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ADVANCING REGIONAL INNOVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT

UTPB NSF EPIIC ARISE Survey Executive Summary

Survey Topic: UTPB External Collaboration Capacity

Conducted from January – March 2026

Conducted via Microsoft Forms

The University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB) conducted an anonymous survey from January through March 2026 as part of the NSF EPIIC ARISE award to assess faculty and staff perceptions of UTPB's capacity to collaborate with external organizations. The survey consisted of five questions and received 21 responses—16 from faculty and 5 from staff. A follow-up focus group was conducted on April 30, 2026, with four survey participants (all faculty) that offered to provide additional context and recommendations. Each question from the survey is provided in this summary, along with a brief overview of the responses.

1. What are your general impressions of UTPB's ability to collaborate with external organizations?

Respondents expressed mixed but generally critical views of UTPB's ability to collaborate with external organizations, including other institutions, schools, nonprofits, federal laboratories, and industry. Respondents recognized that UTPB has developed valuable regional partnerships and that external collaboration is particularly important for a smaller institution; however, several respondents indicated that collaboration is inconsistent, lacks institutional structure and transparency, and often depends on the initiative of individual faculty or staff rather than established university systems.



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2. When thinking about collaborations with external organizations, what does UTPB do well?

Respondents identified several areas of strength, particularly community engagement, relationships with regional industry, service-learning activities, guest speakers, and capstone projects. These activities demonstrate UTPB's ability to establish practical partnerships that benefit students, the community, and workforce development. Respondents also noted the value of UTPB's faculty, facilities, and efforts to increase institutional visibility and engagement through media channels.

3. What challenges or roadblocks are present to establishing collaborations with external organizations?

Administrative barriers were identified as the most significant challenge to external collaboration. Respondents cited slow or cumbersome approval processes, limited resources, competing priorities, heavy teaching responsibilities, centralized decision-making, and insufficient research infrastructure. Limited data resources and a lack of graduate students were noted as additional constraints on research and collaborative activities.

4. What do you think would improve the ability for UTPB to engage in collaborations with external organizations?

Respondents recommended establishing greater structure and institutional support for collaboration. Common recommendations included assigning dedicated collaboration liaisons or individuals responsible for partnerships, improving internal communication, streamlining administrative processes, increasing faculty autonomy to pursue external relationships, and providing additional funding and protected time for research and collaboration. Respondents also emphasized the importance of increasing the visibility of existing partnerships so that successful practices and opportunities can be shared across the university.

Overall Findings

Overall, the results indicate strong interest among UTPB faculty and staff in expanding external partnerships. The primary opportunity is to reduce institutional barriers and provide the structures, resources, autonomy, and support necessary to translate existing partnering interests into more sustained partnerships and measurable outcomes.

