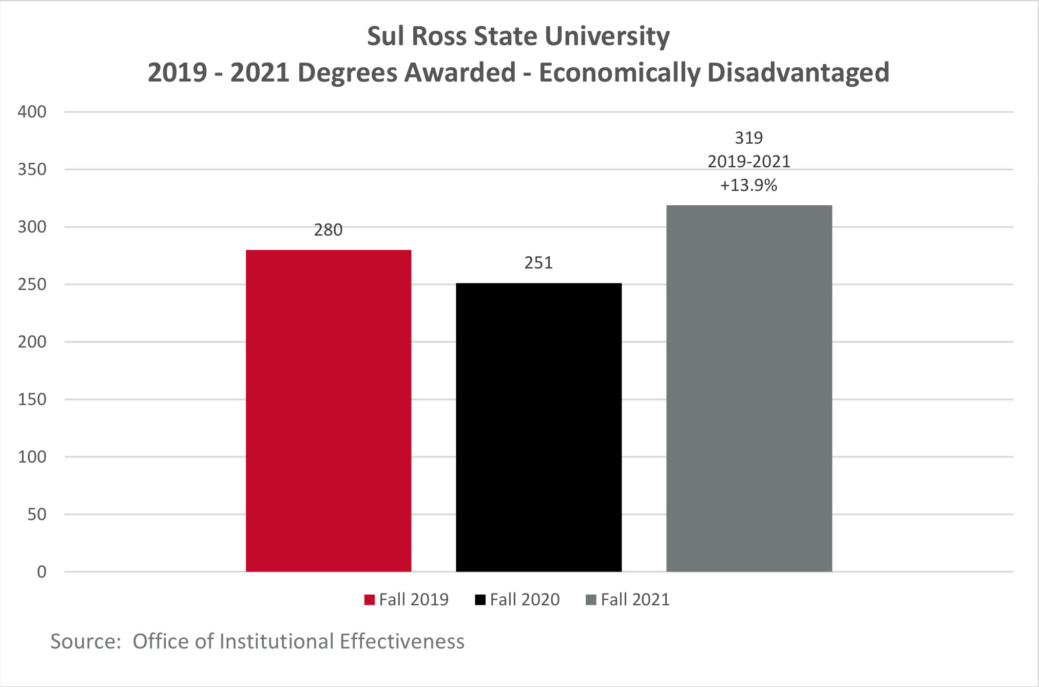
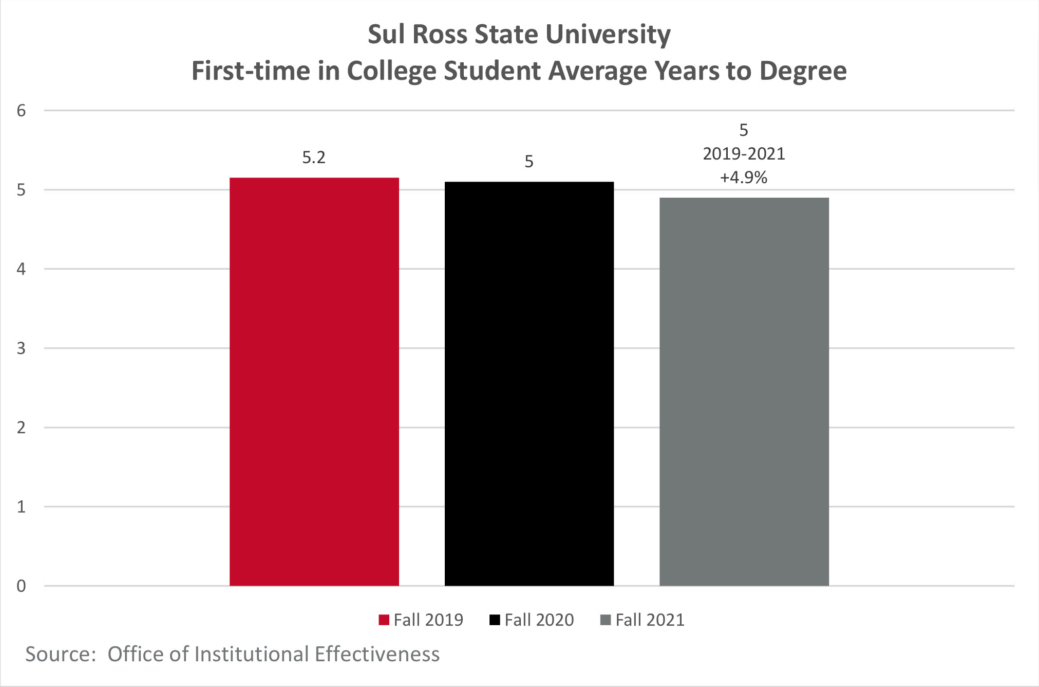
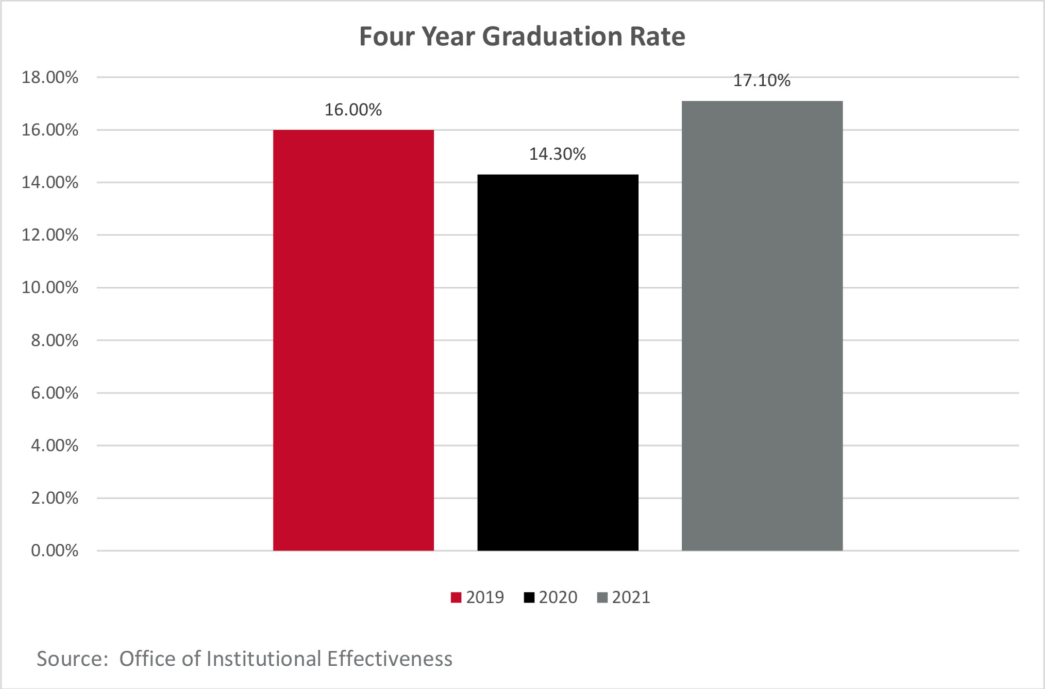
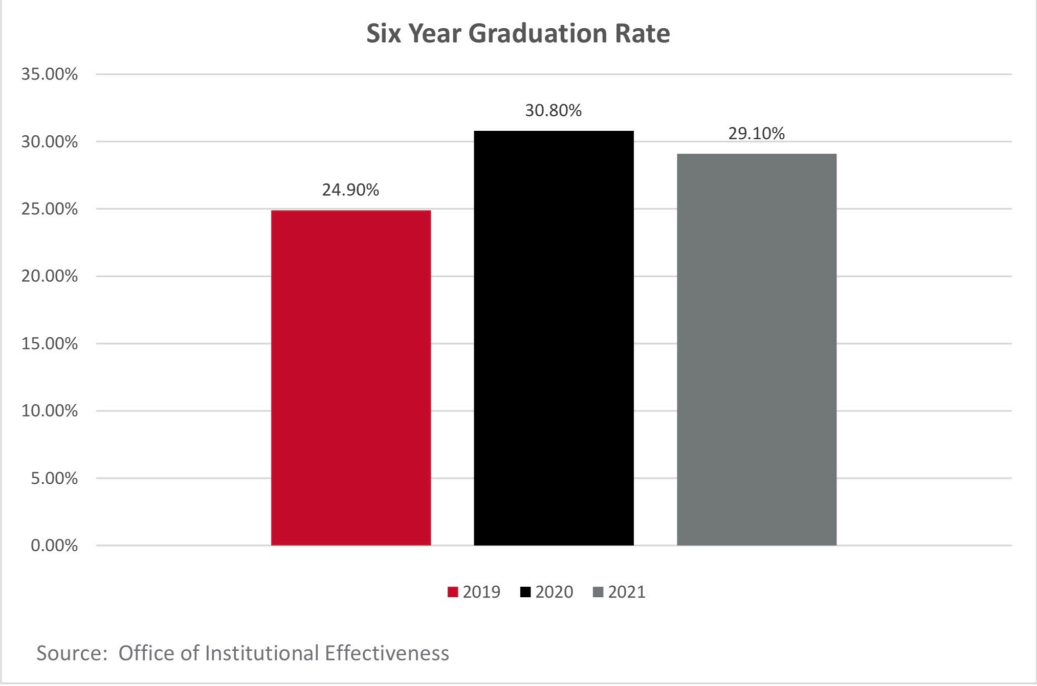

Sul Ross State University
2019 - 2021 Degrees Awarded - Economically Disadvantaged
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
280
251
319
2019-2021
+13.9%
Fall 2019
Fall 2020
Fall 2021
Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness


Sul Ross State University
First-time in College Student Average Years to Degree
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
5.2
5
5
2019-2021
+4.9%
Fall 2019
Fall 2020
Fall 2021
Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness



Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness



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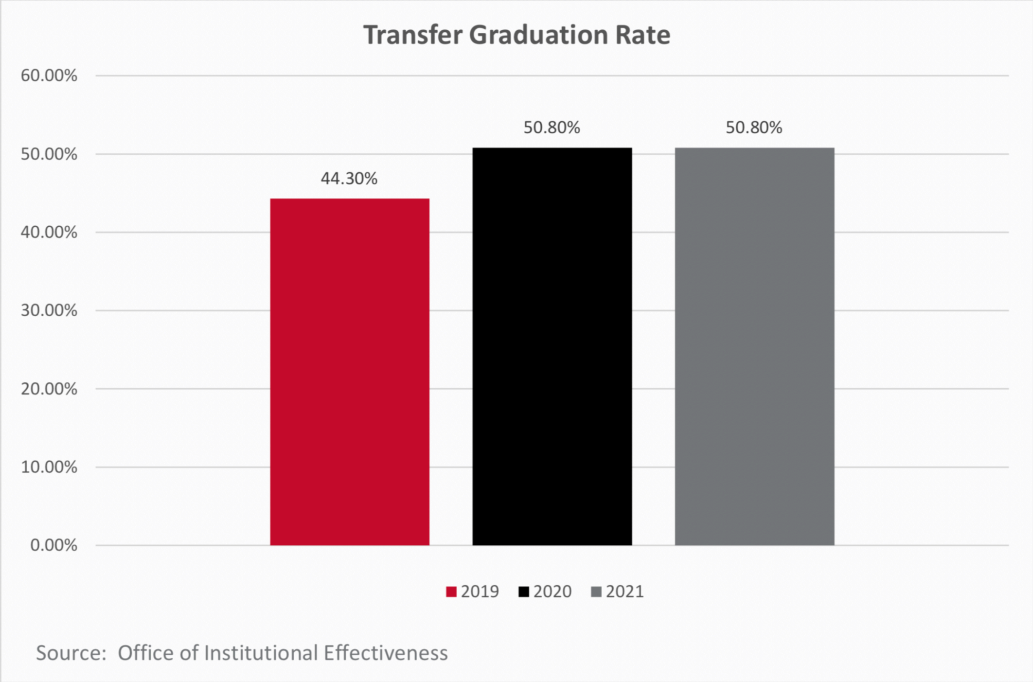

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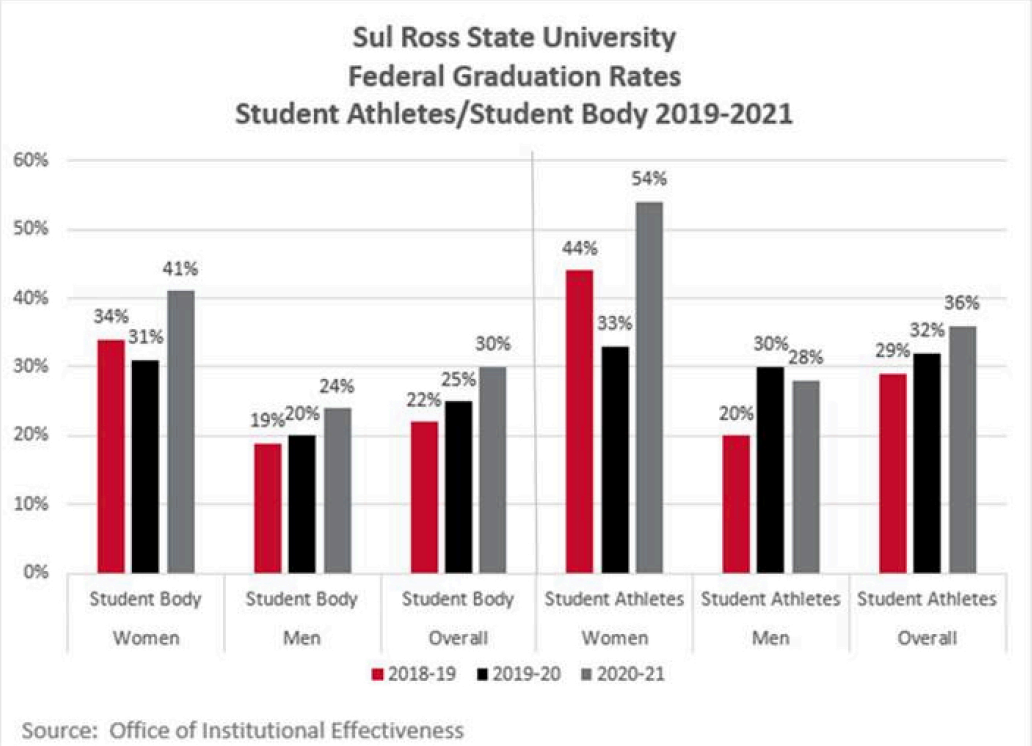


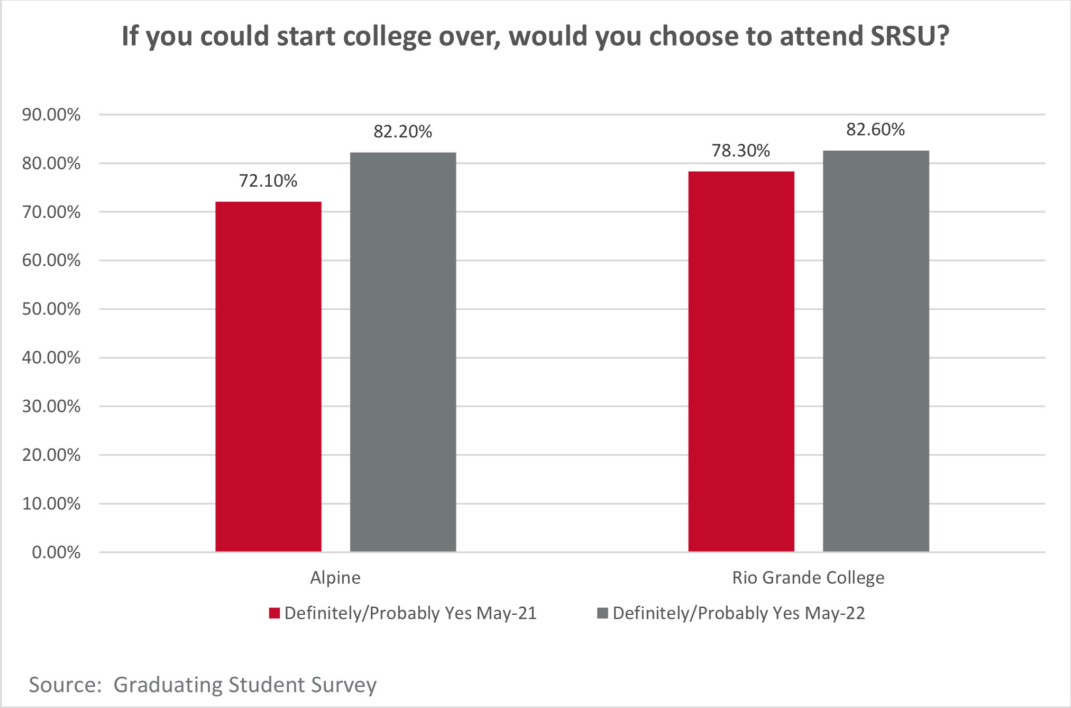
Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness

From engagement of the families at orientation to maintaining relationships throughout a student's time here, the University is committed to a process that keeps students focused on their future graduation day.

Graduation rates among student athletes at SRSU are higher than graduation rates among the general population of students. As noted earlier, under President Gallego, the percentage of graduating male and female athletes has risen over the years, as has the graduation rate of the student body as a whole.

Sul Ross Athletics is a critical partner in any potential growth of the University. It makes every effort to keep students centered on their long-term goals, their priorities straight, and their families engaged. Both the administrative and academic sides of the University could learn a great deal from University Athletics.

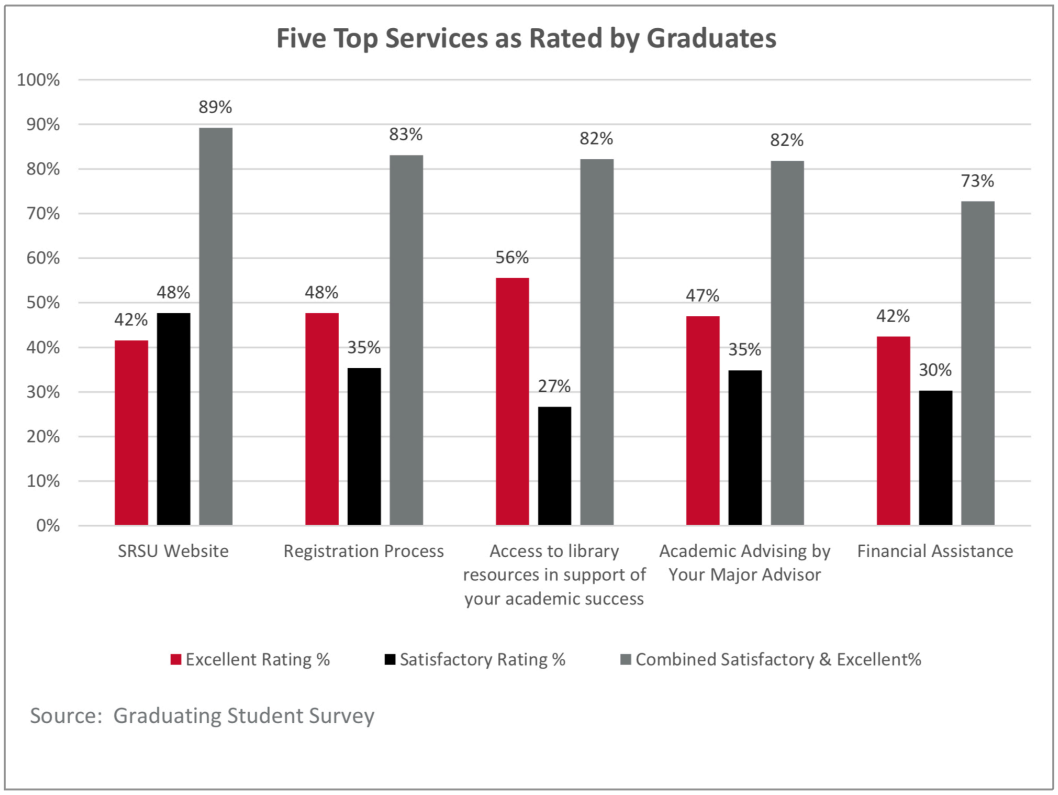
(d) Graduate Satisfaction - <u>In 2022, over 80% of all graduates of both the Alpine and Rio Grande College campuses reported they *definitely or probably* would choose SRSU again if they could start college over. This was a significant increase over the year prior.</u>



In the two years under President Gallego, graduates have expressed increasing satisfaction with their experiences. In 2021, 72.1% of Alpine students responded definitely or probably yes. That response increased to 82.2% in the next year. On the Rio Grande College campus, the satisfaction rate jumped 78.3% to 82.6%. These are extremely positive trends.

