



"We see a school of public affairs...which will try to produce thinkers and doers: people who dream of progress and will try to turn those dreams into achievements." —President Lyndon B. Johnson

 **TEXASLBJ School**
lbj.utexas.edu

renewal

2016–2020

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LBJ Story

Five years ago, the LBJ community embarked on comprehensive self-evaluation to understand the School's most pressing challenges and create a collective vision for the future. Three key strategic imperatives emerged from this process and guided our efforts in the years leading up to our 50th anniversary.

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Strategic imperative #2

There were opportunities to strengthen our research ecosystem and grow our global thought leadership by generating new grant funding for cutting-edge research, strengthening cross-collaboration with other UT schools, and boosting the profile of our world-class faculty.

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A Public Policy Agenda for the Future

We took a number of steps to address the strategic imperatives that had emerged from our self-evaluation. These efforts coalesced LBJ staff, faculty, students, alumni, and supporters around a set of shared goals.

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Strategic imperative #3

The LBJ School had outgrown many aspects of its operational and digital infrastructure. There was a need to upgrade systems and processes in order to better meet the needs of the LBJ community.

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Strategic imperative #1

A comprehensive review of our academic programming was needed to ensure that the LBJ School was adapting to a rapidly evolving workforce and to the growing complexity of policy problems.

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The Road Ahead

The world is perpetually in flux. In order to maintain its position as a world class public policy school, the LBJ School must remain ready to adapt to the many challenges that lie ahead.

This report summarizes the achievements of the LBJ School of Public Affairs in the five years leading up to its 50th anniversary.

If I had to choose the theme that best encapsulates this period, it would be the power of renewal. We have been intentional about identifying shifts in the landscape that are influencing public policy education, addressing these strategic challenges, and thinking daringly about the future.

As a result of these efforts, the LBJ School has transformed into a powerhouse—a fitting tribute to President Johnson's legacy and a testament to the creativity and sacrifice of the entire LBJ community. The achievements outlined in this report were possible because of the collective efforts of LBJ staff, faculty, students, and alumni, as well as the support of its benefactors. Their enduring commitment to cultivating the next generation of public policy leaders is reflected throughout these pages.

On a personal note, I have been honored to serve as dean of this remarkable School. My hope is that we maintain our momentum, continue to build on our progress, and ensure that the LBJ School remains a singular force in public affairs for decades to come. Here's to the next 50 years.



Angela M. Evans

ANGELA M. EVANS, DEAN
December 2020

Dedicated Areas of Strategic Concentration

Course Content and Matriculation Model

Review and assess course titles and content of other policy and international schools. Identify innovative courses and create catchy course titles. Review and assess matriculation models. Identify innovative ways to deliver course content and build skills.

Diversity and Inclusion

Review current diversity and inclusion activities, analyze strengths and weaknesses. Benchmark exemplar diversity strategies for recruiting faculty, students, and staff. Benchmark exemplar professional development protocols for faculty. Analyze options for consideration in both areas.

Faculty Recruitment and Professional Development

Benchmark exemplar faculty recruitment strategies, include diversity. Benchmark exemplar professional development protocols for faculty. Analyze options for consideration in both areas.

Faculty and Staff Onboarding of New Hires

Review and assess faculty, staff, and contractor orientation processes of other UT Colleges. Identify all necessary documentation and information needed for new hires, transfers, and contractors arriving to work for the LBJ School. Identify all logistical necessities for a new hire or transfer (i.e. parking permit, UT ID, Keys, IT requirements, etc). Identify materials specific to the LBJ School that would prove helpful in orienting a new person. Develop a professional, efficient, and welcoming process for all new hires.

International Partnerships

Analyze current partnerships and the value-added they have provided to the School: number of students served, research generated, faculty participated, etc. Develop options for how to approach international partnerships to align with the School's story and analyze their advantages and disadvantages.

LBJ School Ranking and Visibility Strategy

Establish a plan wherein the LBJ School can grow and maintain a presence in NASPAA & APPAM with an eye towards increasing the LBJ School's overall ranking. Increase the visibility and understanding of the LBJ School within The University of Texas and the broader community.

Skills and Subject Expertise

Determine the core subject matter expertise and skills most critical for successful entry and advancement of policy students in today's and future marketplace. Determine issue areas in which LBJ will lead and in which LBJ will coordinate with university partners.

