

How the DigiTex Consortium Expands Rural Student Access to STEM Courses

A FOCUS ON COLLABORATION TO INCREASE ACCESS

The Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas (DigiTex) partnered with Acadeum in the spring of 2020 to establish a collaborative consortium that ensures every learner in the state of Texas has access to in-demand courses, no matter where they live, while helping community colleges create new pathways to college completion. As a result, students can access an expansive network of courses and stay on track to graduate.

Claredon College was able to leverage the DigiTex consortium and help five students progress toward on-time completion after a last-minute faculty cancellation. "This consortium allowed Claredon College to continue to serve a group of students that needed Microbiology for the Spring term when we had an unexpected instructor situation. The fact that we could still help our students when we were short on faculty was a great relief," shared Brandi Havens, Registrar at Claredon College.

Currently, DigiTex has 20 colleges collaborating through course sharing. In the first three years, the consortium shared 1,048 seats, enabling students to access classes unavailable at their Home Institutions. This collaborative effort has helped solve course availability roadblocks for students, increasing the ability of member schools to retain students in their current academic program. In addition, by working together, community colleges in the consortium have created access to almost 700 courses and over 3,000 course sections.



1,048+

seats shared at member schools to access courses not available at their Home Institution

"[Physics classes] are prerequisites for vet school. I didn't have a way to...take [these classes] at A&M in-person...so it was really helpful [to take them] online."

-Broc Kieschnick, Student, Vernon College

Grant Funding Creates Pathways at Scale

In the fall of 2021, DigiTex was awarded a \$645,405 grant from Greater Texas Foundation to support their project, "Harnessing Course Sharing to Support Guided Pathways at Scale." The funding further enabled the collaboration between DigiTex, Acadeum, and community colleges in Texas to help solve the problems of persistence, on-time completion, and access to courses to assist in fulfilling guided pathways. In addition, the grant supported efforts to increase the number of STEM and in-demand short-term courses available through course sharing while sustaining robust collaborative pathways and enhancing support and skill transfer among all partners to further strengthen curriculum development and online instructional acumen.

700+
in-demand
courses available

With the support of Greater Texas Foundation and through its partnership with Acadeum, DigiTex has aligned closely with the Texas higher education plan and found success in helping students complete their educational goals.

"[Without course sharing,] I would have to wait to graduate...probably another semester."

-Glenda Cotton, Student, Cisco College

The DigiTex Consortium uses course sharing to meet student needs and build pathways for community colleges in Texas to collaborate, while also:

- + Promoting degree completion and on-time transfer
- + Increasing access to in-demand courses
- + Supporting guided pathways
- + Expanding course catalog and flexible scheduling options
- + Expanding options for visiting students in the summer
- + Retaining tuition-paying students

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