President Gallego desired as much data on the student experience at Sul Ross as possible. In 2021, the University began asking more detailed questions in surveys of graduating students. Students are now asked to provide specific feedback on their time as a student at SRSU. The feedback received is shared with the appropriate departments and helps the institution refine and enhance programs offered.

The graduating student surveys also provide data on specific services provided by the university. In 2022, the students' top-rated services included the SRSU website; the registration process; access to library resources in support of your academic success; academic advising; and financial assistance. At the direction of President Gallego, SRSU now uses this data to continually track satisfaction and refine the services offered to students.

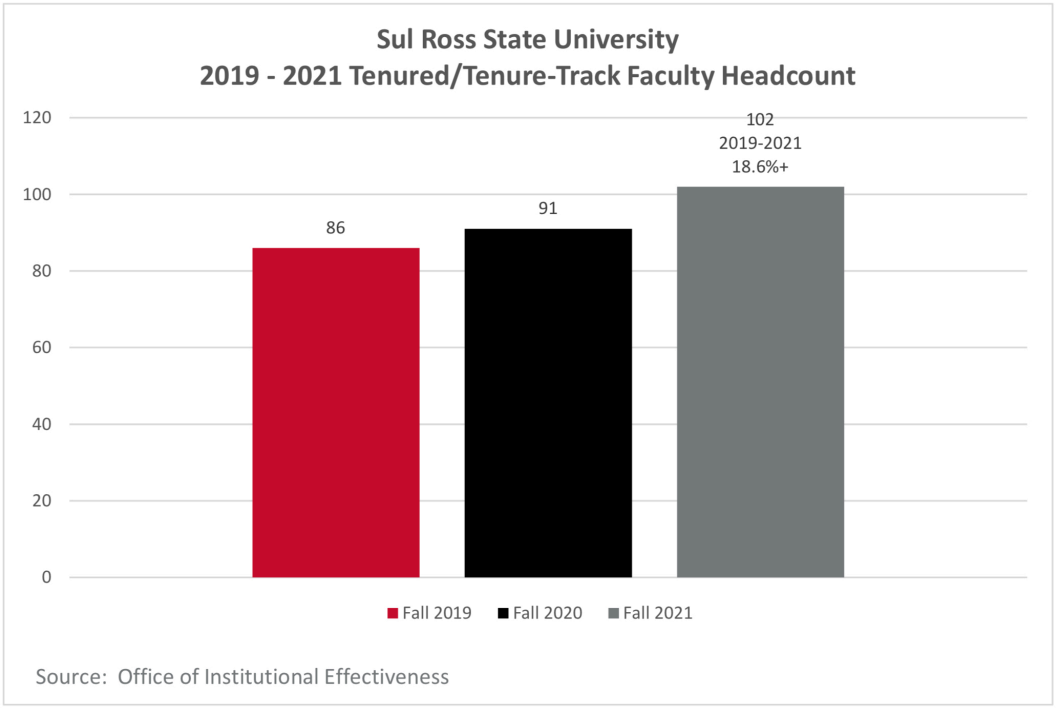


(e) Faculty Call-a-Thons - Everyone has a vested interest in increasing enrollment and enhancing faculty and staff salaries. President Gallego was the first to actually engage the faculty's direct and organized help in retention of students. President Gallego implemented "faculty call-a-thons" in which faculty members were given a list of their own students who had not yet registered for the succeeding semester, given a proposed script, and asked to personally reach out to the students.

The first call-a-thon was held in person and was a resounding success. Approximately 37 faculty members participated; many gathered in the same room at the same time and went through their various lists together. The shared experience built camaraderie among participating faculty members. Due to the pandemic, the later call-a-thons were handled from individual homes or offices. Re-enrollment rates for calls ranged around 60%, with one academic department achieving a 77% re-enrollment rate for students contacted.

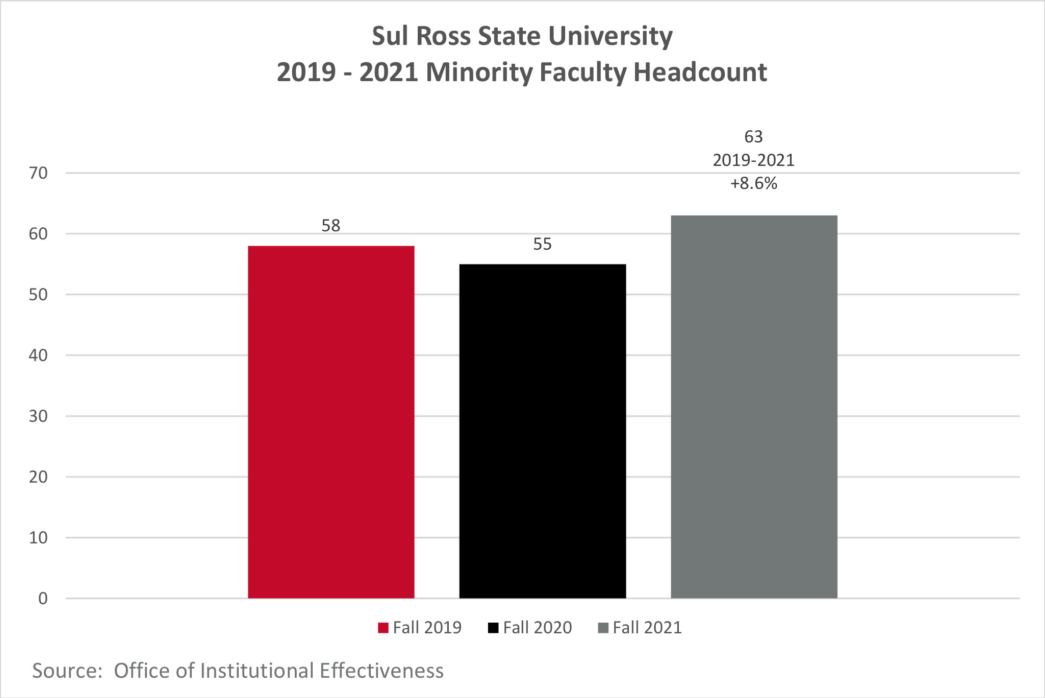
Faculty call-a-thons are now a routine practice each semester at SRSU. Faculty are given a list of students from the current semester who have not yet registered for the next. Students remain impressed and appreciative when getting a personal phone call from a faculty member they know who asks how they are doing, what their experience has been at Sul Ross, reminds them to re-register, and answers any questions they might have about the process.

This personal touch has made a difference and helped increase retention rates. Further, because of a commitment by the Gallego administration to increase faculty salaries using revenue from increased enrollments, the call-a-thons have both incentivized assistance in the university's retention efforts and given faculty members a way to become full partners in the effort to achieve their desired salary goals.



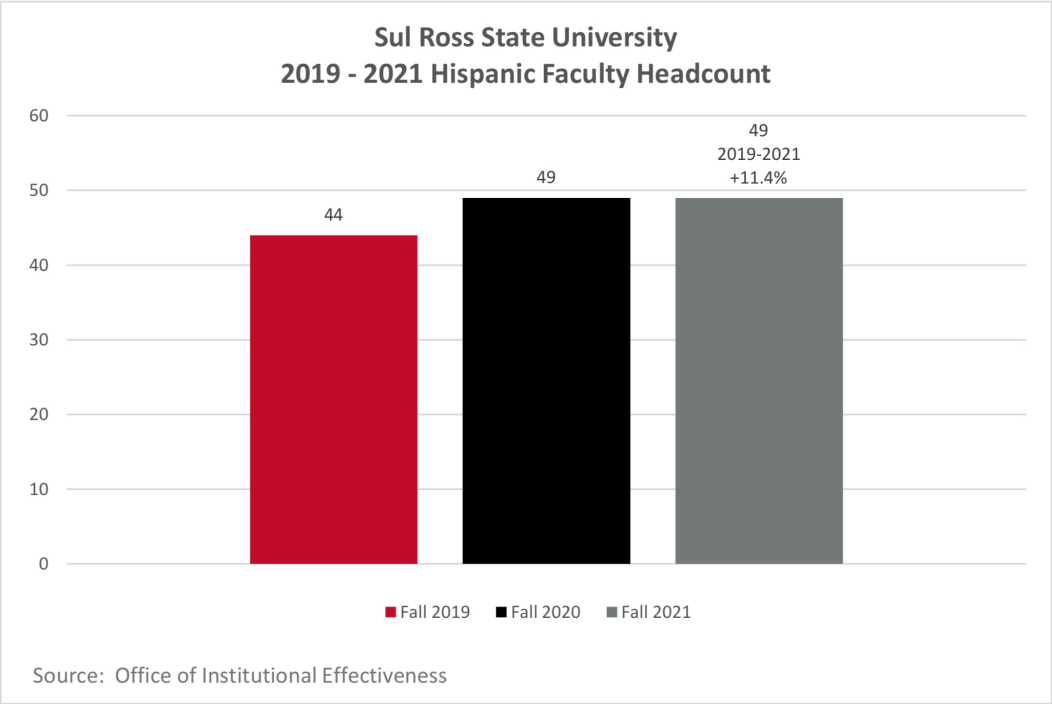
(f) A Robust and Diverse Faculty - The faculty reflects the diversity of the student population and the community. President Gallego moved forward on authorizing many long-standing vacancies to be filled.

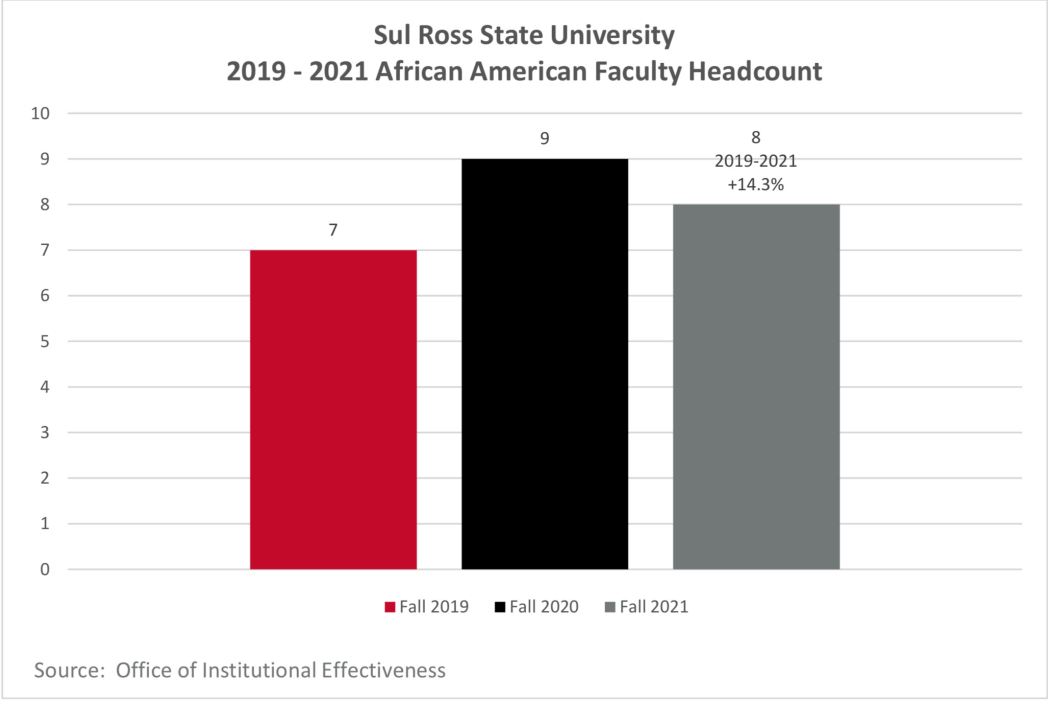
President Gallego believed that students must be able to see themselves in or otherwise identify with faculty members in order to believe that success is achievable for them. As a student at Sul Ross in the 1980's, he saw only one tenured Latino professor on campus and no women or people of color on the University's executive committee. He believed that a robust and diverse faculty is critical in providing an excellence in a college education.
Under the leadership of President Gallego, great strides were made in filling faculty vacancies rather



than relying on adjuncts and overloads. And, a deliberate effort was made to ensure that faculty not only represented the diversity of the student body, but also the diversity of the area and the state.

The number of appropriate faculty members is not easy to discern. There must be enough faculty members to teach the curriculum. Faculty members must have enough students as needed to generate the revenue necessary to operate the institution, but they must also have classes small enough to get to know their students well. Small class size and personal attention are hallmarks of a Sul Ross education.

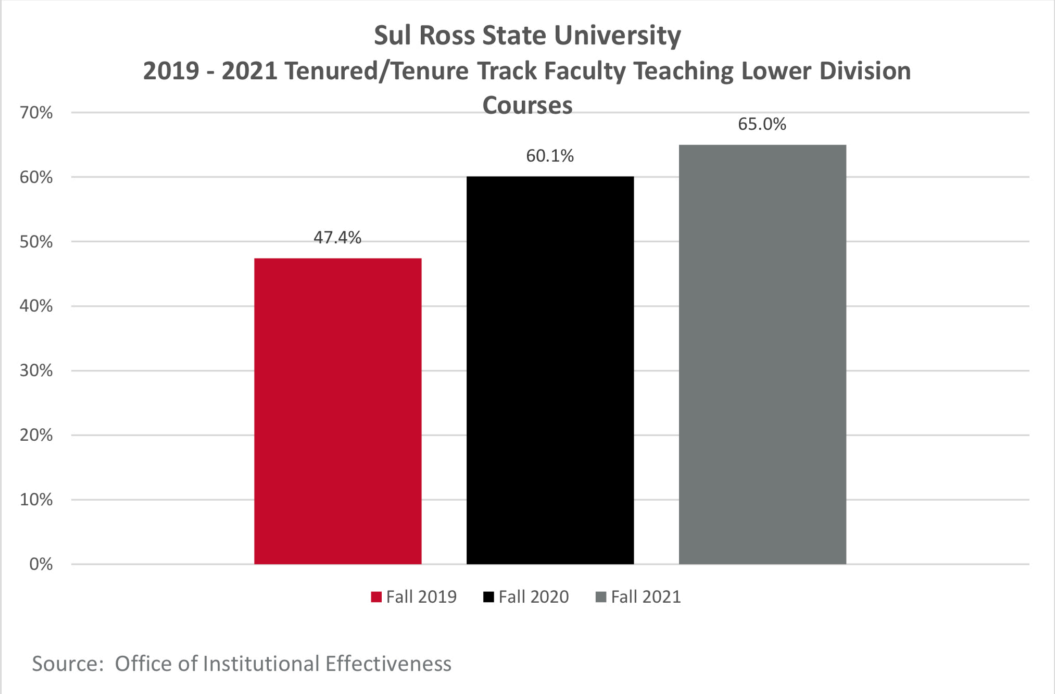




Further, faculty must be allowed time for scholarly pursuits, i.e. research, writing, or otherwise bettering themselves or the University. Sul Ross has a long history of boasting nationally renowned subject matter experts in their fields within the faculty ranks.

The University must aggressively and continuously seek to attract and retain the tenured or tenure-track faculty members in each discipline to teach both the core curriculum and all additional coursework required to obtain a degree in any field in which a Sul Ross degree is offered.

(g) Teaching with Tenure - . During Pete Gallego's presidency, tenure and tenure track faculty teaching lower division courses increased from less than 1/2 of the faculty to nearly 2/3. In fact, the University saw a 17.6% increase in teaching by tenure and tenure track faculty.



According to the THECB, SRSU ranked fourth in the state in this measure in 2019. Neither the 2020 or 2021 data is yet available, but it is expected that SRSU's rank will increase as a result of President Gallego's efforts.

This measure is critical because it is one in which the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) ranks all public universities. President Gallego's strong support of faculty in general and of tenure in particular, combined with his equally strong devotion to students and the student experience at Sul Ross, led to a significant improvement in the number of lower division courses taught by tenure and tenure track faculty.

Entities from the Texas Legislature to the THECB to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) encourage the use of tenure or tenure track

faculty absent special circumstances. In fact, the funding formula used in Texas also rewards hours taught by tenure or tenure track faculty at a higher rate than hours taught by adjunct professors or non-tenure track faculty.

Tenured and tenure track faculty should remain directly involved both with the core curriculum and with students taking lower division courses. The AAUP argues that "Students are denied a stable learning environment and consistent quality instruction by continuous "rotating-out" of faculty. Temporary faculty are less likely to be deeply concerned about or interested in the future of the institution that currently employs them, thus contributing to an institutional environment that discourages students' involvement in learning outside the classroom." *See AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, Pages 190-196.*

(h) Restoring Trust - President Gallego made immediate investments in technology and personnel on the Rio Grande College campuses. Additional faculty and staff positions were rapidly approved. Internet, wi-fi, and classroom technology were upgraded. He also immediately pledged that every student, employee, and community would receive the same high level of service, cooperation, and commitment regardless of location.

In addition, President Gallego designated as the official seal of Sul Ross State University one in which four stars - one for each campus - were separated by "1917", the year of the University's founding, and ended official use of the previous University seal which said "Alpine, Texas" on the bottom.

Upon his arrival, President Gallego canceled the construction of a visitor center on the Alpine campus. Rather than investing in a one project for one campus, the University invested in infrastructure that improved internet connectivity on every campus by 1000%. More work was done to ensure that faculty and students had access to state of the art distance learning equipment. That work is still ongoing.