Student Recruitment and Career Development

Benchmark exemplar student recruitment strategies, include diversity. Benchmark exemplar professional development protocols for students. Analyze options for consideration in both areas.

No. 8

MOVED UP 6 SPOTS IN USNWR RANKINGS, UP FROM #14

9%

INCREASE IN ADMISSIONS YIELD RATE

16%

INCREASE IN DIVERSITY ENROLLMENT

100

ACTIVE ALUMNI MENTORS

\$57,000,000

IN GRANT, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Since its inception, the LBJ School of Public Affairs has blended rigorous academic study with real-world experience, cultivating—as our namesake intended—both “thinkers” and “doers.” This strategic merging of theory and practice has made us one of the preeminent schools of public policy in the country.

This success is due in no small part to past leadership's willingness to question the status quo, push the boundaries of what is possible, and adapt to the realities of a changing world. As dean, I have tried to live up to this time-honored legacy.

When I joined the LBJ School in 2016, the technological, political, and social landscapes were continuing to evolve in ways that were radically altering the study and practice of public affairs: the growing influence of new digital technologies, big data, and social media; the spread of misinformation; changing population demographics; increased private-public sector collaboration; and unprecedented political polarization and mistrust in institutions.

As the incoming dean, one of my key priorities was to ensure that the LBJ community was at the cutting edge of responding to these and other changes. This need was made more pressing by a drop in the School's national standing. Though the LBJ School continued to be held in high esteem both in the U.S. and globally, it had

slipped out of the top ten in U.S. New and World Report's national rankings of public policy schools (at the time of my appointment, it was ranked #14). The transition to new leadership was an opportunity to take stock of our accomplishments and proactively prepare for the future.

Soon after my appointment, I initiated a comprehensive self-evaluation intended to inform our long-term strategic planning and advance our collective vision for the future—what I called “the LBJ story.” In short, that we are a dynamic institution of higher learning committed to cultivating courageous, ethical leaders capable of translating policy into real-world solutions (for more on “the LBJ story,” see Appendix II).

To facilitate the self-evaluation process, I assembled working groups dedicated to one of eight different strategic areas (for a description of each working group see Appendix I):

Course Content and Matriculation Model

Diversity and Inclusion

Faculty Recruitment and Professional Development

Faculty and Staff Onboarding of New Hires

International Partnerships

LBJ School Ranking and Visibility Strategy

Skills and Subject Expertise

Student Recruitment and Career Development

The LBJ School is committed to producing dynamic, actionable research that informs real world policymaking.

To ensure that a range of perspectives were represented, each working group was composed of at least one of a faculty member, staff member, student, alumnus, and subject matter expert. Starting in March 2016, working groups began meeting and engaging key stakeholders—members of the LBJ community, employers, policymakers, community leaders, and others—about operational strengths and weaknesses, untapped opportunities for growth, and strategic priorities. Working groups presented their findings in a series of meetings between August and December 2016.



**Lt. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland visits the LBJ School
(Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series, 2018)**

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #1

Refresh our Academic Programming

At the time of my appointment, there had not been a strategic review of LBJ School curriculum in over a decade. During this time, the socioeconomic landscape had changed dramatically. Policy issues had become increasingly complex and interdependent, revealing the inadequacy of siloed approaches to public policy education. Changing demographics demanded curricula and faculty that were representative and met the needs of a diverse populace. New digital platforms had major implications for how and what curriculum was delivered—for example, students of international security must increasingly be versed in cyberwarfare, the dark web, and social networking. A comprehensive review of our curriculum was needed to ensure that the LBJ School was adapting to a rapidly evolving workforce and to the growing complexity of policy problems, both nationally and globally.

