

## Introduction




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# 1 The University of Houston – A Metropolitan Research University

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## 1.1 Introduction to the University of Houston

**T**he [University of Houston](#) is the flagship public metropolitan research and teaching institution in Texas, distinguished by nationally recognized faculty and programs and the most ethnically diverse student body of any research university in the country. This diversity reflects the demographics of Houston, the fourth most populous city in the nation. Vitrally connected to its urban environment since its founding in 1927, the University has awarded more than 200,000 degrees. Seventy-five percent of alumni remain in the Houston metropolitan area to live and work, making a substantial impact on the socio-economic life of the city.

Currently, more than 34,500 students attend UH in twelve academic colleges and an interdisciplinary [Honors College](#). The academic colleges include the [Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture](#), the [C.T. Bauer College of Business](#), the [College of Education](#), the [Cullen College of Engineering](#), the [Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel & Restaurant Management](#), the [College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences](#), the [College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics](#), the [College of Technology](#), and four graduate colleges: the [Law Center](#), the [Graduate College of Social Work](#), the [College of Optometry](#), and the [College of Pharmacy](#). Collectively, these colleges offer 278 undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees.

The University of Houston pursues an ambitious agenda to become one of the nation's leading Tier One research universities and a model for the public metropolitan universities of this century. UH has made research a priority with recent efforts to catalyze interdisciplinary research through the development of six research clusters: Arts & Human Enrichment, Bio-Med Sciences & Engineering, Community Advancement & Education, Complex Systems/Space Exploration, Energy & Natural Resources, and Nano-Materials. These clusters are designed to enable scholars to exchange ideas, to explore emerging research areas, and to work more effectively with industry, the community, and other research organizations. Powerful centers of creativity enabling collaboration across traditional disciplinary boundaries, our

research clusters bring research knowledge to bear on issues of intellectual, scientific, social, economic, environmental, and cultural importance. The clusters build on our faculty research strengths as well as Houston's regional assets. Houston – home to the Texas Medical Center (the largest medical center in the world) and the NASA Johnson Space Center – is also known as the “Energy Capital of the World,” with over 5,000 energy-related firms. Furthermore, our city is among a handful of U.S. cities with resident companies in theatre, ballet, symphony, and opera. The museum district is one of the largest in the country with 18 institutions within walking distance of one another.

We plan to increase significantly the annual research expenditures from the current \$90 million per year, and to expand our 43 research centers and institutes, by leveraging our regional assets and supporting interdisciplinary research efforts. Moreover, the Framework Master Plan adopted by the Board of Regents in 2006 will double the academic and research space on campus over the next 15 years.

Currently, our 550-acre campus includes multiple parks, fountains, plazas, sculptures, and recreational fields surrounding modern classrooms and high tech laboratories. When fully implemented, the Master Plan will double the research and learning space, increase parking, and expand residential housing to accommodate 12,000 students. The University also recently completed construction of a 200,000-square-foot Science and Engineering Research and Classroom Complex (SERCC) that features five floors of laboratory space accommodating an estimated 40 research laboratories, particularly in the Bioscience and Bio/Nano-technology areas.

Beyond our commitment to education and research, the University of Houston has also taken the lead with service. UH supports more than 600 partnerships with government and private industries, and our students log more than 920,000 volunteer hours each year. The University serves the Houston community as the home of KUHT, the nation's first Public Broadcasting Service station, and KUHF, Houston's National Public Radio station.

According to “[The University of Houston System Impact Study](#),” a 2006 study by the Institute for Regional Forecasting, the UH System (UHS) makes a significant financial impact on the Houston area, producing \$3.126 billion in annual economic benefits. The UH System annually contributes more than \$1 billion new funds to the local economy. In addition to the 12,500 UHS graduates entering the Houston workforce each year, the funds generated by UH produce 24,000 local jobs.

*The UH System (UHS) encompasses four universities (UH, UH-Downtown, UH-Clear Lake, UH-Victoria) and two multi-institution teaching centers (UHS at Cinco Ranch and UHS at Sugar Land) that offer courses in partnership with the universities. The University of Houston is the largest and most comprehensive institution of the System and is a nationally recognized doctoral degree-granting, comprehensive research university.*