President Gallego made a concerted effort to improve communication and lessen tension among and unify the four university campuses, emphasize that SRSU is one entity, and raise the pride and professional standards of employees university-wide. Mr. Gallego emphasized a shared desire to include all four campuses as equal partners. Every decision, every committee (including the 2nd Century Committee, Academic Planning Committee, University Curriculum Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, etc) had strong

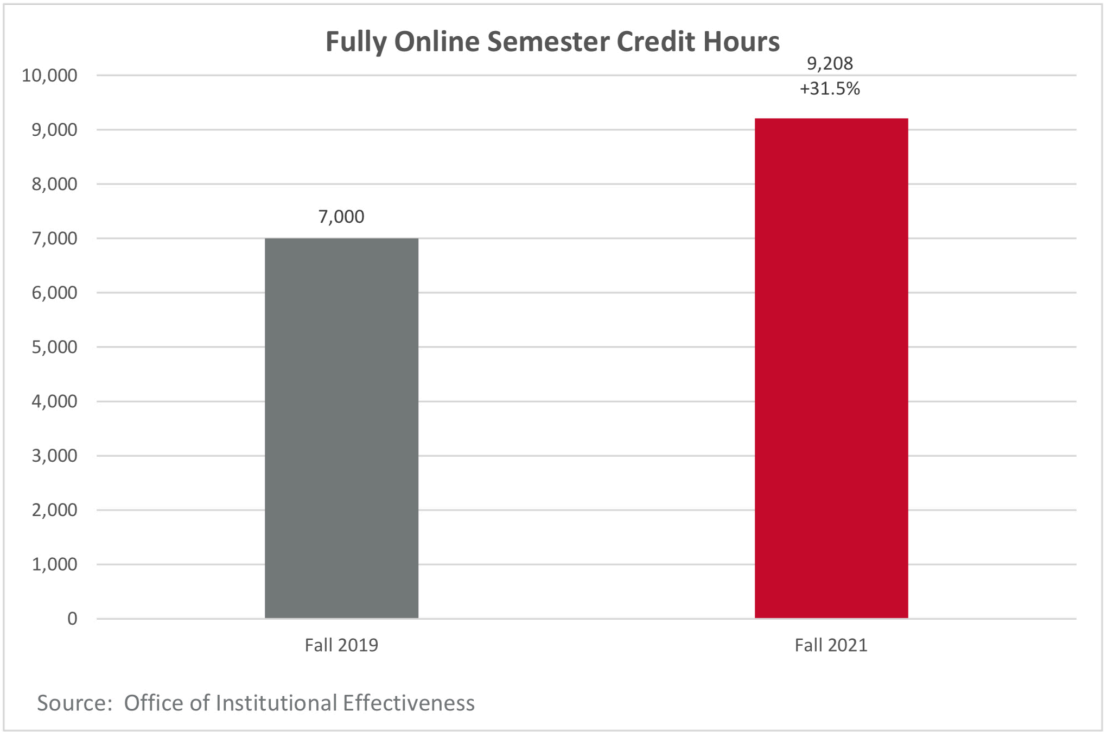
representation from Alpine's sister campuses in Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass.

Having represented all four SRSU campuses both in the Legislature and Congress gave Mr. Gallego the historical and situational awareness of relationships between the Alpine and Rio Grande College (RGC) campuses of Sul Ross. His emphasis on cooperation and shared resources and responsibilities is evidenced by the first-ever appointment of two university professors from the Rio Grande College as university-wide chairs of their respective departments.

In addition, two of the leading programs from Alpine and RGC, the Educator Preparation Programs (EPP's) in the respective Education Departments, have agreed to coordinate their programs to make sure that, if not combined, both programs can prosper on their own. The RGC's EPP had been on probation and was on the verge of termination until President Gallego stepped in and appointed a new director. Closure of the program would have impacted about 2/3 of the students at RGC.

Basic and fundamental items such as the alignment of calendars, courses and course catalogs for the entire university have been achieved. In the past, even simple things - such as making Sul Ross merchandise available for purchase on Rio Grande College campuses - had been overlooked.

Building trust and a shared sense of mission is a slow process. However, relationships among Alpine and RGC campuses, departments, and faculty are at an historic high.



(i) Making the Shift: Online Courses - The number of fully online semester credit hours at Sul Ross has grown by 31.5%. The University has gone from 7,000 semester credit hours online in Fall, 2019, to now 9,208 semester credit hours of coursework online in Fall, 2020.

The pandemic forced Sul Ross to move its course offerings online quickly — and it also reinforced the need to create expanded online offerings. Thus, the number of semester credit hours taken fully online will continue to grow. President Gallego has initiated conversations with several governmental entities, including school districts, and other local, state, and federal agencies, to provide courses for their personnel. These negotiations are ongoing.

As more courses become available online, the University has partnered with Sam Houston State University to certify faculty in online education before allowing faculty to offer classes online. A faculty member must learn the science behind online learning before being authorized to teach online. This certification will not only improve pedagogy, it ultimately improves student learning.

Mr. Gallego, always a full-throated supporter of all opportunities to increase enrollment at Sul Ross, was fully supportive of these efforts. Sul Ross is moving rapidly in the direction of providing optional online education and will presumably advertise for a Dean of Online Education position soon to oversee and guarantee the quality of the SRSU educational offerings.

(j) Re-Thinking a University's Role - President Gallego took action to reinitiate the offering of adult and continuing education hours, certificate programs, and two-year degrees as appropriate and to rebuild the Industrial Technology programs at Sul Ross. SRSU had in its past had similar offerings and a strong Industrial Technology program.

The President became convinced that SRSU should offer more options to local residents after the Texas Legislature authorized junior colleges to offer up to five bachelor's degrees. Mr. Gallego argued that Sul Ross had to compete for EVERY student in the University's Far West Texas service region. He also emphasized and prioritized the University's mission to provide "public service."

Students in certificate or two year programs, or programs which provide what the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board terms "credentials of value," count for purposes of enrollment. They also count in SRSU's "completer" statistics when they get their credential, certificate or two-year degree. The enrollment and completer numbers would help SRSU tremendously.

President Gallego's actions put SRSU at the forefront of the statewide conversation taking place at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board regarding the respective roles of universities and

junior colleges, their authority to expand course offerings, and the autonomy which institutions should be granted.

(k) Reorganizing and Streamlining - Focusing on the future, President Gallego emphasized the importance of enhancing the visibility and quality of University STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) offerings by combining them under one roof. With the permission of the Texas State University Board of Regents, our newest college, the College of Agriculture, Life and Physical Sciences (ALPS) was born.

The formation of ALPS not only allowed SRSU to integrate all agricultural offerings with other science programs, it also helped students who formerly attended classes only in the Turner Range Animal Science Center connect with and feel more a part of our main campus. It also had added advantage of allowing us to strengthen courses such as hydrology and geology which Sul Ross, because of its history and location in the Chihuahuan Desert, is uniquely qualified to specialize in.

In other changes, the Department of Fine Arts was designated as the Department of Visual and Performing Arts. And, the Communications Department was moved from the Department of Fine Arts and into the Department of Social Sciences.

(l) Learning to Leverage Assets - President Gallego surveyed the landscape, inventoried University assets - including some that others viewed as disadvantages - and put the assets to work. He viewed the University's location in the Chihuahuan Desert and along the US/Mexico border as an advantage and worked to build programs that could leverage these things.

The creation of a specific STEM college and a renewed focus on science - including a women's conference with a women in science panel - were designed to attract students interested in using the uniqueness of Chihuahuan Desert as a laboratory. An Alpine faculty member was transferred to the Rio Grande College to spark renewed interest in social sciences such as history and build a stronger program there while the communities of the Middle Rio Grande Region remain at the forefront of conversations on immigration, cross-border traffic, and international trade.

Recruiting by athletics was refocused on regions and communities where rural living is familiar. Sul Ross has invested in a nationally competitive rodeo program and a successful university basketball program. One SRSU basketball

player went from playing NCAA DIII basketball at Sul Ross to playing DI basketball with The University of Texas Longhorns. These successful programs have been of tremendous assistance in recruiting new students.

On campus efforts to show students the rugged wilds of the Big Bend Country or the incredible view of the Milky Way Galaxy from Fort Davis, or to feel the exhilarating cold spring water from San Solomon Springs in Balmorhea, are designed to increase retention. Soon, trips to the University ranch will be added.

Investments in University ranch near Sierra Blanca will allow students to use another "living laboratory." New fencing and the repair and restoration of water wells and water lines have allowed for the restoration of native wildlife. Proposed improvements to the ranch headquarters will provide infrastructure to host larger student groups. At some point soon, the University will also begin raising revenue through hunting on University lands and "City Slicker" type cattle drives which will significantly raise the national and state profile of Sul Ross.

Finally, with respect to physical facilities on the Alpine campus, residence hall rooms long dormant each summer will now be used to host summer camps and outdoor groups interested in visiting the area and using SRSU as a base camp. Staff from a public school district in San Antonio recently brought a group of students to stay in SRSU residence halls while visiting the area. Using these residence halls - and allowing non-student groups to stay at discounted rates - significantly boosts both revenue and recruiting.

(m) The Largest and Most Diverse Executive Committee and Leadership in SRSU History - President Gallego created the largest and most diverse SRSU Executive Committee and Leadership team in SRSU history.

President Gallego made decisions by gathering data, collaborating with others, and reaching consensus. He put more people at the decision-making table and created a cohesive team of people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences. Some had been around Sul Ross for awhile; others were newer to Sul Ross but brought expertise and an outside perspective.

President Gallego also invited the academic deans to sit regularly with the Executive Committee of the University - a move long sought by the Faculty Assembly in Alpine and the Faculty Senate on the Rio Grande College

campuses. Executive Committee meetings became discussions about challenges the University was facing, opportunities to coordinate actions and activities across the University, and celebrations of success in different academic or administrative areas.

As of President Gallego's departure, the Executive Committee was made up of seven men and five women; five Anglos and seven Latinos; five people with terminal degrees and seven without. When the deans sat with the Executive Committee, the Committee became 17 people; eight men and nine women; nine Anglos, seven Latinos, and an Asian American; and 10 people with terminal degrees and seven without. All four of the academic deans are women, an increase of 20%. Of the seven deans at Sul Ross, six are women. One is an Asian American male.

(n) IRBNet: Supporting Researchers While Protecting Human Rights - In July, 2020, just after President Gallego's arrival, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness adopted a secure, web-based tool to support faculty research by investing in and facilitating the efforts of the SRSU institutional review board (IRB) committee. The adoption of IRBNet allowed faculty to submit proposed research projects online while still ensuring the protection of rights, privacy, and welfare of all human participants in research programs conducted at the institution.

The SRSU institutional review board (IRB) committee found that the adoption of this web-based tool helped them carry out their charge more effectively. Members of the IRB Committee report that the IRBNet platform provides a centralized location for the efficient review of all research proposals. It saves time, reduces errors and increases oversight and compliance.

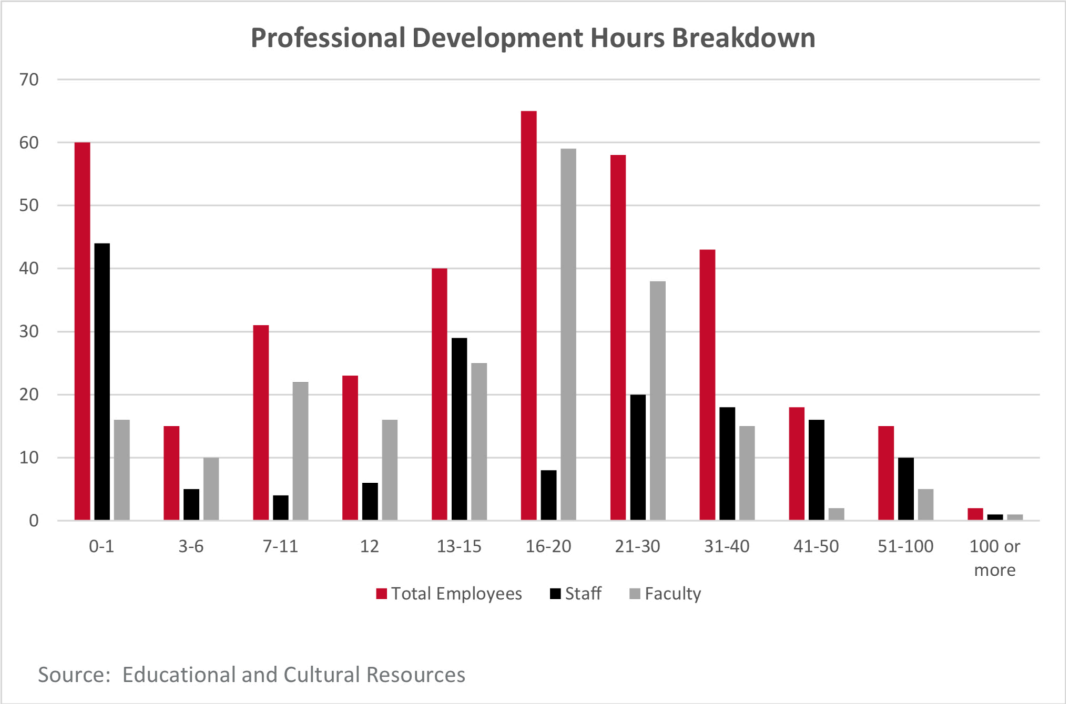
IRBNet provides a streamlined solution for researchers as well. The IRBNet process provides helpful guidance for best practices in research. A faculty member can also find templates for informed consent and multiple other guidelines on the IRBNet site.

With the adoption of IRBNet, research has significantly increased among faculty, students, and staff. Since 2020, 105 research proposals have been posted on IRBNet for easy access and review by the IRB Committee. The IRBNet tools are available for all researchers on all SRSU campuses.

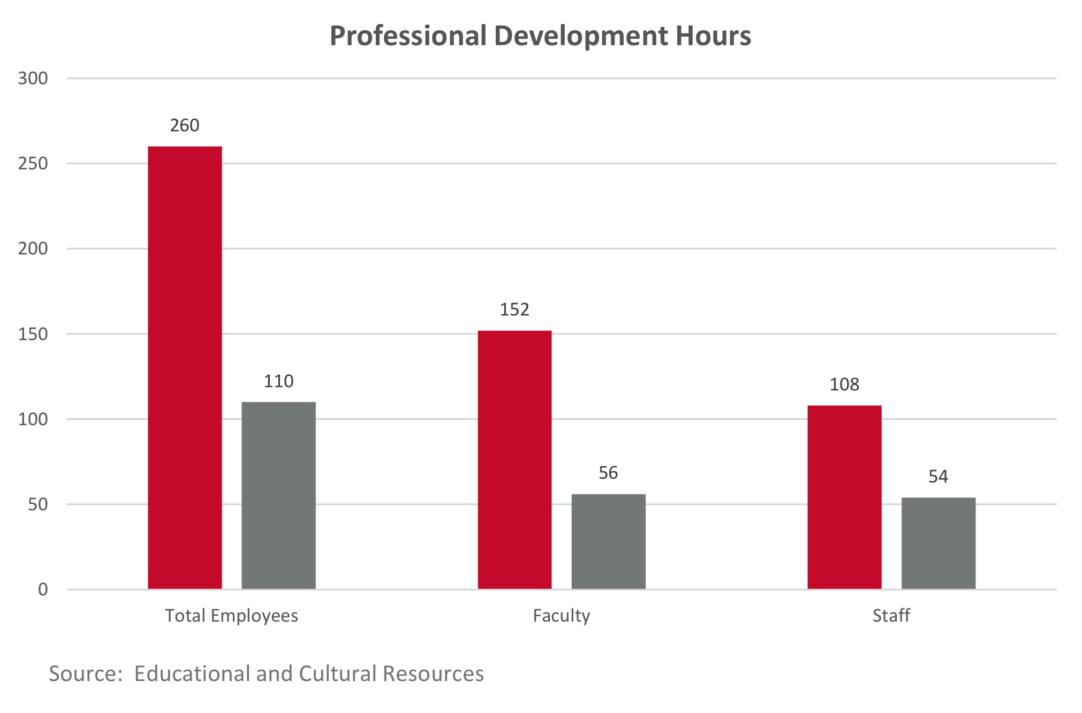
(o) Pack First Professional Development - President Gallego initiated the first-ever organized professional development program at Sul Ross and asked all employees take a minimum of 12 professional development hours per year — an average of one hour per month. Leading by example, President Gallego himself took professional development courses.

Employees now have many options in obtaining professional development that is customized to their positions, meets their needs, and helps them achieve

their professional goals. Options include courses from Sul Ross (SR Presents), Academic Impressions, The Chronicle of Higher Education, CUPA-HR, and others. Since January 1, 2022, the University's Pack First Professional Development Program has offered 137 sessions on the calendar, and of those 38 have been presented by SRSU.



Source: Educational and Cultural Resources



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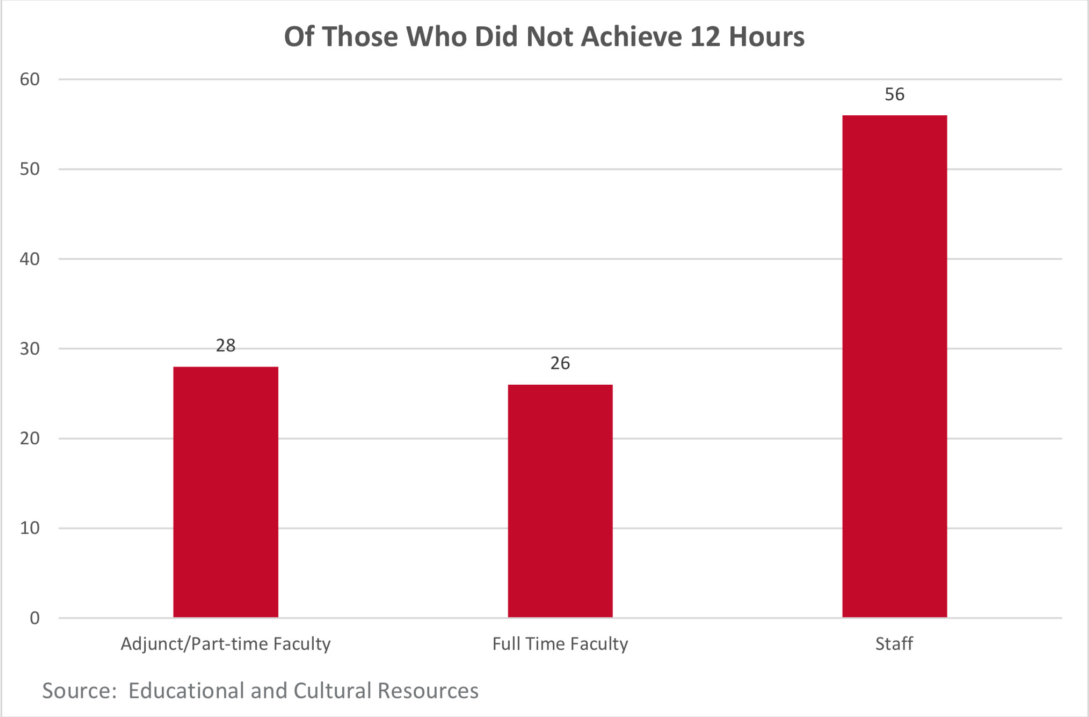


The initial goal was to have over 70% participation. The goal was met. Of 370 employees on all four campuses, 260 achieved or surpassed the minimum 12 hour goal, including 73% of the faculty and 67% of the staff. Of the 260, 241 surpassed the 12 hour goal. There were 54 faculty members who did not reach the goal. Of those, 28 were adjunct/part-time faculty members. Among all employees, a total of 7,439 hours of professional development hours were submitted in 2021.

A new professional development reporting system makes reporting professional development hours simpler and allows individuals to see and track their own hours. Since January 1, 2022, faculty and staff have reported 2,164 professional development hours. In May of 2021, faculty and staff had submitted only 1,290 hours. It would appear that the culture at SRSU is embracing and taking pride in the continuing improvement of Sul Ross.

Lobo learning never ends, nor does the University's effort to improve its services and offerings.

(p) Showing Off: The Sul Ross Spotlight and "I Love Sul Ross" - With the goal of getting the SRSU name and identity out there - and to show off the depth of the talents and skills of SRSU faculty, President Gallego initiated "The Sul Ross Spotlight" - a monthly online lunch-time lecture series during each long semester that highlights the expertise and research of members of the Sul Ross faculty.

President Gallego also initiated a series of short videos featuring seven SRSU students, including a Rio Grande College student, talking about why they loved Sul Ross.