Professors Ruth Wasem and Ed Dorn discuss immigration reform (2018)



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #2

Expand Our Intellectual Leadership

The LBJ School is committed to producing dynamic, actionable research that informs real world policymaking. Our self-evaluation revealed opportunities to strengthen our research ecosystem and grow our global thought leadership by generating new grant funding for cutting-edge research, strengthening cross-collaboration with other UT schools, and boosting the profile of our world-class faculty. To ensure that research led to practicable solutions and was relevant beyond the “ivory tower,” working groups identified a need to engage more actively with the policy community, especially practitioners from marginalized groups whose views are underrepresented in academia.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #3

Modernize and Streamline Our Operations

The LBJ School has grown steadily from just 11 master's students enrolled in 1972 to 330 master's students enrolled in Fall 2020. As we have grown, so too has the need for more sophisticated operational procedures and systems. Some aspects of the School's operations were sluggish, inefficient, or redundant. For example, there was no formal budget planning process in place and the School's digital presence was modest, limiting our ability to disseminate research, reach potential students, and drive public policy discourse. Working groups identified the need to upgrade our technological, digital, and operational infrastructure in order to better meet the needs of the LBJ community.



**Professor Pat Wong
(LBJ School Orientation, 2016)**

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #1

Refresh our Academic Programming

CURRICULUM

We conducted a comprehensive review of our MPAff program to ensure that the LBJ School was providing students with the most relevant tools to thrive in the policy arena. This review included surveys and focus groups of faculty, students, and alumni; a scan of curricula at 20 public policy schools, and conversations with employers and professional organizations such as the Volcker Alliance. This process led to a number of adjustments to our core curriculum, including enhanced focus on communications skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving; the integration of ethics, social justice, and civil discourse (e.g. policy development); and more opportunities for experiential learning. For example, we shifted completion of the Policy Research Project (PRP) to students' second year so that they can better apply the skills acquired in their first year.

To complement coursework in economics and empirical methods, we introduced courses dedicated to the acquisition of advanced practical skills, like the ability to work with data, understand capital markets and manage public budgets. During the 2019-2020 academic year, we launched a Dean's Certificates program that enables students to earn an additional credential in these and other critical policy areas. We also introduced a graduate stackable certificate program that gives students, and especially working students, a way of incrementally acquiring skills that can help them advance in their careers. Finally, we created a new dual degree program in partnership with Dell Medical School that will launch in the Fall of 2021.

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are being woven into all new and existing academic programming, and faculty members can leverage several new tools and incentives to diversify syllabi. In the 2020-2021 academic year, all faculty yearly merit reviews, promotion cases, and annual course observations will include a DEI component.

This year, we are launching a similar curriculum review of the MGPS program, the first such review since the creation of the degree some 15 years ago. We anticipate that the review will kick off in January 2021, after terms of reference and committee members are finalized, and last between 12 and 18 months. Like in the MPAff review, the committee will assess all aspects of the MGPS program, including core and elective curriculum, faculty expertise, student recruitment and diversity, marketing and admissions, job placement, alumni feedback and network, relationship with other UT schools, and positioning vis-à-vis peer institutions.

LBJ Professors Abigail Aiken, Michele Deitch and Varun Rai showcase research (LBJ Birthday Bash, 2016)



During the last five years, the LBJ School has taken a number of steps to address the strategic imperatives that emerged from our self-evaluation. These initiatives are detailed below.

Documentary filmmaker Ken Burns interviews former Secretary of State John Kerry (2016)

PRACTICAL EXPERTISE

The LBJ School has a long legacy of balancing scholarly research with practical expertise. This carefully curated balance enriches our curriculum and enhances its applicability to the workplace. Over the past few decades, however, the balance has shifted sharply in favor of academically credentialed, tenure-track faculty. We have sought to restore the role of practitioners in the academic and public life of the School by recruiting more leaders with deep, hands-on experience as adjuncts, professors of practice, and lecturers. These leaders have included former secretaries in the executive branch of government, elected officials from other countries, former ambassadors, renowned political theorists, and policy experts across a range of issues. These new hires complement our existing roster of tenure-track faculty, with an eye to enhancing representation with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual preference.

To that end, we reviewed and modified processes for assigning faculty to service-related activities, such as membership on admissions and recruitment committees and for making appointments to endowed chairmanships, professorships, and fellows of endowments. This work builds on ongoing efforts to reduce disparities in levels of compensation within the ranks of tenured, non-tenured, and professional track faculty. We also introduced three new faculty positions: Associate Dean for Students, Assistant Dean for Civic Engagement, and Assistant Dean for Academic Strategies. These roles were created to provide focused leadership of LBJ initiatives around DEI, community relations, and academic programming, and to provide new avenues for faculty members to drive LBJ School priorities.

