



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

Good morning, Academic Affairs!

What a busy summer it has been! Let me start by welcoming everyone back. I hope you had a great summer and are ready for an incredible fall semester. To those of you who are new and just joining the Lion Family, welcome! It is a wonderful time to be a Lion. We are excited to have you with us and I look forward to seeing your impact on our institution as we continue to transform lives.

A special welcome to our two new additions to the division's leadership team, our new CHSSA and Honors College deans. Dr. Joe Romero, Dean of CHSSA, started on June 1st and Dr. Erin Webster Garrett, Dean of the Honors College, began this past month. They have already made great strides in learning about and contributing to our institution. If you see them, be sure to say hello and welcome them!

As we prepare for the upcoming fall semester, I have exciting news to share:

- Updates regarding office moves that you will want to be aware of include:
 - What was once the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research has now split into The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and The Office of Institutional Research (IR) to provide more targeted services and reduce overhead. IR is still located in Journalism 350, with plans to move to the BA sometime later this semester. IE has moved and is now located at BA 348.
 - The College of Innovation and Design dean suite has relocated to Ferguson Suite 137.
 - The CHSSA dean suite has relocated to Ferguson Suites 220 and 221.
 - The Honors College is currently relocating to Velma K. Waters Library Suite 156.
 - The Office of Student Access & Success is now occupying Suite 173 in the library. This includes First Generation Student Success and the Office of International Programs. Feel free to stop by to say hello to Jayson Douglas, Executive Director of Student Access & Success, and other team members. They are always happy to welcome members of our division, and I have no doubt we will continue to be great partners as we all work on behalf of our students.
 - Over the past several weeks, advisors, life coaches, money managers, and the director for Title III moved to the second floor of the library in Suite 231. As many of you are most likely aware, this centralization has been planned for over three

years. I am excited to have these critical services all in one location to serve as a supportive place for our students and their success.

- With the complete reimagining of student success at our university, it is safe to say that Senior Vice Provost Ricky Dobbs is as busy as ever, as he is charged with overseeing the work of everyone coming together to improve our students' progress toward graduation. Working closely with Dr. Dobbs on cutting-edge approaches to student success, Lanee Dunlap will soon be serving as the Assistant Vice Provost in addition to her role as Dean of the Libraries. She will be responsible for actively contributing to the institution's vision of becoming a student-ready university; helping to ensure a welcoming environment for all students, one that includes promoting student engagement, retention, success, and career preparedness; playing a pivotal role in leading efforts towards the continued creation and implementation of the Student Success Center through collaboration with relevant stakeholders; developing strategic initiatives and implementing programs aimed at increasing student success; and collaborating with the Dean of Students and Division of Student Affairs on issues related to student success and well being. In addition to overseeing the operations of the Student Success Center, she will also be managing the creation and implementation of a teaching and learning center. (Much more to come about the development of this center that will be focused on faculty needs and offering support for their pedagogy. Please watch for ways that you can be involved in early discussions and a part of its formation!)

- You will hear more about this at President Rudin's Fall Assembly, but I will provide a quick update regarding the Refreshed Strategic Plan. As you are aware, the Revision Committee and Implementation Committee have each worked hard to revise the document, including identified metrics. Now, for the third phase, the Action and Accountability Team (A Team) has been assembled to oversee the outcome process, charged with finalizing metrics and managing movement forward to ensure meaningful data is collected. This committee will report each year to the President, Executive Team, and other identified stakeholders, to share outcome data and offer recommendations for the next year. Thank you to those across campus who agreed to serve on the A Team!
 - Co-Chair: Dr. Maria Carlson
 - Co-Chair: Jordan Stevenson
 - Dr. Robert Rodriguez
 - Autumn Johnson
 - Steve Harwell
 - Nicole Askew
 - Dr. Dan Su (ex officio)
 - Cynthia Rhodes (coordinator)

Feel free to reach out to my office or either of the co-chairs with any questions.

- I am delighted to announce that Dr. Andrew Baker has joined the Honors College as an Honors Faculty Leader. This part-time role engages faculty, students, and community members and I'm excited to see the work he will accomplish as the Honors College continues to adopt a student-ready focus. As many of you know, Dr. Baker is a popular and well-respected professor from the Department of History. He is known as being an innovator, and someone who is clearly committed to student success; he has been active in the Honors College for more than nine years.
- This summer, the Deans Council met to strategize around our institution's vision of becoming a student-ready university. In short, a student-ready university is one that supports all students, focusing on their potential and meeting them where they are. Additionally, we as faculty and staff embrace our skills as educators as we prepare students for the workforce, providing meaningful connections between what they are learning and their future careers. Much more to come regarding TAMUC becoming a student-ready university! Want to learn more about a student-ready university now? I encourage you to take a look at the book "*Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*."
- The faculty handbook has been updated and is [available online](#). Thanks to all who contributed to this important task; it had been quite a while since the last update, and moving forward we will implement processes to ensure critical information is kept up to date. Please note that the handbook has not been finalized, as the updates will be reviewed by the Faculty Senate. Coincident with the faculty handbook, we are in the process of updating all of the academic affairs-related policies that are due for review. Please be patient with this process as there is a fairly large number being addressed. We expect to have those policies through the review process by the end of the Fall semester but are working hard to get those updated much sooner. Please never hesitate to reach out to my office if you come across information in the faculty handbook or in any of our division's policies that is either confusing or outdated. We appreciate any input or assistance you can provide.
- This fall we will be busy with three dean searches. Each has an ambitious timeline, with the goal of welcoming the new deans to our institution this upcoming January. However, we certainly will be flexible, depending on how the search process evolves and any successful candidate's schedule. My intention is to have new leaders in place no later than July of 2025. Please see the links below for more information about each search.
 - [CID Internal Search](#), Chair of Search Committee: Devin Girod
 - [COB External Search](#), AGB, Chair of Search Committee: Bruce Trego
 - [CASNR External Search](#), Ashwood/Green, Chair of Search Committee: Dr. Jennifer Schroeder

- The external search for a Vice Provost of Academic Affairs continues. Slight updates were made during the past few weeks and the position has been [reposted](#). Please share with others who may be interested.

Amid all the exciting updates and transitions, here's what hasn't changed: You are always welcome in the Provost's Office! I have office hours available on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm; but also by appointment. This semester I will again be hosting Listening Lunches— feel free to send me an email if you are interested in joining several of your colleagues and me for lunch. You should never feel that you don't have a path to have your voice heard, and I welcome all discussions. 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 will be sending another memo in a little over a week with additional updates. For now, I wish you a smooth start to the week and I look forward to seeing you at the President's Fall Assembly this Thursday at 9:30 a.m. in the Ferguson Auditorium!

Take care,
tvh