The monthly lunchtime lecture is open to the public and has gained wide recognition and attendance. It has highlighted archeological projects from the Center for Big Bend Studies establishing the first human presence and first domesticated plant use in the Chihuahuan Desert region; experiences of a nationally-renowned journalism faculty member, research from the SRSU Borderlands Institute, and much more.

The Sul Ross Spotlight has been extremely popular, though some SRSU faculty members have been reticent to participate in the lecture series. In time, that will change. Putting Sul Ross and SRSU faculty members in the spotlight only helps Sul Ross.

On the contrary, Sul Ross students were not reticent in telling why they loved Sul Ross. The "I Love Sul Ross" videos not only helped raise Sul Ross' profile statewide, they also helped raise student and staff pride and morale locally. They were quite a hit.

The seven "I Love Sul Ross" videos can be accessed here:

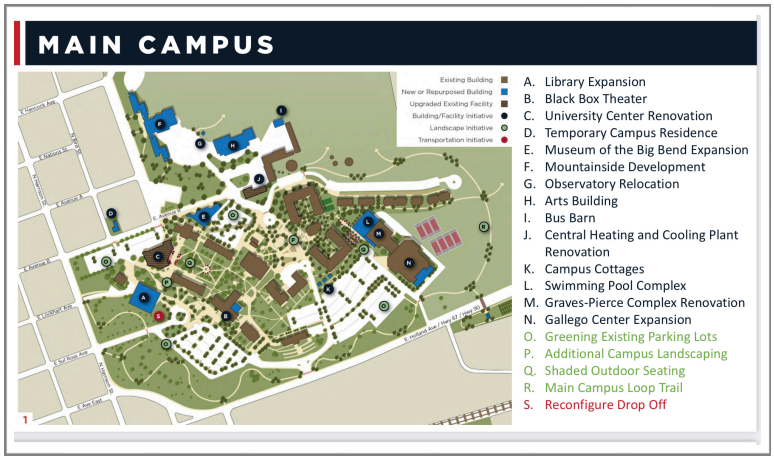
Vania Woods - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQeB6S6hitw
Henry Segovia - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRhZP9UQY1c
Annika Canaba - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rY6wCXwBZc
Brooke Upchurch - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpQmgF80uHY
Tristen Licón - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2jGZmlbq6Y
Ky Hamilton - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wWNjh8s24U
Anthony Sánchez - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bTeawsRPH0

(q) A Campus Master Plan with Big Dreams - President Gallego dreamed big for Sul Ross as he developed a master plan for the physical campuses of the University. He often said that he wanted it to be one of the 100 best small colleges and universities in the country. Since he had been born and raised in Alpine and had graduated from Sul Ross, and since he'd helped in authorizing the construction of the current Rio Grande College facilities, he'd been thinking about what he would do as President of Sul Ross and how he would do it for a long time. Mr. Gallego was never indecisive and always knew what he wanted.

When he was first elected to the Legislature, SRSU had no classroom facilities in Del Rio or Eagle Pass. Space was rented from the local school districts as needed. Mr. Gallego then negotiated a deal

whereby Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) would build new facilities and Sul Ross would lease them - and thereby pay any debt SWTJC would owe for construction. Now, however, he knew that the Rio Grande College campuses wanted a space of their own and knew it would enhance the University's visibility in the area.

Mr. Gallego included a new University-owned headquarters campus for the Rio Grande College in the master plan. He viewed this as critical to enhancing the university's reputation and image in the portions of South Texas which Sul Ross serves. He also consulted with SWTJC about using the continuing SWTJC/ SRSU partnership to leverage the investment in a new campus or campuses. Mr. Gallego believed that SWTJC could potentially co-locate campuses and build student amenities facilities that, by law, Sul Ross could not use state appropriations for (such as a gym, student center, or other auxiliary enterprise). He envisioned that SWTJC could share SRSU's new academic facilities and SRSU could share any new SWTJC student service facility.



For the Alpine campus, President Gallego included an outdoor rooftop reception area for the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial library and an expansion of the Morgan University Center to include more room for student activities and office space, a renovated dining area offering *al fresco* dining to take advantage of Alpine's excellent weather, and a new pub available to students over the age of 21. He also included a new theatre and other improvements in entertainment venues.

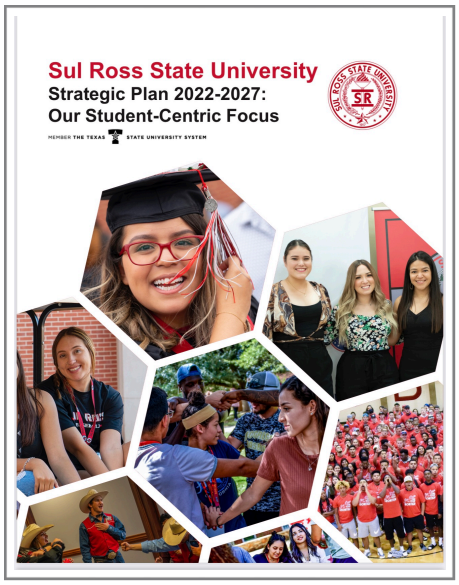
On the eastern edge of the main campus, Mr. Gallego proposed renovation of the Graves-Pierce complex, a new swimming pool, an expansion of the Gallego Center to include a weight room, additional dressing rooms and office space, an alumni area, and restoration of a kitchen and green room.

Ever a fan of rodeo, east of the main campus at and near the Turner Range Animal Science Building, President Gallego also envisioned developing additional space for the rodeo team, a street market area where vendors could rent space during rodeos, more parking, two miles of additional trail connecting to the main campus for fitness buffs, and a new Industrial Technology Building.

Other items included restoration of the three remaining brick cottages as temporary quarters for new faculty or staff while they looked for a permanent home in the community, the redevelopment of Mountainside Dormitory, construction of a small observatory behind Mountainside at the request of the Astronomy Department, and a community garden.

The Master Plan can be found at https://www.sulross.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SRSU-Campus-Master-Plan.pdf. A portion of Mr. Gallego's proposed master plan - including the renovation of visual and performing arts facilities and the construction of one or more buildings for the Rio Grande College - may be built in the very near future with the funding approved by the Texas Legislature during its special sessions in 2021.

(r) A Simple and Clear Strategic Plan - Leading a unique university, President Gallego guided the University toward an "outside the box" strategic plan. He appointed a committee to develop a strategic plan and asked that they build an entirely new plan from the ground up instead of editing or otherwise amending a previous strategic plan.



The result - "Our Student-Centric Focus" - was a complete rethinking of the SRSU mission and goals and represents a return to the University's grassroots as a school centered around the people and areas we serve. It highlights both our vision and our values. Unlike typical plans and vision statements, it is clean and uncomplicated. It is easy to read — and even easier to grade.

The plan sets four goals; the first of which is to promote student opportunity and success. Putting students first is yet another example of President Gallego's prioritizing students. President Gallego also asked that the plan include core values around which each of our campus communities could rally.

The difference in approach is clearly notable when comparing the 2017-2022 plan to the current plan. The current strategic plan was the result of collaboration by many people, both faculty and staff — and it is something the entire Lobo family can be proud of and unite behind.

(s) A Real and Enduring Partnership - A consensus builder, President Gallego built and maintained the University's best-ever relationship with Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC), SRSU's partner in the Middle Rio Grande and Winter Garden areas of Texas. SWTJC provides the first two years of a college education for students attending the Rio Grande College in Uvalde, Del Rio, or Eagle Pass. The President believed that the two entities were much stronger as allies, not competitors.

SRSU and SWTJC began working towards a unique seamless four-year university experience for all

students. Student services (including financial aid and academic advising) will eventually be co-located to provide a one-stop shop for students transitioning from one institution to the other. This alliance and cooperation is critical due the Legislature's decision to allow junior colleges to offer up to five bachelor's degrees.

Already, SWTJC has hosted transfer fairs solely for Sul Ross, has allowed Sul Ross employees to teach junior college courses, and has invited Sul Ross employees to sit in on interviews for vacant positions at SWTJC that work jointly with SRSU. Likewise, Sul Ross has extended SWTJC the same courtesies.

(t) A Functional Support Foundation - President Gallego completely reconstituted and reorganized the Sul Ross State University Foundation. For the first time in recent memory, the University's charitable foundation is a strong organization actively engaging with the University to build both local and state support as well as raising money. They are a full partner in raising revenue, building stronger relationships, enhancing the University's reputation, and helping SRSU students.

The Foundation board has been expanded and now includes representation from the Rio Grande College campuses as well as a network of individuals from around the state. The University's foundation now meets regularly, keeps minutes, allows public comments and input, and works jointly with other foundations to be of assistance to SRSU. The Sul Ross State University Foundation is now an excellent working partner for the University.

(u) What's in a Name? A Lot! - President Gallego also oversaw efforts to make the University more welcoming and to recognize the diversity of its students and employees as well as the dedication and service of those who gave much of their career to Sul Ross.

No building, facility, or space on the Sul Ross campus had ever been named for an African American, though African Americans had long been part of area history. Black students on campus had no validation of their cultural connection to this university - until 2021. At President Gallego's request, the main University Mall on campus which stretches from the Morgan University Center to Lawrence Hall, was named for Christine Young Robinson of Alpine, Texas, the first African American student admitted to attend Sul Ross State University. She was initially offered admission if she would would only state that she was of Mexican descent, but she refused to do so as she was proud of her African American heritage.

No college of the University had ever been named for an individual. At the request of President Gallego, the Texas State University Board of Regents recently named the College of Literature, Arts, and Social Sciences (LASS) as the Jimmy D Case College of Literature, Arts, and Social Sciences in honor of Dr Case's long and illustrious career. In an interesting twist of fate, Dr Case

was the last remaining faculty member on campus who had had President Gallego as a student; and he chose to retire while Pete Gallego was still President of Sul Ross.

In addition, an office suite in the Morgan University Center now bears the name of Leo Dominguez, the long-time Dean of Students and Vice-President of Student Affairs who retired while President Gallego was in office. Mr Dominguez was originally hired at Sul Ross during the Vic Morgan administration at the urging of then-Representative Pete Gallego.

The garden and grove of trees between the Warnock Science Building and the Francois Fine Arts is the Dr. Michael and Shirley Powell Garden. Dr. Powell, who arrived at Sul Ross in 1964, established and still operates the University Herbarium, the third largest herbarium in the state. There are two large and rare cork oak trees in the garden which Dr. Powell grew from seeds. His wife, Shirley Powell, now also at the Herbarium, was a long-time science teacher at Alpine High School and Pete Gallego's science teacher.

Lastly, at the President's request, the Board of Regents named the football field house at Jackson Field in honor of Randy Jackson, one of the University's first recruiters and among the most enthusiastic Lobo fans ever. Mr. Jackson, an SRSU graduate himself, raised money for championship rings, contributed to fundraisers, invited students into his home, and did much more. He and his wife, Sherry, never met another Lobo they didn't like. At the Homecoming football game shortly before his passing, Mr Jackson was named the University's first "Mr. Sul Ross."

A WALK THROUGH FACULTY, STUDENT AND STAFF SUCCESSES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

(a) COVID 19: Not In 100 Years . . . - President Pete Gallego led Sul Ross through the darkest days of the pandemic. Of his 24 months as SRSU president, his first 19 were during the height of the COVID pandemic. As if being a university president was not challenging enough, the onset of the pandemic heightened many of the foundational challenges at Sul Ross — but it also created tremendous opportunities to be of assistance to local communities.

Thus began Pete Gallego's tenure at Sul Ross and his effort to restore the historic goodwill between Alpine and the main campus of the university. It is particularly telling that Sul Ross State University was the first entity to offer COVID testing in Brewster County, where the main campus of Sul Ross is located.

Over a three day period, over 1,000 tests were administered. The first day offered drive-thru testing. The waiting line stretched nearly a mile. Testing on the second and third days took place inside the Gallego Center. The outpouring of appreciation to Sul Ross and President Gallego was immediate.

Limited community resources allowed President Gallego and SRSU to continually play an outsized role in local COVID prevention strategy. Despite not having a physician on campus, President Gallego and his team established and implemented strict protocols that worked to a large extent to minimize the virus on campus.

Discussions regarding classroom and office protocols involved both the academic and administrative sides of Sul Ross. Conference calls to discuss strategies and make decisions included members of the executive committee and, for the first time in at least recent memory, all of the academic deans. All participants took an active role in the conversations and were polled regarding each decision made. Decisions were made on the basis of consensus and were always unanimous.

Together, the administration and the academic deans determined to go face-to-face as long as possible, but to move entirely online after the Thanksgiving holiday when only two weeks of school would remain. In this way, no students

"No Improvements. In these difficult times, Sul Ross has gone out of its way to educate us."

In response to the question "What can Sul Ross do to improve?"

- Campus Environment Survey; Fall, 2020

who had left campus for the holiday would have to return to campus and inadvertently spread the virus in the area. Strategies such as this were a success.

At the same time, and in order to provide transparency and restore trust of both the employees and the community in Sul Ross, Sul Ross was among the first universities in the state to implement a COVID-19 Dashboard. The Dashboard was featured prominently on the Sul Ross website. Any member of the university community or local could easily look up the numbers of COVID cases on campus. The numbers on our COVID Dashboard were updated in real time.

It is difficult in retrospect to remember the fear that gripped the nation, state, and the campus in 2020. To allay the fears of the faculty, maintain contact with students, test protocols, and lead by example, President Gallego began teaching. He initially taught federal government in a face-to-face format in a room with no windows and no distance-learning capability. However, as students fell ill, he was moved to a different classroom in order to provide an online opportunity for students who contracted the virus.

Despite the unknowns and the dangers of potential transmission, President Gallego sought and received the help of many volunteers to help bring food, study materials, or get well packages to members of the campus community who were stricken by COVID. At President Gallego's request, SRSU police officers often delivered groceries or otherwise checked in on members of the Lobo family who were ill.

An entire floor in one of the university residence halls was reserved as a quarantine floor. Over the course of the pandemic, over 200 students were moved out of their assigned rooms and into the quarantine area. While in quarantine, students were tended to by SRSU Residential Living staff and volunteers, including President Gallego, who brought them meals, mail, and packages from family or friends. In addition, our library staff provided library services to students in quarantine.

COVID testing on campus was offered twice per week. It was initially made mandatory for student athletes by the rules of the American Southwest Conference, the SRSU athletic conference. Testing was also initially mandatory for all residents of university housing. While testing for students, faculty, and staff was prioritized, the Sul Ross often tested members of families from local communities. And, when other local entities could not obtain or ran short of COVID tests, the University filled the void by sharing from its own supply of tests.

To date, the Alpine campus of Sul Ross has conducted over 15,500 COVID tests. Of those, just under 500 were positive results (3.2%). Once a vaccine was made available, the University also began hosting several vaccine drives open to the community where over 300 shots were given.

Other Sul Ross campuses also proactively provided community service. The Sul Ross Rio Grande College campuses are located in communities larger than Alpine where COVID testing was widely available. On those campuses, the University hosted regular blood drives, food drives, clothing drives, and other events designed to provide help to individuals or health care providers in need.

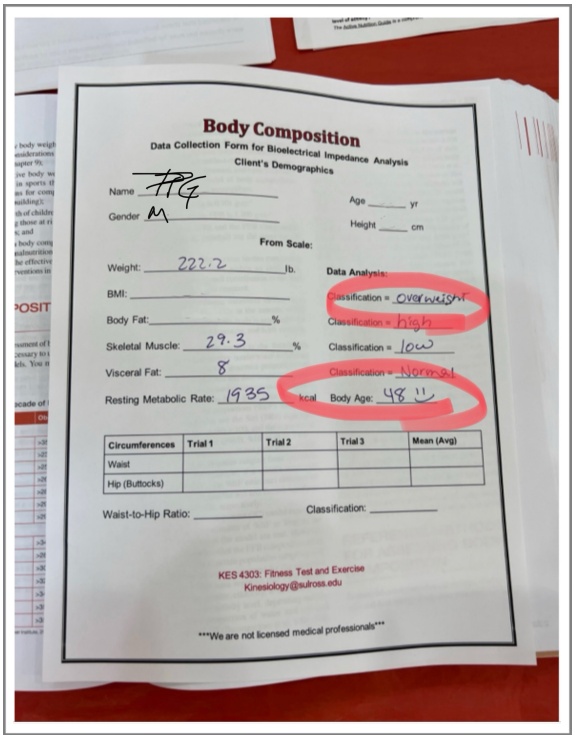
(b) Mental Health Resources - In the midst of COVID, President Gallego also began an effort to prioritize the mental health of all members of the Lobo family. Counseling services at Sul Ross in Alpine previously consisted of one counselor who was available online only. President Gallego opened two counseling positions in Alpine and required face-to-face counseling sessions as an option for individuals who preferred face-to-face meetings.

In addition to the two positions in Alpine, a counseling position was also opened at the Rio Grande College. Students at the Rio Grande College seeking mental health services had previously had to seek treatment in their local community. The counseling position at the RGC was deliberately designed to make a service already available to Alpine students also available to RGC students; another example of President Gallego's often stated desire to bring parity of services to all campuses.

As president, Mr. Gallego worked aggressively to dissipate the stigma on campus surrounding mental health. He publicly disclosed that depression ran in his family and was one of his own challenges. He publicly encouraged individuals to seek help when necessary and often walked students to the counseling center himself. He underscored that mental health was just as important as physical health. No previous SRSU president had ever been so openly supportive of mental health services.

(c) More Active Health Care - As part of the overall effort to improve the health of the Lobo community, President Gallego also made changes to the access point used by students to get health care or health care information. A new university nurse was hired to more proactively inform and help protect students, staff, and faculty on campus.

While the health clinic at Sul Ross is very basic and operates mostly on referrals, the nurse is still a critical person on the SRSU campus. The new nurse also became the contact person for Preventative Health Care Services (PCHS), the Federally Qualified Health Care (FQHC) clinic with



whom the university contracts to provide additional health care services. She now actively advocates for students on health care issues, serves as the liaison to PCHS, and is the point person working on finding additional entities to bid on the SRSU health provider contract.

(d) A Robust Wellness Program - President Gallego worked with the Vice President for Student Services and the Kinesiology Department to implement a robust wellness program on the Alpine campus. As a result, faculty and staff satisfaction regarding "work-life balance" soared from 38.9% in the Spring of 2021 to 51.8% in the spring of 2022 according to the annual Campus Environment Survey.

The wellness program had many components. SRSU's Alpine campus also begin offering regularly occurring classes such as yoga, weight-lifting, and other group activities open to both students and University employees. The University swimming pool was also re-opened to the public for use by members of both the university and local communities. A monthly calendar advised the university community when activities would be offered. President Gallego himself led a weekly 6:30am Wednesday Walking Group to take advantage of the new trails on the front of the campus and the brisk morning weather in Alpine. The walk began and ended at the President's Home.

In addition, kinesiology classes began hosting events as part of their coursework. Most recently, a health fair on the Alpine campus helped all members of the University community learn their body mass index, percentage of body fat, appropriate weight for their age, blood pressure, etc. Students were excited to provide these services and the experience was good for both the organizers and the participants.

(e) La Vida Lobo - Investing in Our Students and Community - After taking presidency in June, 2020, Pete Gallego made a concerted effort to build a greater sense of unity between SRSU students, faculty, staff, and the communities SRSU serves. His efforts to reconnect the university and local communities were based on his view that the university had become somewhat disconnected over the last several years.