WASHINGTON CENTER

The Washington Center allows LBJ Students to complement their theoretical learning with experiential apprenticeships in the nation's capital. We recently completed a new strategic plan for the Center to reflect its evolution from modest "start-up" to fully functional research and educational hub, including aggressive development and marketing strategies to build awareness of the Center among potential employers. In 2019, the Center entered into its first partnership with the Bipartisan Policy Center. As part of the collaboration, the latter is hosting an LBJ faculty member and a recent graduate as a research and immigration fellow, respectively, creating a blueprint for future D.C.-based partnerships.



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STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #2

Expand our Intellectual Leadership

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

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Building on the work of our centers, we established several new research laboratories aimed at connecting policy to practice by actively engaging with key stakeholders in the public, private, non-profit, and educational sectors, as well as in the community at large.

faculty. We launched the School's first ever Dean's Research Grant, a competitive grant provided to faculty members to support their research. Since 2016, the dean's office has directly attracted over \$1 million in grant funding for faculty research projects, supported faculty members in securing \$22 million in grant funding, and raised over \$34 million in development funding. We have also enhanced our public relations and media outreach functions to draw more attention to emergent LBJ School research. This includes the introduction of a once-per-semester newsletter aimed at updating our more than 3000 colleagues in peer policy schools about emergent LBJ School research, as well as the expansion of our research showcase, Innovation Bound, from an evening event to a full day of programming open to the entire university.

We have also transformed the role of the LBJ Office of Research to become a more value-driven, purposeful entity. The Office has led strategic initiatives on multiple fronts: (1) catalyzing thematic teams of LBJ School faculty and research-

ers and supporting them in project development and external grant seeking, (2) using a tailored approach to supporting the research of LBJ School faculty, including individualized search and targeting of external grant and fellowship opportunities, (3) fostering a more collaborative and interactive research environment at the LBJ School, including faculty mixers, junior-senior faculty lunches, and high-quality research poster sessions, impact videos, and research outreach to increase external visibility, and (4) facilitating cross-cutting interactions and collaborations with other departments and schools at UT, as well as with peer policy schools (Carnegie Mellon University, University of Washington, University of Southern California, Georgia State University, New York University, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin-Madison).

In Spring 2020, the OneStar Foundation awarded the LBJ School a data platform gift valued at \$2 million. This gift complements our efforts to bolster the School's strategic policy data initiatives. We created a new position, Senior Project Manager for Data Initiatives, in the Office of Research, to strengthen support and infrastructure for data-driven policy analysis by faculty, staff, and students. This work includes forming new data partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, enhancing data-driven policy analysis opportunities for our students, and supporting the research and impact efforts of faculty and researchers.

ACTION LABORATORIES

Building on the work of our centers, we established several new research laboratories aimed at connecting policy to practice by actively engaging with key stakeholders in the public, private, nonprofit, and educational sectors, as well as in the community at large.

WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN SCHOOL

In 2020, we launched the first-of-its-kind Women's Campaign School, which trains women for careers in public office or campaign management. The inaugural class is a geographically and ideologically diverse group of 50 women from eight U.S. states. In keeping with schoolwide DEI efforts, nearly 60 percent of women in the program and a third of advisory board members are non-white.

URBAN LAB

The Urban Lab was established in 2019 to devise solutions to pressing urban planning problems and to cultivate a new generation of city leaders. In a short period of time, it has become a valuable partner to local and state governments, industry, community organizations, and academic institutions within and outside of Texas. The laboratory was a critical resource for the development of post-COVID-19 resiliency "playbook," developed in partnership with the Hobby School of Houston and widely circulated among state lawmakers, which offered strategies for Texas's recovery from the pandemic. We also created a resiliency "toolkit" that included interdisciplinary policy solutions from 20 LBJ School faculty members, 3 faculty members from other University of Texas departments, and 6 graduate students for how to correct systemic flaws exposed by the pandemic.

