



OFFICE OF THE  
**Provost and Vice President  
for Academic Affairs**  
A&M-COMMERCE

Hello Academic Affairs!

First and foremost, I want to congratulate everyone on a successful spring semester. We made it to this point, and I couldn't be more proud of the outstanding work everyone has put forth. I am excited for our graduates, and look forward to the celebrations! With that, I will jump into my final update until this fall:

- Please join me in congratulating the Provost Fellows for the upcoming academic year! I'm delighted to share that Dr. Robert Rodriguez, Dr. Tami Morton, Dr. Maggie Salem, and Dr. Mark Moreno will serve as the inaugural cohort of this initiative. Joining the Provost Office this fall, fellows will be attending administrative meetings within the Division of Academic Affairs and across the university, shadowing senior leaders, participating in mentoring opportunities, helping move initiatives from the Provost Office forward, and being responsible for an identified campus-wide project.
- I am thrilled to see faculty taking advantage of our new faculty-led student experiences initiative. Examples of funded events include the "Business to Industry" event by Dr. Robert Rankin and Dr. Asli Ogunc, a trip to Dallas for ceramics students with Dr. Christy Wittmer, a trip to Oklahoma with art students by Dr. Melynda Seaton, and so many more! Our faculty's dedication to student learning experiences is outstanding. For more information and to apply for funding, please visit the [faculty-led student experiences website](#). Thank you to Dr. Villanueva-Russell and her team for managing this funding. I look forward to seeing what other creative, educational ways these funds will be used.
- The Strategic Plan Updating Committee has created a survey to gather important feedback from our university community regarding our institution's priorities for 2024-2029. Please take 10 minutes to complete the survey; we need your input! The survey can be found at: [https://tamuc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8o9qLLJ1h8mZVk](https://tamuc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8o9qLLJ1h8mZVk)
- Shortly after I arrived at A&M-Commerce, I started hearing from deans, department heads, and others about how complicated scheduling classes had become. In the last couple months, my office has been utilizing data and meeting with others to take a comprehensive look at what processes might be in place that are creating the complications, how students might be impacted, and studying how we can reduce the burden of scheduling concerns on faculty and staff. We have identified several factors that have contributed to various challenges and are taking immediate steps to improve

how courses are scheduled. These include eliminating many of the subterms that had been created, adhering to the course rotation schedules departments created for undergraduate programs in 2019, and creating course rotation schedules for graduate programs.

These changes will allow faculty, students, and advisors to be able to know several semesters in advance which courses will be offered and how students can complete their degree in as short a timeframe as possible to maximize financial aid and minimize a student's financial burden. You should start seeing some of these changes as soon as the Fall 2023 semester, and certainly even more by Spring 2024. I am optimistic that these tweaks to the schedule will not only help the university's space-usage efficiency, and ensure that we are best leveraging our resources, but also promote stability and reduce the stress that faculty, staff, and students experience related to course scheduling.

- Dr. Ron Carter, who has extensive experience and is nationally recognized as an expert in leadership development, visited our campus a couple weeks ago, meeting with the leadership in Academic Affairs. Dr. Carter, who is in the process of getting to know our university, will be working with our division to implement mentoring activities, workshops, and possibly a course on leadership in the fall as part of our continued development of leadership training opportunities for our division. Although much of his work will be virtual, his next visit to campus will be June 20 through June 21. If you are interested in learning more about leadership skills, please stay tuned, as I'll be sharing updates and professional development opportunities.

As we come to the end of my first academic year at this institution, I want to sincerely thank everyone for making this a remarkable time together. Moving into a new town and job can be overwhelming, especially at a university with such an extensive history and a future filled with opportunities. But on all accounts, I was welcomed into the Lion Family and shown kindness, understanding, support, and grace. So many of you have reached out to share your stories with me; both your challenges and your successes here at A&M-Commerce. We have outstanding faculty, who not only care about students, but who remain humble and hard-working. We also have dedicated students who overcome so much to complete their degree so as to change the trajectory of their future, as well as their family's. This is just a small description of what A&M-Commerce means to me and what my first year's experience has included. While I am mindful that this is only our beginning, I wanted to again share my gratitude!

I hope everyone has an excellent summer with respective productivity and relaxation. Please don't hesitate to reach out to or stop by the Provost Office during the next few months; I am always happy to find time on my schedule to meet with you!

For now, please take good care! I look forward to this fall and all of its vitality. Go Lions!

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