President Gallego named a committee of faculty and staff from all campuses to design a service program to incentivize employee activities that would benefit students and our communities. The La Vida Lobo Service Initiative took shape. The committee created two clear goals for the La Vida Lobo Service Initiative Projects: (1) serving SRSU students and promoting their retention and graduation and (2) serving and strengthening our ties with communities we serve.

The La Vida Lobo Service Initiative was announced in September, 2020. By December, 2020, 23 employee-designed and driven La Vida Lobo projects were in operation. Upon completion of the projects, the committee reviewed the final reports, verified the data, and selected ten La Vida Lobo Service Initiative projects for special recognition and a $1,000.00 award.

"I believe La Vida Lobo is about giving back to our wonderful University and/or community. I look forward to continuing to be of service to Sul Ross.."

- La Vida Lobo Award Survey comment

For the first year, nine staff and 14 faculty members completed projects ranging from Christmas for Children at the Family Crisis Center of Big Bend to Trail Markers for the Hancock Hill Trail, to the Big Bend Comic Con Event to Library Partnerships for Children in Alpine and Presidio. Eleven of the projects were designed to benefit students. Twelve projects promoted stronger ties with local communities.

Responses to the new La Vida Lobo Service Initiative were hugely positive. Comments in the La Vida Lobo Award_Survey included: "It should form a pillar that emanates across and through university departments and activities and out into communities."

Indeed, the La Vida Lobo Service Initiative is becoming institutionalized. In December, 2021, seven staff and 16 faculty reported projects in operation. Ten of the projects addressed focused on students and 13 of the projects focused on the local community. In April, 2022, the committee selected the second set of top ten projects for the $1,000 award. These projects ranged from Food for Thought to address students' food insecurity to writing the script for the Historic Alpine Ghost Tours to a Lobo Success Wall providing students with needed supplies at no cost.

"I think [La Vida Lobo] is a great idea which will build morale, synergy among campuses, and recruiting channels."

- La Vida Lobo Award Survey comment

Faculty and staff have embraced the values of service to our students and community. A La Vida Lobo participant reported she was already thinking about her project for 2022-2023. Faculty and staff who participate in the La Vida Lobo Service Initiative discover the truth in Mahatma Gandhi's thought that "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

(f) Community Service/Community Bonding - Born and raised in Alpine, President Gallego aggressively looked for every opportunity to use University organizations, activities, events and resources to bond Sul Ross more closely to the local communities. His efforts met with much success. Alpine and the surrounding communities responded enthusiastically.

Local communities came onto the campus for COVID resources. However, they also came onto the campus or sought University expertise in many other events. For the first time, the University placed a large holiday tree in front of Lawrence Hall, the front door to the University and hosted a regional

holiday event. The University's event was supplemented by efforts from the City of Alpine, the Alpine Historical Association, and - most notably - the efforts of a La Vida Lobo project and program participant.

The crowd at the tree-lighting included bands, choirs, parents and other people from Alpine, Marfa, Presidio, and Fort Stockton. A visit from Santa also meant a long line of children waiting to get their pictures taken. It was the largest crowd on the main campus since before the pandemic.

Another innovative idea proposed by the Alpine Historical Association worked in conjunction with yet another La Vida Lobo program participant to create "Alpine Ghost Tours" - a by appointment walking tour of various "haunted" homes near the downtown area of Alpine. The Ghost Tours were also hugely successful. In fact, tickets to each tour sold out.

In addition, President Gallego successfully petitioned the Brewster County Commissioner's Court to make Sul Ross State University a community polling place for the November, 2020, presidential election and encouraged voter registration on campus. Students and community members came together at the University's polling place in the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and received special "I Voted" stickers for voting at SRSU.

(g) Making School (and Work) Fun Again - Pete Gallego, the college student and Pete Gallego the President both had fun. As president, he brought back much the same approach as he had had as a student (and student employee in the Financial Aid office).

Known as somewhat of a workaholic, President Pete Gallego also liked to ensure that he and those around him - whether faculty, staff, or students - were having fun and felt a part of the Lobo family. He was always willing to consider new and different things; and, whether the activity would be fun was always a consideration. This approach was as refreshing as it was different.

A conversation with the rodeo coach and dean of the ALPS College about supporting the SRSU rodeo team turned into a rodeo pep rally featuring a cattle drive through the middle of the Sul Ross campus. A conversation with his son about NBA March Madness turned into a Lobo Madness event to welcome a new basketball season. A stroll through the Archives of the Big Bend turned into a "family picture", a tradition from the early days of Sul Ross where as many

"Pete Gallego has made some very positive improvements with a special focus on students.."

- Campus Environment Survey, Spring 2022

students, faculty, and staff as wanted to participate gathered on the University's Christine Young Robinson Mall for lunch and a group photo.

From resurrecting the Homecoming bonfire and bringing it closer to the community by holding it at the Lobo Track Field, to a late midnight breakfast with board games and pick-up basketball on dead day, President Gallego was actively involved in creating events that brought people together — and even participating in them. When students chanted for him to sing during a karaoke/lip sync challenge on campus, he gladly complied with a rendition of Alabama's "Old Flame" and Vicente Fernandez's "El Rey." Though President Gallego jokingly asked the students never to tell anyone, the Snapchat video of him singing quickly made the rounds among students.

President Gallego will perhaps be remembered best for his cries of "Point, LOBOS!!!," "Bucket, LOBOS!!!,' or "Threeeeeeeeeeee, Lobos!!!" during Lobo volleyball and basketball games. A strong supporter of Lobo Athletics, he was the first ever SRSU president to serve as the announcer for volleyball and both men's and women's basketball. He brought a renewed energy to the game. He authorized funding for the Lobo Cheer squad and purchased spirit signs for the games. He hosted half-time contests and encouraged students and all attendees to be loud and proud.

President Gallego also regularly hosted staff, students, and faculty, at the President's Home. A new tradition of saluting the newest terminal degrees among the faculty was born. When the SRSU custodial staff invited him to breakfast, he reciprocated by inviting them to breakfast as well. He hosted athletic teams at his home — both to tell them in person that their seasons were being cancelled due to COVID and later to celebrate their victories. Students in the President's federal government class were treated to an end-of-semester hamburger cookout in the President's backyard.

The President was seen everywhere across campus. He bought pottery from ceramics students; attended art shows, plays, and concerts; served as a guest speaker for various classes or clubs; agreed to work in a "pie booth" so that a club could raise money by allowing students (or unhappy faculty or staff) to hit him in the face with a pie. He hosted a campus-wide Thanksgiving meal for all employees, asked the Executive Committee to serve the food and personally joined in, and then

helped clean up after the event. He joined in with physical plant and Student Activity crews to put away tables and chairs. And, he was also well known to break out a margarita machine and serve margaritas to employees at the end of a great week — or a tough one.

(h) Making the Campus and the Region Come Alive for Students — As the first SRSU graduate to become president, Pete Gallego wanted to make sure students had the same or better experience that he did. In interactions with students even before he became president and before COVID, he came away with the impression that student life at Sul Ross was no longer what he remembered. As president, he vowed to change that.

Competition for students among universities is a an all-time high.Student retention is critical to the University's future growth. To get students to stay at this university, Sul Ross must ensure that students are enjoying their experience here. For President Gallego, that included several different layers: (1) activities for students and (2) services for students. At the time of his arrival, the entire budget for all student activities for an entire year was $10,000.00. Unsurprisingly, students complained that there were little to no student activities.

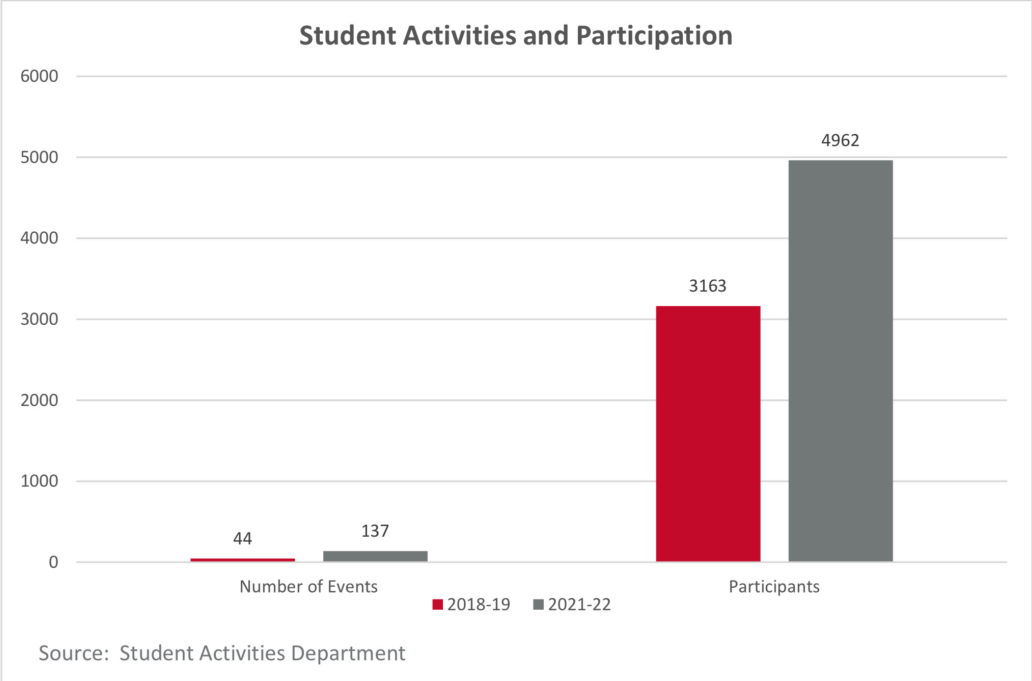
As President Gallego began to personally poll students on their opinions of SRSU and the region, he was shocked to discover how many students simply stayed in their rooms to play video games and had never explored the area's natural beauty. He was also disappointed to see that what had once been a thriving intramural athletic scene was but a shell of its former self.

Mr. Gallego made an effort to build up clubs and club sports. Efforts that did well were rewarded. The SRSU Ultimate Club, a club sport previously known as ultimate frisbee, achieved national ranking. They routinely defeated NCAA Division I schools such as Rice University and The University of Texas at San Antonio. Thus, the University invested in them because their success is a Sul Ross' success. There are many Ultimate players around the state and nation who now know exactly where Sul Ross is and who we are.

In addition to some traveling outside of our region, student trips to area attractions such as Big Bend State and National Parks, McDonald Observatory, and Balmorhea State Park were also added so that students could see and take advantage of the natural beauty of the Big Bend/Davis Mountains area. Additional entertainment in the form of magicians, speakers, etc, were brought to campus to keep students entertained and occupied.

President Gallego also strived to make the Alpine campus a "home away from home" for students from other parts of the state. To that end, he had OIT sort lists of students by hometown. The goal was to gather students from the same region together so that they could get to know each other (if they didn't already), take care of each other on campus, and help each other commute home occasionally.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, the last full year of classes before the COVID pandemic, 44 campus events garnered participation from 3,163 people. There were also 19 tournaments held in the University's game room located in the Morgan Student Center. In contrast, for the 2021-2022 academic year which just ended, there were 137 events that garnered participation from 4,962 people. And, this year, there were 34 game room tournaments.



(i) Building a "Student-Centric Culture" Using Common Sense - Keeping students busy was not President Gallego's only motivation, he also worked to keep students satisfied. Growing up in a restaurant, Mr Gallego recognized and understood the importance of customer service. Creating an environment where students feel safe, protected, cared for, and important is critical to making students want to keep coming back to Sul Ross.

As part of the university's transition to a more student-centered culture, President Gallego invested in a customer relations management system. This system allows the University to effectively

communicate with students via email, text, and voice messaging. If there is an issue, it can be addressed in the short-term, instead of being allowed to languish and become a source of later discontent - especially important for retention - and even more important in light of recent violence on school campuses.

Over the years, many rules had been established for the convenience of the University and at the expense of students. For example, students were prohibited from re-registering for classes if they had an outstanding balance — even when that balance was less than $1.00. Or, if a student did not timely remove his or her clothes from a university laundry facility, they were permanently disposed of by university personnel. Discipline for minor university infractions could be a bit harsh.

President Gallego's focus on student-centered and student-friendly policies brought about full-scale reviews of many university administrative policies to insure that student retention was a prime consideration and that a student's best interests and well-being and best interests guided university policy. Each office was asked to review its rules to make them more student-oriented. As a result, student-centric hours were established during crucial periods. Advising and Financial Aid offices stayed open until 10:00pm on occasion as a convenience to students.

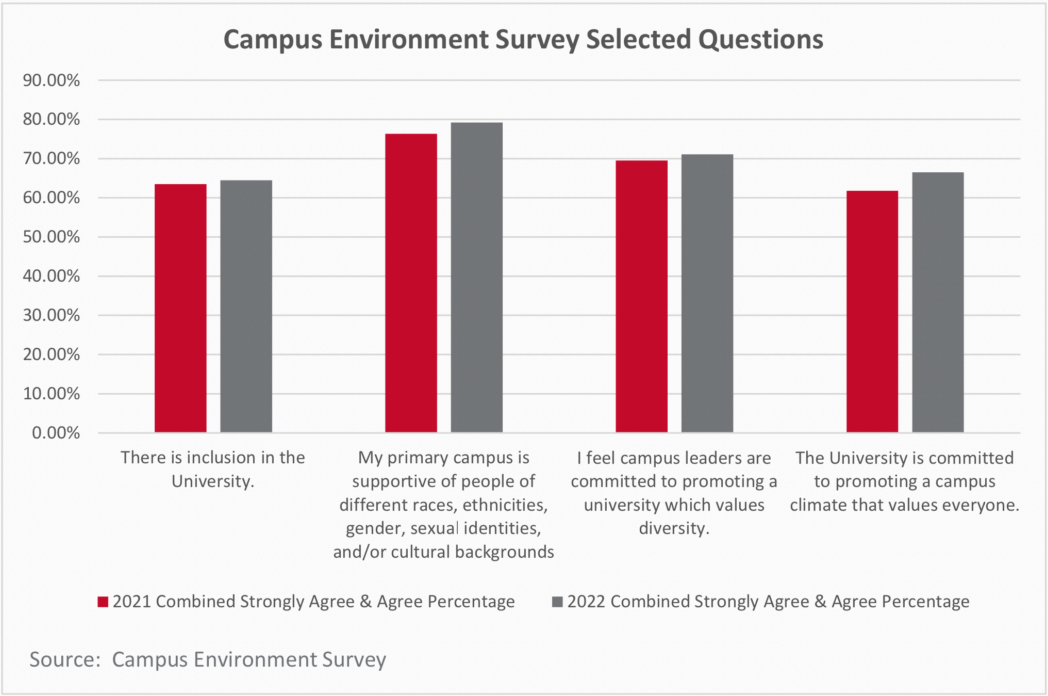
The University Police department philosophy was also shifted towards a more service-oriented form of public safety. Community policing, where police officers know the names of the students and actively engage with students, became the norm. University Police officers became active participants in campus life not an unwelcome intrusion. Their version of street tacos, served at nearly every special event held outdoors, quickly became among the favorite foods on campus. Justice was tempered with mercy - and healthy doses of care, concern, and friendliness.

As a result of President Gallego's efforts to build a more student-friendly, 79.9% of students reported "Generally, I feel welcome on my campus" on the Campus Environment Survey in spring of 2022.

(j) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - President Gallego valued diversity, believed in equity, and sought inclusion for all. The annual Campus Environment Survey results reflected his commitment. Progress was made on each category survey question, with the largest increase - from 61.8% to 66.5% - coming in the category of "The University is committed to promoting a campus climate that values everyone."

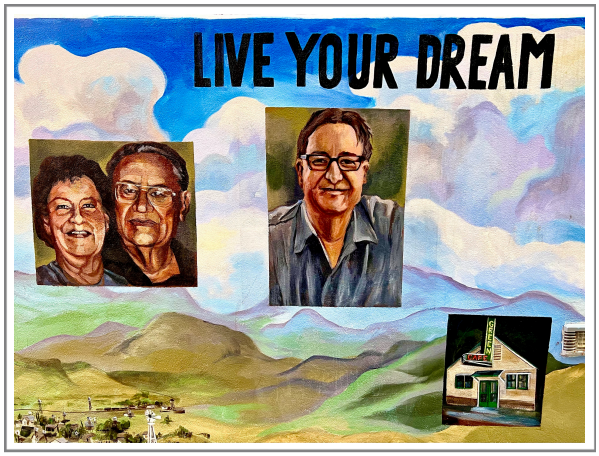
Born and raised in Alpine at a time when diversity was not particularly valued, President Gallego was committed to making all students, faculty and staff feel valued at the university. His goal was to create a space where diversity of race or ethnicity is appreciated, diversity of thought and opinion encouraged,

opposing view points respected, and freedom of speech celebrated. To promote that sense of comfort and belonging, the President supported a number of initiatives that are the first in the history of Sul Ross State University.



Cultural pride on campus came to life with the dedication of two murals designed by the SRSU art department and regional artists to create outdoor spaces promoting cultural familiarity. The murals feature historical images of the region and portraits of 23 remarkable Texans of Hispanic descent who have achieved their dreams. Those featured in the murals are graduates of Sul Ross State University or have some connection with the university and community.

Located across from the first floor entrances to the Pete Gallego Center, the murals are intended to inspire both SRSU students, many of whom are first generation college students, and the community to believe in themselves and make a difference. SRSU is grateful to Union Pacific for their assistance in funding the second mural and a virtual walking tour app in both English and Spanish. SRSU received a Community Spaces Grant from Union Pacific.



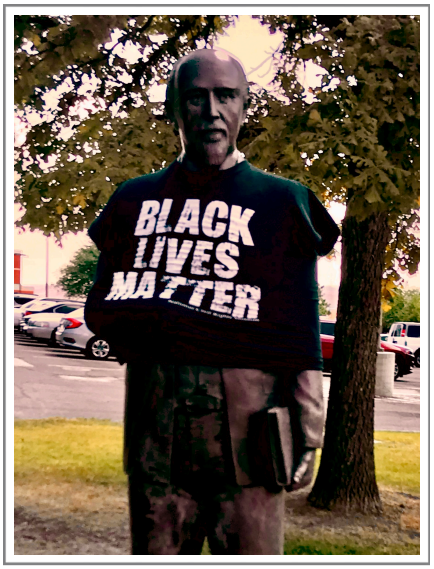
SRSU is designated as an Hispanic Serving Institution and these murals highlight the Hispanic culture while enhancing the cultural experience for everyone. The first mural was dedicated on October 8, 2021, and the second mural was dedicated on May 5, 2022.

In addition, the University also hosted Amado Maurilio Peña, a nationally renowned Mexican American visual artist and art educator as an “artist in residence.” Mr.

Peña is known as an important Mexican American artist with roots in the Chicano Movement in Texas, having been the high school art teacher in Crystal City, Texas, during the height of the movement.

Mr. Peña was featured in the 1990-1993 exhibition *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* that traveled to ten major cities in the United States. The exhibition was among the most extensive and widely seen show of Chicano art in in history. His art can also be seen in the US Department of State's Art in Embassies collection as well as the Smithsonian American Art Museum. President Gallego is a proud owner of an original Peña work and several autographed prints.

The "Black Lives Matter" movement was welcomed on the SRSU campus. Students held a March to the Brewster County Courthouse and expressed their views regarding a statue of Lawrence Sullivan Ross on campus. In a free speech exercise, the statue, traditionally dressed by students in garb appropriate for holidays or other events, was dressed in a "Black Lives Matter" t-shirt and a doo rag in a display of the constitutional right of free speech. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion also hosted campus conversations on race and justice.