THE IMPACT FACTORY

Individual health is intimately connected with systemic issues such as poverty, homelessness, addiction, hunger, mobility, and education. Recognizing this crucial link, the LBJ School partnered with Dell Medical School at The University of Texas to create "The Impact Factory," an incubator that brings LBJ and Dell School faculty and students together to find innovative solutions to health policy problems. Using entrepreneurship and civic engagement, this first-of-its-kind cross-campus collaboration aims to radically improve health, while also providing students with an opportunity to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

PRISON & JAIL INNOVATION LAB

The COVID-19 crisis has had an enormous impact on the nation's prisons and jails. To help policymakers manage this impact in a way that is consistent with constitutionally granted rights, the LBJ School is concept testing a new prison and jail laboratory. To date, we have secured \$300k in funding to produce resources for corrections departments, regulatory agencies, and policymakers. Although still in the pilot stage, the Lab is already proving its relevance. Its recent report on the impact of COVID-19 in Texas prisons and jails reached more than 405 million people, garnering more than 650 media mentions in the first week of its release, including on NBC and CNN.



LBJ Urban Lab director Steven Pedigo moderates a forum on homelessness (2019)

COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Over the last five years, we have sought to deepen our relationships with the policy community, other academic institutions, employers, and community stakeholders. As part of an initiative led by our Associate Dean for Research, we hosted a series of roundtable meetings with consular officials from across Texas. In 2020, we launched “LBJ In the Arena,” a series of publicly accessible, virtual conversations between LBJ faculty and leading public policy thinkers.

As dean, I established a new speakers series (the “Dean’s Distinguished Lecture Series”), a recurring platform for policy practitioners from around the country to share their experiences with LBJ students. As part of our DEI strategic plan, we have endeavored to strengthen the School’s engagement with organizations representing the interests of historically marginalized communities, such as the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus. Additionally, our new civic engagement certificate program enables students to augment their experiential learning through school-organized, group activities once per semester. These activities can include serving as a poll worker or helping to “get out the vote” in scheduled elections.

The LBJ School has also taken a leadership role in setting the agenda for public policy education going forward. In 2017, I convened the deans of the top 30 public affairs schools in the country for an informal gathering to discuss opportunities to ideate and collaborate, share best practices, and establish priorities in public policy education. This gathering, which has come to be known as the Deans Summit, now convenes annually. At each meeting, participants are broken out into working groups that convene regularly throughout the year to help advance Summit priorities, which have included reimagining public affairs education, social justice, undergraduate programming, and national coordinated certificates.

These and other engagement initiatives culminated in our 50th anniversary celebration in 2020. Initially planned as an in-person event, the virtual celebration consisted of 15 forum sessions, 4 commemorative films, and 30 speakers, including high profile figures like Stacey Abrams, Jamie Dimon, Dr. Lonnie Bunch, Admiral William McRaven, Pete Buttigieg, Melinda Gates, and others. The event was a major turning point in the life of the School. It was not only a celebration of 50 years of vigorous policy teaching and learning, but also—and more importantly—a force for innovative, forward-looking solutions. The agenda was designed to foster inclusive engagement, honest dialogue, and an appreciation for the wonder of the human spirit and intellect. At the same time, it did not shy away from the tensions, conflicts and rigor of the extreme sport we call public service. These pivotal conversations were a testament to the LBJ School’s legacy and an inspiring rallying cry for the future.

Catherine Robb (2019)



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #3

Modernize and Streamline Our Operations

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

At the time of my appointment, there was limited data to guide decision making, and administrative procedures were often ambiguous and redundant. To address these issues, we carried out several major reorganizations aimed at streamlining processes, strengthening transparency and accountability, and facilitating strategic planning by making information more accessible to administrators.

Significant improvements were made in the areas of budgeting, hiring, financial oversight, distribution of fellowships, facilities management, and more. Notably, we rolled out a formal budgeting process, which now requires an annual budgetary review and quarterly budgetary updates. We also created a master plan for facilities usage, technology, and health and safety, and increased business operations training for LBJ staff. Another important area of focus over the last five years has been to better leverage digital technologies for administrative, marketing, and recruitment purposes. Since 2016, we have dramatically increased our social media presence, revamped our website, and launched a policy-focused podcast (“Policy on Purpose”). We also now have the capacity to live stream events.

