



OFFICE OF THE
**Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs**

EAST TEXAS A&M

Good morning, Academic Affairs!

The spring semester is now underway and I hope everyone is off to a positive start to the new year. As we begin 2025, I have a handful of updates:

- I am pleased that we are making excellent progress on the development of a Faculty Success Center at East Texas A&M, thanks to the hard work of Provost Fellows, Dr. Flavia Belpoliti and Dr. Brian Zator. As many of you are aware, this is something I feel strongly about, as this initiative aims to serve as a centralized hub for fostering the growth and success of all faculty across the institution. The Faculty Success Center will focus on key areas to directly support faculty, including teaching excellence and scholarship, as well as offering unique opportunities for professional development. By prioritizing these areas, the Center will become an inviting and comprehensive space that promotes collaboration, mentoring, and career advancement, ultimately supporting and celebrating the professional endeavors and achievements of ETAMU faculty members. Over the upcoming semester, the provost fellows will work closely with faculty senators, department heads, deans, and my office, to ensure the prioritization of needs, and ongoing plans for ensuring success. Feel free to contact either Flavia or Brian if you have any questions or would like to get involved.
- I am excited to share that the 2025-2026 Provost Fellowship is ready for those who are interested in submitting their applications to serve. I invite faculty to apply for this immersive leadership development opportunity aimed at enhancing competencies and fostering collaboration across the university. Provost Fellows dedicate 15-20 hours weekly in the Provost Office to lead initiatives aligned with institutional priorities such as student success, teaching excellence, and faculty wellness, while gaining hands-on experience with university administration. Benefits include executive coaching, shadowing university leaders, and leading a high-impact project. Fellowships are available for tenured faculty at the Associate or Full Professor rank. Applications are due on February 7, 2025, by 5:00 pm, with selected candidate interviews to follow. Please see the attached documents for the overview and application form, or contact one of the current fellows at Brian.Zator@tamuc.edu or Flavia.Belpoliti@tamuc.edu for more information.
- I want to thank Jim Curry, the Director of Athletics, Haley Major, the student-athlete success director, and the rest of the athletics team for their continuous collaboration with Academic Affairs. It is important for athletics and academics to collaborate so that these

two essential aspects of our institution complement each other for our student-athletes. I would love to hear ideas from faculty and staff on how our two divisions may integrate further.

- I am delighted to share the results of the Honors College's inaugural Student Transformative Learning Award competition. Six students were awarded a total of \$5,930 for their innovative research projects:
 - Kamiah Long, Computer Information Systems
 - Jahmad Banks, Psychology
 - Mykah Gallaher, Wildlife & Conservation Science (Agriculture)
 - Kilee Lasiter, Chemistry
 - Vanessa Luviano, Wildlife & Conservation Science (Biology)
 - Collin Callagher, Biological Science

It is always delightful to see our undergraduates (especially from multiple colleges) partaking in challenging and meaningful research agendas. Thank you to Dr. Webster Garrett and all the faculty reviewers for their hard work on this!

- There is no doubt that we have a busy semester ahead of us! Here's a list of currently active committees, all with tentative schedules to finish their work by the end of this semester:
 - D2L Improvement (Basic Template): Lanee Dunlap (Chair)
 - SB 25: Ricky Dobbs and Jennifer Schroeder (Co-Chairs)
 - Development of Graduate Programs: Jennifer Schroeder (Chair)
 - Development of Undergraduate Programs: Ray Green (Chair)
 - Review of Class Schedules: Ricky Dobbs (Chair)
 - Summer Pay Model: Joe Romero (Chair)
 - Faculty Workload Policy: Ray Green (Chair)
 - Tracking Class Attendance: Asli Ogunc (Chair)
 - Review of Learning Platforms: Carrie Klypchak (Chair)

Each committee consists of faculty, faculty senators, and a department head; my thanks to all who have been willing to serve. For any questions, feel free to directly contact the chair of the committee. Although there will be numerous opportunities for input across our division, I know that committee chairs are always interested in hearing from you!

- I have office hours available on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm; but also by appointment for other days and times. This semester I am continuing to host Listening Lunches for faculty. This is a very informal meeting over the lunch hour, where my office provides lunch, and we have time to talk about what is on faculty members' minds— positives, concerns, questions about the future, etc. We tend to invite about 6-7 faculty members for each Listening Lunch so there is time for meaningful discussion and all to share. Please feel free to send me an email directly if you are interested in joining several of your colleagues and me for lunch. For my office hours, to sign up for a Listening Lunch, or to

schedule a meeting with Dr. Ricky Dobbs or me, please reach out to Cynthia at Cynthia.Rhodes@tamuc.edu.

I look forward to seeing all that we accomplish this year and I wish everyone a great spring semester!

tvh