In March of 2022, during the National Women's Month, SRSU also hosted its first ever Sul Ross State University Women's Conference. The conference was President Gallego's idea - his to encourage and inspire young women to seek successful careers and to honor the strong women in his family: his mother, Elena, one of the main strategists in the fight for integration of Alpine schools in Alpine and a leading voice in local civil rights causes, his sister, Imelda, the first attorney in his family and the first Mexican American graduate of Alpine High School to become an attorney, his sister, Rebecca, the first Mexican American graduate of Alpine High School to become a medical doctor, and his wife, María Elena, a fellow attorney and long-time general counsel in the judicial branch of state government.

The first conference attracted about 250 participants from the university, area high schools and the community. Senior SRSU women administrators planned the program to showcase successful women in a variety of fields. Panels included Women in Education, Women in Technology, Women in Counseling, Women in Music, and Women Trailblazers. Sonia Pérez, President of AT&T Southeast States, was the keynote speaker. As a fifth-generation Texan and proud Latina, she modeled and urged everyone to be involved for the betterment of their communities.

As part of the conference events, the SRSU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee created the SRSU Women's Conference Scholarship. One scholarship was awarded to a first-year student. Several participants also came away with posters celebrating National Women's Month. A special SRSU poster was commissioned for the event - and it was in high demand even after the event.

(k) Rewarding Excellence - While every university has a Deans' List acknowledging students who have achieved a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.3 during a semester, President Pete Gallego established a separate President's List to honor those students whose grades put them in an even more elite group of students - the best of the best. The semester GPA required for the President's List is 3.9.

Students named to the first President's List comprise less than 8% of the Sul Ross undergraduate student population. In its first year of existence, 102 students were named to the President's List; 38.7% of the students named to the Deans' List also reached the vaunted President's List during the first year of its existence.

Mr. Gallego also recognized and celebrated his predecessor, President Bill Kibler, by expanding a tradition President Kibler began and naming it in his honor. Each long semester, Dr Kibler invited SRSU-Alpine honor graduates and their families to lunch. The graduates also invited the faculty member who made the biggest impact on them while at Sul Ross.

Mr. Gallego expanded the tradition to include Rio Grande College honor graduates. He named the luncheon the "Bill Kibler Scholars Luncheon" to honor not only President Kibler's idea, but his service to the Lobo family.

At the luncheon, each honor graduate is individually recognized and shares with the crowd a few words about his or her experiences at SRSU and plans for the future. They also have the opportunity to recognize both their family and the faculty member who most influenced their college career.

(l) Innovative Ideas: Connecting with Students for Success - As a small university, President Gallego viewed Sul Ross as the perfect laboratory for new and innovative ideas and constantly pushed for them. In conversation, the President mentioned to a faculty member that he required students in his class to come see him for 15 to 30 minutes each month. Sometime later, the faculty's Access & Excellence Committee discussed the book, **Relationship Rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College**, to identify practices to promote student success - and a member noted the President's practice.

In Spring 2022, six Access & Excellence Committee members agreed to implement the *Connecting with Students for Success Pilot* in their classes. The pilot was based on a study at Oakton Community

"Not only has the Connecting with Students for Success pilot helped me be successful in this course, it has made me WANT to be successful."

- Connecting with Students for Success Pilot Program Survey, April 2022

College in Illinois reported in the book. The pilot called for faculty to implement four practices in their courses: (1) Learn their students' names; (2) Return success-oriented feedback to students early in the term; (3) Articulate high academic standards while offering support to students who may struggle; and (4) Meet one-on-one regularly with each student for a ten to fifteen-minute conversation.

The faculty received IRB approval and launched the pilot in Spring 2022. Throughout the semester, members of the Access & Excellence Committee reported on their progress. The faculty found that students in their classes appreciated timely feedback, and some students asked for additional follow-up conferences.

At the close of semester, students in the six courses were surveyed to determine how the *Connecting with Students for Success Pilot* impacted them. When asked "In your other courses, how common are the four practices?", 62% reported always or usually, and 38% reported sometimes, rarely, or never.

When asked, "If the pilot helped you to be successful in the course", 81% strongly agreed or agreed, and 19% neither agreed nor disagreed. In the open-ended question, students were very favorable towards the pilot project. One student commented, "Not only has the *Connecting with Students for Success Pilot* helped me be successful in this course, it has made me WANT to be successful. When your professor learns your name and gives you effective feedback on assignments, you start to feel like your professor cares about your success."

Members of the Access & Excellent Committee are excited about the *Connecting with Students for Success Pilot* and plan to continue the program during the 2022-2023 academic year.

(m) A New Nursing Program - The highlight of President Gallego's year was the establishment of a new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in the summer of 2021. The process was arduous and involved numerous interviews of local individuals, including President Gallego and members of the Executive Committee.

At long last, a formal meeting was held before the Board of Nursing. The hearing was held online due to the pandemic. At the time the Texas Board of Nursing approved the course, members of the Board told President Gallego that Sul Ross' application was "the very best application" they had ever seen. And so, Sul Ross had a nursing program.

In June of 2021, classes began for the first entering class. It was made up of seven students. In 2022, 12 students were admitted to the nursing program as part of its second cohort. By then, the nursing program had moved into new and enlarged quarters.

As the second class of nursing students began their studies, Sul Ross was notified that its new BSN program was being accredited for a full 10-year period - the maximum amount allowable. This was a huge accomplishment - and one in which President Gallego, the nursing school team, and the entire university took great pride.

The health care needs of the SRSU service territory are significant - and Sul Ross will play a key role in filling a need for nurses in rural areas who specialize in the types of care given in smaller rural hospitals. Perhaps the best part of the nursing journey was seeing the unity among faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community. Getting the program from dream to reality was a joint effort among many, many stakeholders.

(n) Other Additions to the Curriculum - Under Pete Gallego, several new degrees were authorized for Sul Ross, many new concentrations in existing degrees were added, and new course offerings were added to the university's inventory of courses. Every effort was made to keep the University's curriculum relevant to an ever changing world.

A Master's Degree in Sports Administration and more robust offerings in Kinesiology keep the department growing. Additional classes in criminal justice such as courses on the death penalty or cyber investigations add relevancy to current events and current challenges in law enforcement. Graduate programs on school finance, the superintendency, or school board relations keep SRSU at the forefront of providing educational leadership to regional school districts.

All told, more than five new degrees and over 130 additional courses were added to the SRSU curriculum while Pete Gallego was President of Sul Ross. The faculty worked hard to make sure that students had options — and variety; two things are integral to a college experience.

(o) Communication and Transparency: An Open Door - Used to dealing with constituent needs, President Gallego was the most campus-accessible president in modern times. He ate in the Morgan University Center dining hall three to five times a week. There, he met, sat and interacted with, and heard from students who knew he would listen as well as from faculty or staff who gathered there.

Weekly emails to all faculty and staff, including graduate assistants and student employees, monthly meetings with the leadership of the faculty organizations, meetings with the entire campus community, and - upon invitation - meetings with the

faculty organizations, committees, or the staff council as well as a well-known email address were all hallmarks of President Gallego's outreach.

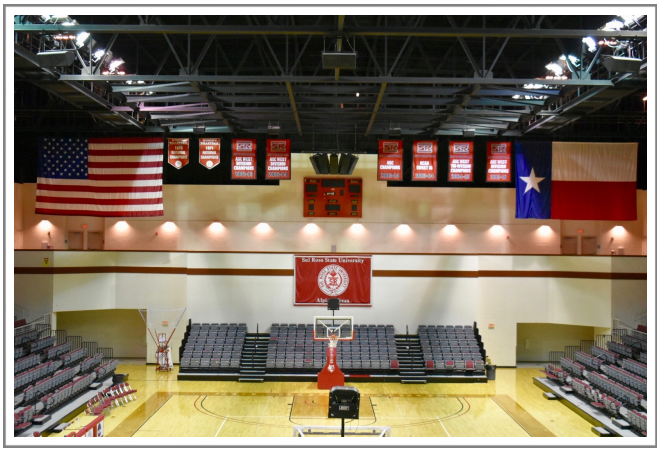
" . . . I just want to say how impressed I have been with your communication to the campus community . . ."

- Email to President Pete Gallego

The President understood that the success of a university is dependent upon both faculty and staff. During the Gallego Administration, staff employees gained greater recognition and voice. The President met regularly with staff, but rarely in his office. He frequently wandered around and engaged staff in conversation, asked their opinions, and learned about their specific challenges. As the pandemic subsided, the staff councils on campuses were also revitalized and took a more active role in university activities.

Particularly appreciated and well-liked were Mr. Gallego's Friday emails known as *The RoundUp*. In his email, the President would update the University on the antics and activities of his son as well as provide information on what was going on with the University. He emails were candid and straightforward - and sometimes funny. He also provided some weekly quotes as thought to ponder.

SRSU is a small university where a president is well known. Upon his arrival, a sort of fear and paranoia about several prior administrations gripped the campus. Because of his political career, Mr. Gallego's was already well-known. His personality and friendly nature raised morale and boosted confidence. The president's home and backyard were regularly used for morale-boosting events such as dinners for the presidents of organizations on campus, birthday celebrations, NFL or NBA playoff events, and other interactions with the university community, especially student organizations - even if folks had to wear masks or social distance.



A new student group, the "university grill masters" as well as the University Police Department were regularly asked to cook for many university events - and President Gallego would join in. Upper-level university administrators (including staff in the President's Office) were also routine participants in these staff and student events.

For the first time ever, the University President served as the announcer for university home volleyball and basketball games. His enthusiasm found favor with the crowd and the crowd would soon join in and repeat his words in a chant.

In short, there was constant interaction between the President, campus leadership, students, faculty, and the various groups on campus.

" . . . I don't think you have missed a week with your weekly roundup. In my time . . . several presidents . . . started out with similar ideas to put out a weekly or bi-weekly message of some kind but a flood of news soon became a trickle and, sooner rather than later, dried up altogether. You are the only one . . . who continued with your version of a weekly message and did so consistently. That has been much appreciated . . ."

- Email to President Pete Gallego

A WALK THROUGH A FEW NOTABLE SRSU EXTRACURRICULAR SUCCESSES
OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

No President has been as familiar with the history and heritage of Sul Ross as was Pete Gallego - including knowledge of officially sanctioned student extracurricular activities. From Student Government and other clubs on campus to rodeo and other athletics, Pete Gallego knew what Sul Ross had done and where it excelled.

(a) Student Government: Shattering a Ceiling - Pete Gallego was extremely supportive of student government and celebrated Anique López of San Antonio as the first Lobo elected by her fellow Texas State University System (TSUS) student government presidents and vice-presidents to lead the TSUS Student Advisory Board. Anique, who is just beginning her term as president of the student government at Sul Ross in Alpine, was elected to lead the Student Advisory Board at the Board of Regents meeting in May, 2022.

The TSUS is the only system that invites its student leaders to meetings of its Board of Regents. The presidents and vice-presidents of each institution in the System, as a group, make up the Student Advisory Board and are invited to each Board of Regents meeting. While there, they meet separately, and essentially get a seminar on leadership. On the last day of the meeting, they address the Board of Regents with recommendations they have mutually agreed on.

For Anique, it's a huge achievement. Typically, the Student Advisory Board leader is from one of the larger schools in the TSUS. This time, she defeated two other candidates from each of the larger schools. Sul Ross will be very proud of her and her service to both SRSU and the TSUS.

Anique is an RA in Residential Housing and a Lobo Ambassador. She's also a dynamic leader . . . and she can sing karaoke, too!!! She is a junior and kinesiology major and hopes to return to San Antonio, attend the UT Health Sciences Center there, and become a physical therapist.

(b) Rodeo: "Drive to X" - President Pete Gallego knew Coach CJ Aragón meant business, so he created an environment where the SRSU rodeo program could again succeed. Mr. Gallego, well aware of SRSU's rodeo history, invested in rodeo. As a result, the ANRS and Rodeo Exes Association called Mr. Gallego the best president for rodeo in over 50 years - and gifted him a belt buckle.

Mr. Gallego invested $50,000.00 in additional rodeo scholarships, increased budgets for hay and other needed supplies, supported the acquisition and maintenance of the University's own herd of cattle, authorized a new position for an assistant rodeo and full-time women's rodeo coach, and met

with the rodeo coach and team regularly. In response to support from the University, rodeo alumni and supporters also raised additional scholarship funds and donated cattle, material, and time to improve rodeo facilities for the University - to the tune of approximately $1,500,000 of in-kind value.
For years, Sul Ross lead the nation in the number of national rodeo championships won by its rodeo team (9); “Drive to X” is Coach Aragón’s and the Lobo Rodeo team’s drive to win SRSU’s 10th national rodeo championship.

SRSU hadn’t won a single rodeo since 2002 — but under Coach Aragón and with the President’s full support, the Sul Ross Men’s Rodeo Team won seven rodeos from 2020 to 2021. When Tristen Hutchings became the national bull riding champion in 2021, the team also had its first national champion since 1983 (just after Pete Gallego graduated from college).

CJ Aragón has built an all-around winning rodeo program at every college or university where he has worked. In 2020, two SRSU Rodeo team members qualified for the College National Finals Rodeo, at which national team and individual championships are decided. Unfortunately, the entire rodeo was canceled due to the pandemic. In 2021, three team members qualified for the national finals. This year, in 2022, six team members have thus far qualified.

Rodeo is a difficult sport. It requires a great deal of skill. Each weekend during the fall and spring rodeo season, rodeo team members hit the road to compete against 17 other colleges and universities in SRSU’s conference. The team set a school record for most points scored in 2020-2021 — then they broke that record and set a new one. in 2021-2022.

Since 2020 and under Coach Aragón’s guidance, the Sul Ross Rodeo team has boasted four Academic All-Americans. Their Rodeo team graduation rate at SRSU is 82%. And, this year, Hadley Kibbe, a champion goat tyer who graduated from SRSU in Spring 2022, became the first Sul Ross student to win the Walt Garrison Leadership award for the Southwest Region and is now a finalist for the national award, which will be decided at the College National Finals Rodeo.

In 2021, Sul Ross hosted what was then the largest collegiate rodeo in American history, with over 700 participants. That rodeo went off smoothly and contributed significantly to the local economy - which also met President Gallego’s expectation that University activities would provide a service to the community.

Sul Ross State University was the birthplace of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA) and once hosted the NIRA’s National Hall of Fame on its campus. Twelve schools originally came together to discuss the creation of the NIRA at a meeting held in Alpine on November 6th, 1948. Yet, over the years SRSU did not consistently prioritize rodeo. President Pete Gallego wanted to change that. He saw and invested in the efforts, the potential, and the progress.

At the time of his appointment, some people were skeptical of the new President's support for rodeo. What the skeptics didn't understand was that Pete Gallego loved Sul Ross. He was for anything that Sul Ross did well and help anyone who could improve SRSU's standing in local, state, and national circles. Rodeo was definitely a program that met that criteria. President Gallego believed in rodeo and supported it until his very last day in office . . . and the rodeo program is still not done.

(c) Athletics - President Gallego actively followed Sul Ross sports, sent campus-wide emails so that faculty, staff, and students could watch online, and served as the announcer during Lobo volleyball and basketball games. He met regularly with the athletic staff and pushed for improvements in game-day activities. He was proud of athletes' accomplishments both in sports and in the classroom.

During President Gallego's two year tenure, graduation rates for Lobo athletics continue to climb and Lobo Athletics made nine appearances in American Southwest Conference (ASC) championship tournaments. The ASC honored 342 Lobo as players of the week, all-conference players, academic all-conference players, or other accolades during that same time period.

Perhaps the rarest of occurrences: Sul Ross Lobo Tristen Licón, the second highest scoring Lobo in the history of Lobo basketball, left Sul Ross for the University of Texas where - from one season to the next, he became a player on the nationally ranked Texas Longhorn basketball team. It is pretty much unheard of for someone to move from an NCAA DIII program to a DI program so seamlessly.

While at Sul Ross, Mr. Licón, a student from El Paso, was all conference, academic all conference, on the D3hoops all-region team, and was a Basketball Times All-American. As a Longhorn, his success story inspired others and caused him to be one of the crowd favorites on the Longhorn team. His experience at SRSU and his basketball success have also brought the Lobo Men's Basketball team a lot of great press.

Head Women's Basketball Coach Katie Novak was the first women's basketball coach to garner nine ASC Conference wins in a single season and the first coach to advance past the first round of the conference tournament. She took her team there two years in a row. Coach Novak continues to coach a strong team

Xavier Webb was the youngest head men's basketball coach in the NCAA. Coach Webb was a former player on the Lobo basketball team and the assistant coach under Coach Cliff Carroll, the winningest basketball coach in SRSU history. Coach Webb carries well the

responsibility of a long winning tradition in Lobo basketball.

Softball/volleyball coach Troy Canaba notched over 100 wins as the SRSU softball coach in 2022 and took his team to the conference championship. He also turned a 2019 pre-COVID volleyball record of 11-14 and turned it into a post-COVID 15-10 winning record and advanced the team to the second round of the conference championship.

President Gallego was too young to remember the 1949 appearance by the SRSU Lobos in the third-ever Tangerine Bowl (now the Citrus Bowl), but he remembers well the Lobo volleyball victories in the infancy of women's volleyball. SRSU was the national volleyball champion for two years in a row in 1969-1970 and 1970-1971. They defeated UCLA in 1969 and Long Beach State University in 1970 to become national volleyball champs. Along the way, they beat Texas Women's University, Oregon, UC-Santa Barbara and San Diego State.

President Gallego believed in Lobo Athletics and Lobo athletes. Those victories may be far off in history, but President Gallego, an amateur historian, knew that history often repeats itself.

(d) The Ultimate Club - The Ultimate team was nationally ranked each year of Mr Gallego's presidency. Ultimate, a club sport similar to football - but with a frisbee - found a welcome home at Sul Ross while Pete Gallego was President of SRSU. The President loved underdogs and followed the team even before he came back to Sul Ross.

The Ultimate team defeated Rice University (a perennial rival) and other NCAA Division I schools to win their conference and continue on to the next level of play. One of their members, Javier Flores-Gaytán, was selected to participate in the "Color of Ultimate: College National Showcase." "The Color of Ultimate" showcases the sport's most talented players of color from across the United States. Javier was the only male Texas athlete in attendance, as well as the only male Hispanic.

Ultimate is another something the President Gallego invested in because it makes the University look good and takes the Sul Ross name to areas where it has not been before. As SRSU Ultimate made a name for themselves - they also made a name for Sul Ross.

Our students are our best ambassadors. The event will highlight Javier representing Sul Ross as an athlete and promoting the University's school's welcoming of diversity. Javier himself regularly talks up Sul Ross and has already been recruiting. He's spoken with many players in hopes of cementing our Ultimate team's long term future success.

Ultimate puts Sul Ross front and center nationally. What more can SRSU ask of its students?

(e) Industrial Technology - A believer that SRDU should do more in the area of industrial technology and trade, President Gallego supported Dr. Eric Busby, chair of the SRSU Industrial Technology Department, in his efforts to broaden the department's offerings and give students practical, meaningful, and hands-on experience.

Dr. Busby put together one of the few West Texas and rural student chapters of the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) and organized a team of students to compete in the NAHB's Production Homebuilding Competition. It was the first Sul Ross team ever to compete in a national contest sponsored annually by the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) at the International Builders Show. The SRSU team was named as the "Rookie of the Year" team in four-year programs from across the nation.

As part of the contest, the students created a fictional company called "Woodmont Homes" and submitted a development proposal in "Wilson Creek Meadows." The competition was stout. The team competed against schools like Texas A&M, Brigham Young, Clemson, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Florida.