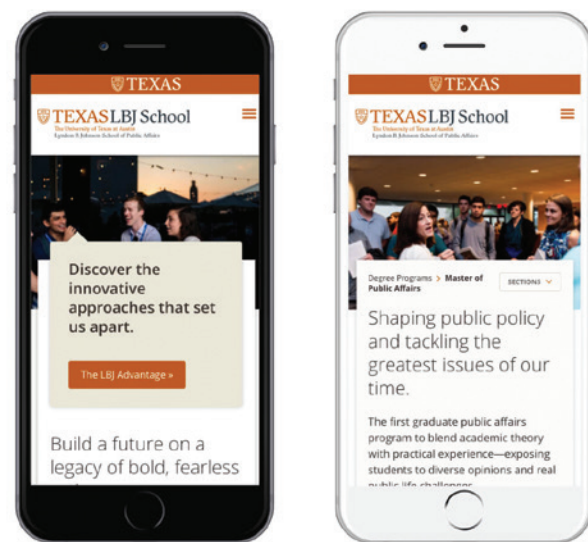
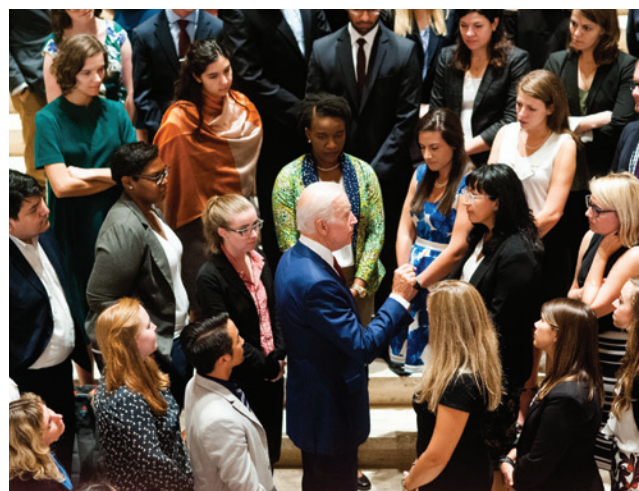
All of this has expanded the reach of our communications and helped raise the profile of the LBJ School. In the fall semester of 2020, coinciding with our 50th anniversary campaign, we garnered 1,200 new email marketing subscribers and roughly \$5 million in earned media coverage.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The LBJ School attracts top tier students from all over the globe. In the 2020-2021 cycle, enrollment and yield rates increased versus the previous year across all of our programs, leading to a current student body that is one of the largest and most diverse in our history. This progress is the result of a concerted effort, led by our inaugural Associate Dean for Students, to make the recruitment and admissions process more efficient, inclusive, and cost effective.

In recent years, we have better leveraged email marketing, search engine optimization, and social media to raise our profile, amplify communications, and recruit students from diverse

President-elect Joe Biden visited the LBJ School in 2017.



backgrounds. We have also reviewed our admissions process to ensure that it is transparent and accounts for factors such as diversity and financial need. In 2020, we introduced new programming to prevent “summer melt,” the phenomenon in which prospective students—particularly first generation and low-income students—renege on plans to attend college during the summer. To engage incoming LBJ students and help ensure that they start the school year on strong footing, these students can continue to learn about the School throughout the summer and enhance their readiness by joining a policy-focused reading club, attending dedicated sessions on a range of policy topics, and participating in quantitative readiness training.

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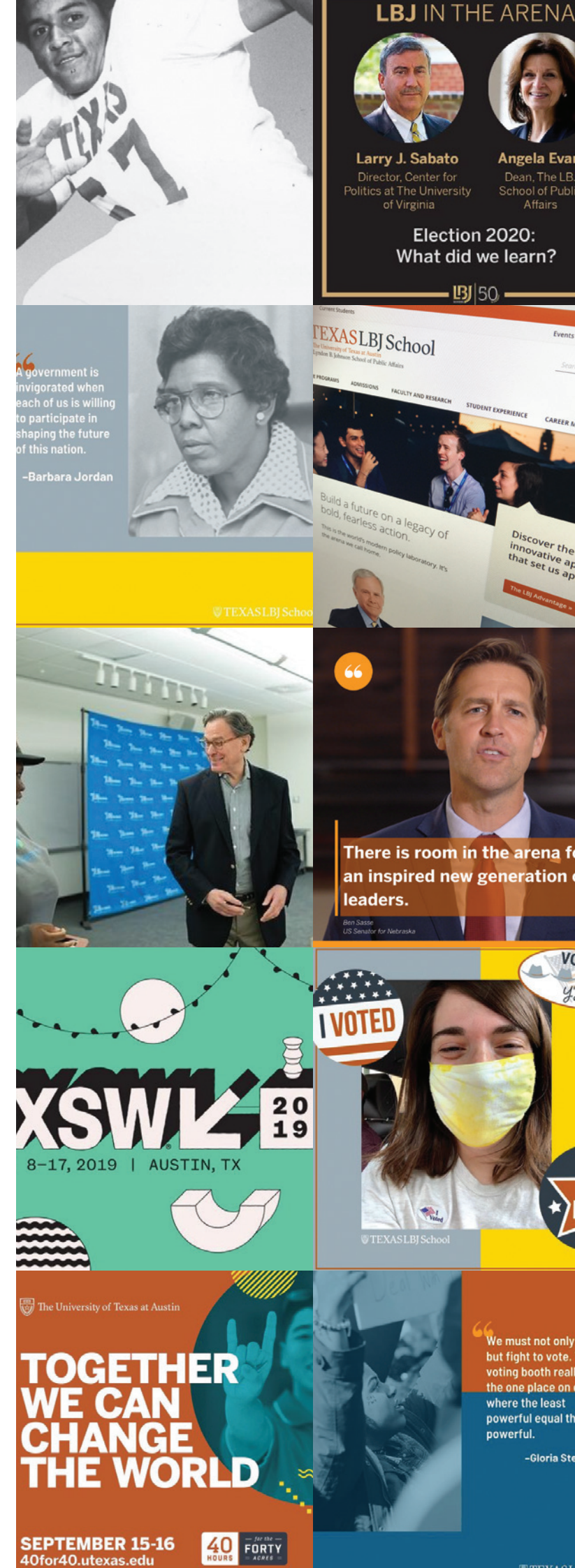
ALUMNI RELATIONS

An engaged alumni community adds enormous value to the LBJ School experience. Recognizing this, we have taken a series of steps to reinvigorate our alumni relations function. As dean, I met personally with individual alumni and with the National Alumni Board on a bi-annual basis, resulting in several alumni-sponsored fellowship endowments for LBJ students. We also deployed School funds to launch an annual alumni reunion weekend and an annual awards ceremony honoring outstanding former students, including MPAff class of 1998 alumni Stacey Abrams. To specifically re-engage our alumni community in D.C., we launched an annual dean’s reception, several of which were attended by Lynda Johnson Robb.

These efforts have succeeded in bringing more alumni into the fold, with many alumni participating in our 50th anniversary and “In the Arena” events. More than 100 serve as mentors to LBJ students and many have helped recent graduates with job searches in the wake of COVID-19. Alumni also helped the LBJ School raise roughly \$448k for UT Austin’s annual “40 Hours for the Forty Acres” fundraising campaign, the fifth-most across all schools university wide. In 2020, LBJ alumni contributions to the Annual Fund were second only to the law school.

COVID-19

Our early efforts to streamline operations and improve administrative efficiency proved invaluable when COVID-19 hit unexpectedly in the beginning of 2020. A stronger informational and digital infrastructure enabled us to relatively quickly establish health and safety protocols for travel and facilities usage, communicate across the LBJ community, and convert to virtual learning. Within two weeks, we altered course delivery from in-person to online for 450 students enrolled in more than 100 courses and retooled all planned events as virtual gatherings, including our Admitted Students Weekend, 50th anniversary celebrations, and graduation. Given the pandemic’s impact on the economy, we have planned for the possibility of having to operate within a reduced budget and are prepared to absorb cuts should this become necessary.





The Road Ahead

I am confident that our efforts over the last five years have helped put the LBJ School at the forefront of public policy education globally. We have significantly revitalized our academic programming, research, and business practices and successfully adapted to the changes brought about by COVID-19. While the pandemic brought enormous disruptions in academic programming, it also offered opportunities to explore and accelerate innovative approaches to curriculum and course modalities. Faculty have enhanced their use of new instructional technologies and are assessing curricular content to better match emerging public leadership challenges. More broadly, we have grown our capacity in areas of pressing social concern and broken down silos between policy realms to give students the interdisciplinary skills they need to tackle complex, multidimensional challenges. Nationally, we have taken a leadership role in discussions that will shape the course of public policy education for decades to come.