The proposal was very detailed and was exactly what a professional development proposal would look like. It included the studies, diagrams, schematics, and renderings. The students' work was also excellent! From the initial stages to the conclusion, the students were literally getting hands-on experience and learning the details of what goes into putting an idea on paper, doing a market analysis, drafting plans, and submitting a proposed development.

The students involved in this project included Teresa Quintana (El Paso), Christopher Bell (Lamesa), Kyle Villalon (Corpus Christi), Caleb Wood (Georgetown), Nana Prempeh (Odessa), Heber Montoya (Andrews), and Branden Lewis (Denver City). They are already excited about next year's competition in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Industrial Technology program was once a jewel of the University. Dr. Busby will put the Sul Ross Industrial Technology program back on the map. All of Sul Ross can and should be extremely happy about and proud of that.

A WALK THROUGH SRSU TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

Technology and infrastructure on all four campuses are vastly improved as a result of President Gallego's efforts. As COVID forced the delivery of classroom instruction almost entirely online, it quickly became apparent that SRSU lacked critical infrastructure to accommodate the remote instruction, learning, and working needs of faculty, staff, and students during the pandemic.

President Gallego's efforts - and insistence that all campuses be equally equipped with modern technology, ensures that Sul Ross will remain competitive and successful in the world of online education.

"You have made great strides to improve and boost Sul Ross State University in your two-year tenure."

- Email to President Pete Gallego

(a) Moving the Earth to the Sky - President Gallego authorized and invested in cloud-based software, services, and applications. This reduced maintenance costs and time and drastically reduced unscheduled down time and disruptions of service. Prior to the Gallego Administration, a vast majority of SRSU's software, services, and applications were hosted on-premise.

As part of the migration to cloud-based services, a new ticketing system was implemented to more efficiently deal with help requests. Microsoft Exchange was migrated to the cloud and a more secure junkmail/spam filter was installed. For the first time, multi-factor authentication (MFA) was enabled on our mission critical and security sensitive applications. Policies regarding conditional access to the University's IT resources were established which have significantly reduced account takeover attempts and incidents of malicious activity.

(b) Internet Reliability and Redundancy - President Gallego authorized investment in a 10-gigabyte internet circuit between all campuses, about 1,000 times the capacity of what each campus previously had. In prior years, the internet always seemed to go down - especially the week of finals.

In Alpine, internet connectivity reached the campus via cable from Midland, Texas. Anytime some backhoe was trenching on the side of the road between Alpine and Midland, chances were good that they would hit the line and knock out internet service for several days. The RGC campuses had the same issue with their line that supplied connectivity to their campus from San Antonio.

A redundant line from Alpine to Fort Davis (where The University of Texas - McDonald Observatory line is

located) and on to El Paso was also authorized as was a redundant connection from Alpine to the RGC campuses. As a result, the Sul Ross campus in Alpine will be connected to both El Paso and Midland once the work currently in process is completed. The RGC campuses are already connected to both San Antonio and Alpine.

Once completely implemented, the new 10-gigabyte lines should allow for close to 99.9% network connectivity, a far cry from the situation when President Gallego first arrived.

(c) WiFi Connectivity - As part of President Gallego's drive to achieve equity among the campuses, 70 additional pieces of networking equipment and wireless arrays were installed across the Alpine and RGC campuses. Because the Alpine campus comprises over 1,000 acres, seven exterior wireless arrays were installed throughout the mall and amphitheater on the Alpine campus.

At the beginning of the Gallego Administration, all four Sul Ross campuses were infamous for their lack of available and reliable wifi across many parts of the campuses, including areas highly trafficked by students. In fact, the *Texas Tribune* at one time did a story on the lack of reliable wifi at the Rio Grande College.

President Gallego had represented the original Sul Ross campus in Alpine plus all three Rio Grande College campuses and communities in both the Texas Legislature and US Congress. Upon taking office, the newly appointed President insisted that students be entitled to reliable wifi throughout each of the four campuses.

Coverage is now available throughout the RGC buildings. In Alpine, wifi coverage is, for the first time, available throughout the grounds of the Turner Range Animal Science Center, including the rodeo arena. Wifi is now also available in athletic facilities such as Jackson Field, and in outdoor spaces such as the University's Robinson Mall and Zuzu Verk Amphitheatre.

(d) Distance Learning/Education - The Gallego administration oversaw the most significant and comprehensive university-wide investment in distance learning technology in over a decade. The investment included the upgrade of 21 classrooms across all four campuses with industry-leading distance education/ learning technology. The upgrade went live in the spring of 2020.
In addition, four classrooms (one on each campus) have been selected to pilot even more cutting-edge distance education/learning technology.

This technology is currently in the process of implementation and is slated to go live in the fall of 2022. The goal is for each classroom across campus to have distance learning/education technology

capable of accommodating remote delivery of instruction via any of the major platforms now in service including Lifesize, Teams, Blackboard Collaborate, Zoom, and Webex.

(e) New Laptop Computers and other Equipment/Service Upgrades - Looking for efficiency, President Gallego shifted away from desktop computers in favor of laptops and invested heavily in equipment and service upgrades. Prior to the pandemic, the University relied on desktop computers. However, during the pandemic, faculty members borrowed the limited supply of laptops that were kept on hand for students to use. It subsequently proved difficult for OIT to recover the laptops.

The university had not bought new computers in several years. The first purchase of the new laptops, 200 of them, began arriving in May of 2022. The laptops were distributed to individuals who were most in need or who had the oldest equipment. The laptops were accompanied by new curved, conferencing monitors, docking stations, and all other peripherals. All told, there will be 21 pallets of equipment totaling 7,000 pounds of freight that will land in SRSU's Central Receiving office.

The networking equipment in the Morgan University Center had reached end of life, so new and more advanced equipment was purchased replacing the outdated hardware and software in use. New hardware accompanied new speakers atop the Morgan University Center, so that the bells of the University's carillon and music from the carillon could be more clearly heard. At President Gallego's direction, the carillon now plays the National Anthem at 8:00am and 5:00pm every day.

DHCP servers were updated with industry standard software. As well, the University's Active Directory servers were updated from their 2008 version. This allowed for "replication" across all campuses. In other words, SRSU users can now login to any SRSU device regardless of which campus they're on. SRSU's Office 365 software was migrated to the cloud allowing for additional cloud based storage and access to software applications such as Power BI. Plus, Image Now, the SRSU method of storing .pdf's, records, and other items electronically, was extremely outdated. This was upgraded to Perceptive Content 7 allowing for the "drag and drop" of files to/from the imaging system and making every user's life much easier.

The OIT staff is also heavily engaged in combating dangerous computer viruses, mitigating vulnerabilities, and protecting the SRSU network. President Gallego experienced this personally one day when OIT staff came to his office and said, "We just wanted to see if you were here, because the person trying to use your computer was in Ireland." No one wants to experience the massive security breach SRSU suffered years ago - and each employee, backed up by our amazing OIT staff, is on the frontline of that fight to keep our network safe and secure.

A WALK THROUGH SRSU FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS
OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS . . .

As President, Pete Gallego insisted that the University present a certain image. The facilities and equipment, including university vehicles, often speak loudly about the condition an institution. The campus is the face of the University. President Gallego wanted all campus facilities to instill pride in every member of the Lobo family. To that end, he invested less in expansion and more on maintenance.

As a budget person, Mr Gallego also always worried about the bottom line. He did not want to see the University overextend itself financially, especially inasmuch as he did not relish the thought of being cross-examined by many of his former legislative colleagues and answering questions that might not paint SRSU in a good light. Still, there were certain expansion projects he was very supportive of.

The following facility improvements were either planned during the Gallego Administration and slated to begin shortly thereafter, or begun during the Gallego Administration.

(a) Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - As an attorney and a person familiar with disabilities and the accompanying stress, Mr. Gallego prioritized required ADA fixes. The ADA is somewhat dynamic and the rules often change. Several projects during the Gallego Administration required the replacement or widening of sidewalks and walkways to ensure compliance with more recent ADA revisions

(b) Centennial Plaza - President Gallego was not initially a fan of changing the westward-facing view of the campus, but he grew to like the concept of an outdoor plaza celebrating the University's 100th anniversary and allowing the community to see and perhaps partake in more activity on the campus. The plaza begins in front of the Morelock Academic Building, stretches to the front of the Briscoe Administration Building, and should be completed in 2022.

The area is designed not only as a sitting area, but as a venue for community events. As part of the Centennial Plaza construction, the traffic circle near the Wildenthal Memorial Library is also being made smaller to allow for the Briscoe Administration Building to have more of a "front yard" and to comply with State Fire Marshal requirements. This change, though approved by a prior administration was a difficult one because it involved the removal of several older trees. After consulting an arborist and some of the campus faculty, Mr. Gallego allowed this portion of the project to proceed as well.

(c) Museum of the Big Bend expansion - President Gallego was an enthusiastic supporter of the / Museum of the Big Bend because much of his Gallego family history is documented there. He had been instrumental in the decision to restore the original museum building and return the museum to its original 1937 home - so he was excited about an extension. As with every project, he asked questions about cost and sustainability.

The groundbreaking for the expansion was held in August of 2021 with the TSUS Board of Regents present. The new 12,100 square foot Miriam and Emmett McCoy Building, made possible by a $5 million initial gift from the McCoy family, will connect to the museum's historic 1937 building. It will feature a permanent gallery for El Pasoan Tom Lea's classic Western cattle paintings as well as a gallery for rotating exhibits. It will also include space to highlight research from various Sul Ross State University departments.

The new building will also include a public space for meetings and events, an outdoor observation deck, and a gathering area showing off views of the Davis Mountains. The cost estimate was $12.5 million, but recent economic conditions have impacted the overall costs of the project. The Texas State University System itself is now directly handling fundraising and cost management for the project.

President Gallego directed that a series of electric car chargers (including those originally slated to be built near Centennial Plaza) be placed in the parking area adjacent to the Museum of the Big Bend. He wanted visitors to Alpine in search of an electric car charging station to have a place to enjoy while recharging their vehicles. Increasing visitation to the Museum was never far from his mind.

(d) The Christine Young Robinson Mall - President Gallego began an effort to have the Christine Young Robinson Mall trenched so that hidden electrical outlets could be installed near trees and to have the Mall reseeded with grass thereafter. The President discovered early on that electricity to the Mall was insufficient to decorate the Mall for the holidays. The Christine Young Robinson Mall is the only place on campus other than the President's Home where grass is now maintained.

The Christine Young Robinson Mall is the place where the campus comes to life daily. It is the center point of the university and was the originating point of the first known cattle drive through a college campus. The cattle drive served as a rodeo pep rally just prior to the start of the annual Sul Ross Rodeo in 2021 Most of the academic buildings on campus line the Christine Young Robinson Mall.

Named at the request of President Gallego and a committee appointed by him and charged to seek ways to highlight local history, the Christine Young Robinson Mall honors the first African American student accepted into the University. A native of Alpine who later served on the Alpine City Council, Ms Robinson was part of a small but vibrant African American community in Alpine.

(e) The Morgan University Center - President Gallego, who provided legislative funding to build the University Center, now negotiated a renewal of the contract with Aramark, the University's food service provider. The contract will require Aramark to invest an additional $1.5 million in the renovation of the University's dining facility. Proposed changes include a food court and a garage-style opening to replace the the current immovable windows and allowing for the entire facility to have open air dining.

Other changes include the addition of a University pub for the use of individuals over age 21, an additional game room and more space for student activities, an enlarged area for the provision of basic health care, a proposed fourth floor observation deck, and easier access to the University Center from the adjacent parking area.

Now 25 years old, the Morgan University Center has not been refurbished or renovated since its original construction. As one of the most heavily trafficked and widely used facilities on campus - and as a tribute to both Vic and Mary Jane Morgan - President Gallego made modernizing the Morgan University Center a priority.

(f) Lobo Village - President Gallego worked to improve ventilation in Lobo Village residential housing units and make sure that the buildings and grounds are more prepared for the next round of severe winter storms. The Lobo Village is now the primary housing for students choosing to live on campus. COVID underscored the importance of better ventilation.

During the infamous winter storm of February, 2021, multiple Lobo Village buildings experienced significant damage due to fire system water pipe breaks in the ceiling. President Gallego asked that a different method of protecting these water pipes be found and that all rooms be repaired and upgraded to match the styles and materials used in Lobo Village 1, which has already been upgraded.

Once full upgrades are scheduled for other Lobo Village units, work will proceed more quickly because some of the rooms and hallways will already have been upgraded. Ever forward thinking and fiscally prudent, President Gallego wanted to save time, money, and effort when remaining Lobo Village units, especially Lobo Village 2, are updated.

Comfortable student housing leads to improved retention, thus the effort to ensure that all Lobo Village housing was comfortable for students. The Lobo Village units include both single and double occupancy rooms as well as apartments. The majority of students living in the Lobo Village live in Lobo Village Units 1 and 2.

The work on ventilation is being done in stages, with work on the most-used Lobo Village units being prioritized. The initial work began in May, 2022. As with any building in regular use, all of Lobo Village needs near constant maintenance.

(g) Fletcher Hall - President Gallego was direct in his desire not to have an abandoned or unused residential housing unit in the middle of the Sul Ross campus - so insisted that repairs and upgrades be made slowly but surely on Fletcher Hall. Fletcher, built in 1962 and known as Morelock Hall until 1988, sits on the first row of buildings behind Lawrence Hall at the entrance to the campus.

Fletcher Hall was used as the COVID isolation building during spring, 2022. Mr. Gallego designed a plan to use Fletcher Hall as a graduate residence hall and to provide housing scholarships to graduate assistants choosing to live in the facility. By limiting the population in Fletcher Hall to 25% of capacity, work to upgrade the facility can proceed in stages.

Needed upgrades include electrical upgrades to allow for more outlets in each room, updated bathrooms (it was a women's dormitory so all bathrooms are pink), improvements in the common area kitchens, and replacement of certain doors to allow for more secure card-key access.

(h) Athletic Facility Improvements - President Gallego sought to make subtle but substantive improvements to athletic facilities on campus. Fluorescent lighting in the Pete P. Gallego Center and the SALE Rodeo Arena, for example, are not flashy — but will improve visibility and achieve significant savings in electrical costs. The savings will more than offset the cost of the lighting in a relatively short period of time.

WiFi accessibility was also added at Jackson Field and the Sale Rodeo Arena. Visiting teams often complained about lack of any reliable internet service at Jackson Field. Reliable internet also allowed rodeo team members to work on homework assignments during breaks in practice. Internet access has become a critical piece of education - and President Gallego made sure it was available throughout campus, even in outdoor spaces.

A refinished gym floor, repaired lighting in stairwells, additional lockers in locker room, new laundry equipment, and a significant upgrade in the tools and equipment available to athletic trainers were also among the many improvements made during the Gallego Administration. Improvements were also made at the SRSU softball and soccer fields.

(i) University Ranch - Then Representative Pete Gallego gave the University a state-owned ranch while a member of the Legislature and continued to support operation of the ranch as President. The ranch is located in Hudspeth County near the community of Sierra Blanca.

Sul Ross has never used the ranch to its full potential, but that began to change during the Gallego Administration. Working with the Dean of the College of Agriculture, Life, and Physical Sciences, and

the rodeo coach, President Gallego began investing in the ranch. Water wells were repaired, water tanks and water lines replaced, over 20 miles of fencing added. Much of the work was done by Sul Ross staff and volunteers.

Water helped restore much of the native wildlife population. The University also began to raise its own herd of cattle on the ranch, which is particularly important for the rodeo program and should allow for some generation of additional revenue over time.

In order to use the ranch to its most full potential, President Gallego also approved a plan to develop a rustic ranch headquarters with classroom and lab space, a kitchen, and sleeping quarters for students.

Once operational, the University plans a unique offering on the University ranch: an opportunity for SRSU to provide a "City Slicker" type experience for people, particularly from urban areas, interested in helping move cattle from one portion of the ranch to another. To the University's knowledge, no other college or university now provides a similar opportunity. This offering could generate significant positive press and recognition for Sul Ross while also generating revenue to offset costs of operating the ranch.

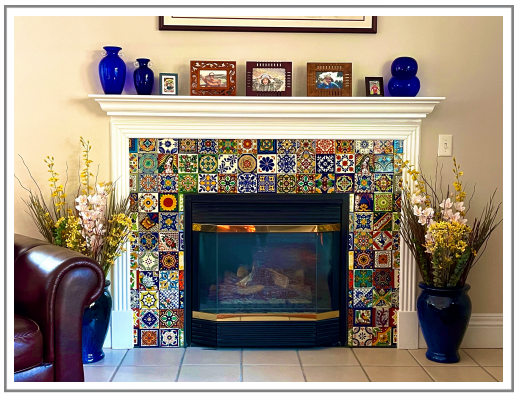
Like much of Far West Texas, the property contains some majestic views and challenging spaces. The ranch can and will be another jewel in SRSU's crown.

(j) Lighting on Campus - The author of the state law protecting the region's dark skies, President Gallego was ever conscious of lighting on campus. He sought to comply with provisions of state law he himself had written.

Safety concerns on campus made lighting a priority. While the campus has relatively little crime, President Gallego, also a former prosecutor, was proactive in making sure opportunities for criminal mischief were minimized. Significant new LED lighting on campus was added which complied with the dark sky requirements but also made students, employees, and guests feel safer.

(k) The President's Home - President Gallego was proud to live in the President's Home and to make it, once again, a focal point of campus life. The President's Home is the second oldest building on the SRSU campus and had been unoccupied for several years at the time of Mr. Gallego's arrival.

Mr. Gallego's changes to the home were minimal. In the family room, the most commonly used of the public rooms in the house, President Gallego added colorful Mexican tile to an all-white fireplace which was the focal point of the room. The tile was not only meant to accent the fireplace, but to acknowledge the President's heritage and culture as well as the to serve as a symbol of the Mexican



American community's contributions to Sul Ross throughout its history - from construction through the current day.

In addition, the President's son, also a regular presence on campus and with a strong personality of his own, objected to the ancient pink tile in the upstairs bathroom at the top of the stairs near the bedrooms. The tiling was redone in a modern white, blue, and grey color scheme and the bathroom amenities were both upgraded and updated.

It is important to note that all changes to the President's Home while Mr. Gallego was living there were made at his own personal expense and not charged to the University or the taxpayers.

(l) Roofs and Elevators - Roofs and elevators seemed like a constant problem for President Gallego. A 2017 hail storm had damaged several roofs severely and they had not yet been repaired. The rooms leaked severely during rainstorms. President Gallego, tired of seeing buckets catching rain in public spaces, scratched and clawed to put together funding. Six buildings across campus saw their roofs repaired.

Elevators were also an issue. The University had previously negotiated its own contract with an elevator repair company. However, TSUS System staff pointed out that the rate the University had negotiated prior to President Gallego's arrival was significantly higher than the rate negotiated under the overall State of Texas contract. The University then proceeded under the state-negotiated contract and saved a substantial amount of money.

Ironically and in a cruel twist of fate, as President Gallego was attempting to move out of his second floor office in the Briscoe Administration Building, it was the Administration Building elevator that was broken.

A PARTIAL ROADMAP FOR FUTURE SRSU LEADERS . . .

As President, Pete Gallego knew Sul Ross State University's history, so he concentrated on envisioning its future. He dreamed about what Sul Ross could and should be. The President's goal was to make SRSU one of the 100 best colleges and universities in the country — and he shared that goal publicly with the faculty, staff, and students on a regular basis.