Our performance metrics suggest that these efforts are having an impact. In the last five years, we have raised \$34 million in new development funding and our overall admissions yield rate was 9 percent higher in the most recent cycle than it was in 2016. While more work is needed to fully meet our DEI targets—especially with respect to our recruitment and enrollment of Black students—we have made significant progress. Between 2016 and 2020, non-white student enrollment increased by 16 percent.

These and other internal metrics are validated by a significant boost in our national standing. The most recent U.S. News and World Report rankings of the top public policy schools in the country puts the LBJ School at #8 (up from #14 in 2016). My hope is that we can build on this momentum, continue to expand our global reach, and maintain the strategically curated blend of theoretical and experiential learning that distinguishes the LBJ School from other public policy schools.

I am so proud of our progress over the last five years. I also know that we must continually grow and evolve to meet the exigencies of a world that is perpetually in flux. As the COVID-19 pandemic vividly demonstrates, public policy is increasingly global, raising questions about traditional academic frameworks that treat domestic and international concerns as entirely separate courses of study. Climate-related mass migration is straining political, economic, and ecological systems in ways that will require entirely new policy paradigms. The growth of artificial intelligence reinforces the need for programming focused on the ethics and application of new technologies globally. These and other shifts are on the horizon and will have enormous implications for the study and practice of public policy.

I end my tenure with gratitude to the LBJ community and secure in the knowledge that we are poised, not only to weather the changes ahead, but to be the stewards of those changes.

LBJ Story: The Key Points

We value the importance of working for the public good, acting ethically, and respecting differences. Questioning the status quo is our legacy, as enduring as the values we maintain in tackling social, economic, and political issues that appear unfair, problematic, or wrong.

THE SCHOOL IS A FORCE FOR SMART ACTION:

- Tackles critical challenges through innovative approaches that work.
- Masters the policy and political skills of legislative wrangling and compromise to propel ideas into action.
- Educates students to think critically, to get to the core of policy challenges, to seek diverse expertise, and to craft solutions that will advance the public good.
- Engages in communities outside of the School where research and learning blend with practical challenges affecting real-life consequences.
- Develops a global perspective of the interconnections of socio-economic and political forces.
- Values substance and objectivity in building one’s knowledge base and crafting positions.
- Expects high performance and rejects settling on “good enough.”
- Exposes students to a broad spectrum of policies from city water management to global nuclear non-proliferation.

THE SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO:

- Scholarship that advances society through better governance, better leadership, better cooperation among sectors, and better methods and tools of engagement.
- Research that is informed by scholarly and practical policy communities.
- Informing policy choices that can be readily implemented by decision makers.
- Knowledge and expertise that enable our policy solutions to be valued and used by policymakers.
- Collaboration that aggressively seeks the engagement of experts from a wide range of disciplines to enrich the design of policy.

THE WORK AHEAD:

- Identify the most crucial research and public policy issues to pursue.
- Determine the most appropriate issue areas to which we can offer unique insights, undertake the most relevant research, and lead the most effective and enduring collaborations.
- Help define the most pressing global, economic, political and security challenges and propose innovative solutions to tackle them.
- Exploit the expertise and knowledge residing in other departments of the University and the broader policy communities.
- Offer a consistently refreshed curriculum that is grounded in sound theory and research, is enriched by experiences that can apply this knowledge to real-life situations, and that builds intellectual frameworks upon which students can draw over their careers.
- Use innovative methods to instruct and engage students.
- Build policy entrepreneurship within the University, serving as the hub where students and faculty from across the University learn how to turn research and teaching into policy actions.
- Enhance the capture of external resources to support the research and teaching missions of the School.

The LBJ School of Public Affairs, ranked No. 8 in the nation among graduate public affairs schools, makes a difference, not only within the walls of academia, but also in the public and social dialogue of the world. Contributing viable solutions to society is the LBJ School’s legacy and its benchmark. Its effectiveness in channeling the purpose and passion of students into professional careers is evident in the success of more than 4,500 graduates who are the living legacy of President Johnson’s bold and fearless action. The University of Texas at Austin is home to the LBJ School.