There were some things he had in mind that he did not get to finish in his short two-year tenure, like seeing his vision of a campus master plan take shape or implementing the strategic plan he and others worked on. However, he was visionary about many things. Here are several of his visions for Sul Ross.

(a) The Rio Grande College Campuses - President Gallego believed that each of the Rio Grande College campuses (Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass) should be a core educational, economic, academic, and research pillar of the communities they serve. In his mind, each campus had a strength and personality of its own that could incentivize progress, grow learning, and create opportunity for the people they serve.

There was no reason, in his view, that in the current national environment, the press should look to other universities for expertise on immigration or border issues. He believed such research capability and expertise should lie within the Sul Ross faculty. The same for trade, economic development, water rights, and conservation. Sul Ross, he believed, should be more closely aligned with the needs of the regions it serves.

(b) Technology for Students - President Gallego hoped to provide entering students with technology. He directed that the University enter into conversations with a technology company about the possibility supplying new students with an electronic tablet such as an iPad. During the pandemic, he learned that many students had no technology of their own.

His idea, should funds be available, was to provide an electronic tablet to first year students in Alpine as a pilot project; thereafter expanding it to transfer students on all four campuses. In his mind, the technology was a new way to both incentivize students to come to Sul Ross and to help them succeed. Conversations with the technology companies have narrowed to one specific possibility - but no agreement was reached before President Gallego left office.

(c) NCAA Division II and the Lone Star Conference (LSC) - President Gallego contended that changing from an NCAA Division III university to an NCAA Division II university was worth a conversation. The Athletic Department at Sul Ross is the among the very best on campus at recruiting, retaining, and graduating students. The move would help the Athletic Department tremendously in recruiting athletes to Sul Ross.

There are also other advantages to the change. In our current athletic conference, our teams have to travel 18 hours or so - one way - on a bus just to play a conference game. Our conference is expanding farther East - so trips will only get longer. Diesel fuel for SRSU “not very fuel-efficient” buses isn’t getting any cheaper. Throw in hotels and meals for 30-80 kids and the expenses become significant.

Joining the LSC will allow Sul Ross to build rivalries closer to home, such as Angelo State University or The University of Texas - Permian Basin. Our teams would not arrive at their destinations exhausted from their road trips. More games would be played within the boundaries of Texas and Division II plays more games. Many alumni may remember that Sul Ross was previously in the Lone Star Conference.

On the down side, Sul Ross will have to spend a certain required amount on athletic scholarships. Years ago, the cost of scholarships was a factor in why SRSU decided to leave the LSC. More games in Division II also means more expenses for SRSU. And, the competition will be stiff for SRSU, especially as coaches initially work to build solid teams.

Moving to DII can be a smart move for SRSU, but it only works if the Athletics Department can continue to increase and improve its recruiting — and the University as a whole can continue to improve its retention rate. It works better if every employee - from the newest faculty or staff member to the most senior - does their part to recruit and retain; and if the Lobo family - from alumni to current students - is supportive of the idea.

(d) Health Care and Wellness - From taking care of his 93 year old mother in Alpine to leading morning walks to encouraging wellness, Mr. Gallego knew that SRSU could play a bigger role in area health care. And, he wanted it to. He envisioned broadening the new nursing program and including other careers and services such as physical therapy, public health, and health care administration. eventually, He also believed that the health and wellness courses taught by the Kinesiology Department could be also be part of a separate department or college of health sciences.

Growing your own professionals is sometimes a better option than looking elsewhere. A full health sciences program at Sul Ross would also serve to strengthen science offerings at area high schools. It would provide students with additional career opportunities in a very unique laboratory - a small university in an area where few studies have been done and that is ripe for studies on cancer rates, diabetes, and other diseases with seemingly higher incidences in the communities of the Big Bend.

(e) Moderating Local Community Conversations - In President Gallego's worldview, colleges and universities should be centers of research and learning and safe spaces for diversity of thought and opinion. To him, that meant that Sul Ross should proactively be hosting forums, leading community conversations, doing local research, educating the public on facts, looking for options and solutions, and providing information to local, state, and federal leaders.

Mr. Gallego often engaged his federal government students in discussions on controversial topics. The conversations were respectful, engaging, enlightening, sometimes difficult but often fun. Mr. Gallego envisioned faculty and students leading and learning from community focus groups and providing information to others.

The recent absolutely unspeakable and horrific tragedy in Uvalde gives the University a chance to help the community heal. It is a small community. The community will never fully recover, but the University's various academic departments can join together to design an effort to slowly and gently help the community deal with horrific loss. In the long term, when other non-local resources leave, Sul Ross will still be there. Uvalde is the University's home, too.

(f) Lobo Lights - Some people light the way for others. President Gallego referred to people who perform random acts of kindness as "Lobo Lights." These employees raise morale and make the University a better place. He wanted to recognize these individuals in a meaningful way — but to allow the staff themselves to select who should be recognized.

As envisioned, employees, faculty, and students in Alpine and the Rio Grande College could nominate a staff member as the Lobo Light of the Month. At the end of the year and during the holidays, staff in Alpine and the RGC would select their yearly Lobo Light award winner from among the 12 monthly nominees. This annual award - and the monthly awards - would be special because it would be chosen from among the staff by the staff themselves. And, the awards would come with some designated perks.

Campus environment surveys consistently indicate that morale among employees could always be better. Showing appreciation regularly is one way to lift morale. If a staff members are unhappy in their jobs, it inevitably impacts their effectiveness — and the University's retention rate.

(g) Mountainside Dormitory - Shutting down Mountainside Dormitory, once the largest dormitory on the SRSU campus, and using it solely for storage was, in Mr Gallego's hindsight view, a huge mistake. Some use must be found for what is arguably one of the two most prominent and visible buildings on the Sul Ross State University campus. Actually, finding a use for the building is not a challenge — finding an investor is.

President Gallego's outside the box thinking and pride in Sul Ross engaged new groups in conversation about potential future uses of Mountainside Dormitory. As Mr. Gallego saw it, half of the facility's dormitory space could be rebuilt as a resort hotel and restaurant - allowing the University to offer courses in hospitality and related subject areas. The other half of the space could be used to provide space for a laser tag venue, bowling alley, or other recreational activity that the University, the regional communities, and the tourism industry could be support.

However, the building's potential is masked by its use as a storage area where years of surplus equipment gather dust. President Gallego engaged in an energetic effort to give surplus equipment to other entities in need. The City of Presidio and the Alpine Independent School District were beneficiaries of University surplus equipment and partners in President Gallego's efforts to empty Mountainside Dormitory.

Absent specific legislative authority and an accompanying appropriation, finding funding for any rehabilitation or renovation of Mountainside Dormitory will be a significant challenge for any future president of the University.

(h) Recruitment and Retention - President Gallego recognized recruitment and retention was a crucial factor especially in light of Texas' transformation from a rural to an urban state. However, he had several ideas in mind to increase both recruitment and retention.

Playing to Our Strengths was a phrase Mr. Gallego used to describe efforts to change the paradigm and take what some saw as a challenge and turn it into an advantage. Geographic isolation - advantage. Chihuahuan Desert - advantage. The Rio Grande - advantage. Big Bend - advantage.

President Gallego wanted to align student recruiting for all four campuses with regional assets. Many students in Uvalde and Del Rio or Eagle Pass may not have seen Panther Cave, the Devil's River or Amistad National Recreational Area. Most students in Alpine have never been to the Big Bend, McDonald Observatory, or Balmorhea.

Hosting by Hometown was an idea that worked well for then-Representative Pete Gallego. He often worked with The University of Texas at Austin to invite students from cities and towns he represented to the Capitol for various events. At Sul Ross, the idea was to invite students from major metropolitan areas to an event. The students may not have known each other at home, but having hometowns in common gives them a nearly automatic friend and support system in Alpine.

Snapping and Social was an idea born from the President's discussion with his classes about how they communicated most regularly. Asking students for their social media addresses and handles and their hobbies and interests would allow the University to establish chat groups based on common interests at the beginning of a semester. It would also allow the University to quickly and easily invite students to impromptu horseback riding lessons from the rodeo team, frisbee lessons from the Ultimate Club, or any one of a number of other potential activities.

Summer Camps are usually great ways to show off a campus. Data reflects that the first campus a high school student goes to usually makes a deep impression. High school students from SRSU's service territory don't often have opportunities to go away for summer camps. President Gallego wanted to bring summer camps to them.

From Student Council to the National Hispanic Institute to sports camps, President Gallego wanted to bring high school students onto the Sul Ross campus each summer. COVID and a fiscal crisis prevented him from doing so, but SRSU's campus is only growing more beautiful as a result of construction, renovation, and landscaping begun during the Gallego Administration. It is quite an asset.

Summer Work Programs are a mutually beneficial way to help the community. Urban areas do summer work programs to give kids something to do, but rural areas don't usually have summer work programs. It was President Gallego's idea to give 15-20 area high school students a job, assign them to maintenance or groundskeeping services, and have them learn a skill over the summer.

The students would earn an hourly wage, participate in the retirement system and get credit should they ever return to state employment, learn a skill, and receive training by mentors. For the University, an additional 15-20 pairs of hands would be great in readying residence hall rooms, stabilizing new landscaping, and making facilities ready for summer camps and other groups.

CONCLUSION:

PETE GALLEGO MADE A DIFFERENCE —
AND PETE GALLEGO LOVED SUL ROSS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:
A VERY SPECIAL THANKS . . .

President Gallego is extremely grateful to the students, staff, and faculty at Sul Ross State University for the friendship and the many courtesies extended to him during his two year term at Sul Ross.

Moreover, he is grateful to the communities Sul Ross serves - including the people of Alpine, Uvalde, Del Rio and Eagle Pass for their faith, trust and friendship over the years. None of President Gallego's achievements would have been possible but for their support.

In particular, President Gallego would like to thank the following:

His family:

His mother - María Elena Paredes Peña Gallego supported and inspired him from his first breath continues to do the same now even in her waning years.

His wife - María Elena Solís Ramón has been the love of his life, his strength and his rock since they met in 1987 and they married in 1990.

His son - Nicolás Miguel Ramón Gallego has been the center of his universe, the source of his joy, and his daily inspiration to be better.

His Office Staff

Michael G. Pacheco, Chief of Staff
Marina Cavazos, Executive Assistant (2020-2021)
Ryan Heckart, Administrative Assistant
Justin Jeffries, Director of Development
Derek Pollacchi, Sports Information Director
Tristen Licón (2020-2021), Julian Paredes (2021-2022)
and Omar Ibarra (2022), Student Employees

The best office, the best people, the best of everything; keep an eye on all of them - one day, you'll say "I knew them when . . ."

Executive Committee -
Bernardo "Bernie" Canteñs, Ph.D.; Jim Goodman; Jorge L. Garza, Ed. D.; Robert Muñoz, Ed.D., Ben Telesca; Yvonne Realivasquez, Ed.D.; Bonnie Albright, Jeane Qvarnstrom, Ed.D.; April Aultman Becker; Amanda Workman, Brandy Snyder, and Jacob Fuentes -

The SRSU Olympic team; undefeated, talented, and amazing; they each bring special talents, knowledge, and expertise to the table — and let no one stand in the way of this team.

Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs -
Bernardo "Bernie" Canteñs , Ph.D., Executive Vice-President and Provost (2022 -) -
Matt Moore, Ed.D., Acting Provost. (2021) -
Dr. Rob Kinucan, Provost and Executive Vice-President (2020) -
Suzanne Harris, Ph.D., Director of Academic Affairs (2021-) -

A different bunch, but variety is the spice of life; visionaries in their own ways - & they all made their mark. One of them was very quick about it.

Office of the Vice-President for Finance and Operations -
Jim Goodman, Vice-President for Finance and Operations (2020 -) -
Bonnie Albright, Associate Vice-President for Finance and Operations (2021-) -

Money makes the world go around - and they know their way around money; always conservative . . . & always right.

Office of the Vice-President/Chief Operating Officer for Rio Grande College - -
Jorge L. Garza, Ed.D., Vice-President/Chief Operating Officer -

Calculated decisions; a Marine and a mathematician; unafraid and unstoppable.

Office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs -
Leo Dominguez, Vice-President for Student Affairs (2020-2021)
Ben Telesca, Vice-President for Student Affairs (2021-) -

Great work starts with great people; great people do great things.

Office of the Vice-President for Workforce and Economic Engagement -
Robert Muñoz, Ed.D., Vice-President for Workforce and Economic Engagement

A *quiet demeanor, a strong character, a good heart, & a great work ethic.*

Office of the Assistant Vice-President for Institutional Effectiveness -
Jeanne Qvarnstrom, Ed.D., Assistant Vice-President for Institutional Effectiveness -
Gregory Marsh, Ed.D., Director of Institutional Research
Jamir Chowdhury, Ed.D., Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Aaron Majek, Research Associate -

A more reliable and harder working group you will never meet; they've never met a task they can't conquer — or a survey they didn't like.

Academic and Administrative Deans -
Bonnie Warnock, Ph.D.
Barbara Tucker, Ed.D.
Tricia Nicosia, Ph.D.
Laura Payne, Ph.D.
Eric Funasaki, Ph.D.
April Aultman Becker

Practical, organized, dedicated, determined, driven; SRSU is in good hands.

Committees, Councils, and Faculty Organizations -
Wesley Wynn, Ph.D., President, RGC Faculty Senate
Kathy Stein, Ph.D., Oresident, Alpine Faculty Assembly
Ryan Luna, Ph.D., Chair, Strategic Planning Committee
Laura Payne, Chair, Ph.D. Chair, Academic Planning Committee
Robert Muñoz, Ed.D., Co-Chair, Second Century Committee
Mark Saka, Ph.D., Chair, Lobo Legacy Committee

SRSU is privileged to have such as these.

The Faculty: Alpine and the Rio Grande College -

Passionate about students; passionate about education; and living to learn every day.

Office of Information Technology -
Jacob Fuentes, Chief Information Officer, & the OIT team -

Professional, polite, reliable, and ready; and led by one who is always professional, polite, reliable, and ready.

SRSU Instructional Services/Blackboard Admin & Support -
Tim Parsons, Director

Super loyal to Sul Ross; and patience is definitely one of his virtues.

University Police Department -
First Seargeant Omar Madrid
Seargeant Kate Rubio

Constant, committed, & capable; great things happen to good people.

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion -
Savannah Williams, Ph.D., Director

A more creative mind is hard to find.

Athletics -
Amanda Workman, Athletic Director
Xavier Webb, Head Coach, Basketball
Katie Novak, Head Women;s Basketball Coach
Jon Evans, Head Coach, Men's Soccer
John Dominguez, Head Coach, Women's Soccer
John Pearce (2020-2021), Head Coach, Football
Troy Canaba, Head Coach, Volleyball & Softball

Candid and committed; dedicated to Sul Ross - but above all, dedicated to their students.

SRSU Rodeo -
CJ Aragón, Head Rodeo Coach

A leader; an inspiration; a friend.

SRSU Custodial & Groundskeeping Staff -

Hard workers, helpful, supportive, & encouraging; always keeping President Gallego in line and close to his roots.

Physical Plant Staff -

No fair weather friends here; always there through think and thin.

All University Staff -

The backbone that holds the University together; quietly doing their job and more through whatever chaos surrounds them.

Students -
A hug or handshake and best wishes; making President Gallego's time at SRSU memorable every day; and to those who had Mr. Gallego in class: Don't forget to use your campaign skills to run for office some day.

University Foundation -

Rick Stephens, Carla McFarland, Robert Wagnon & all the Board -

Tireless in their work, effort, discipline, & dedication; they gave Sul Ross a real foundation.

Aramark Employees -

John Howle and all the crew -

Always there and ready to help; supportive, cooperative, great cooks, great people, & great friends; always there with a scone and a Starbucks tea just in the nick of time.

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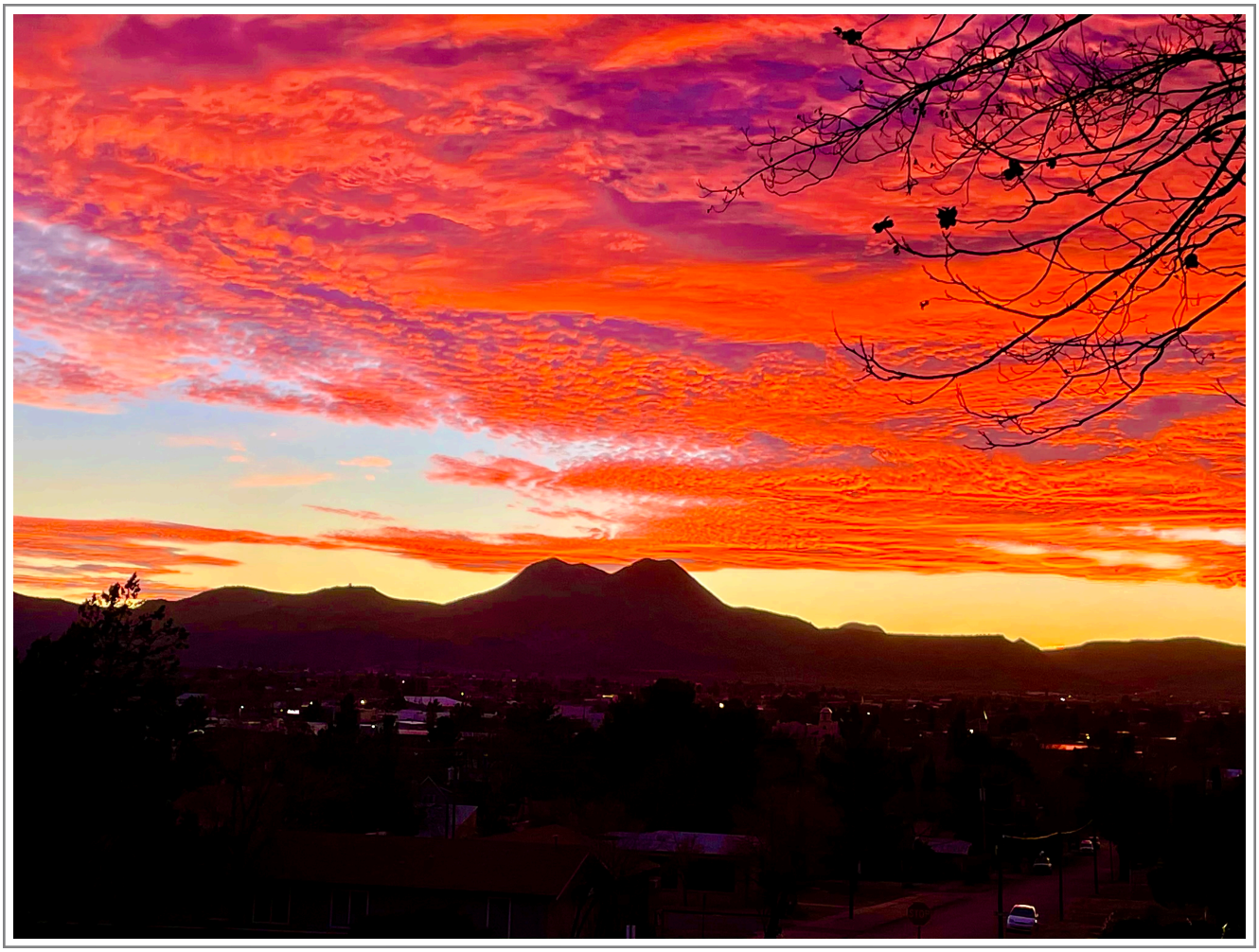
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