



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

A&M-COMMERCE

Good morning, Academic Affairs!

It's been a busy first several weeks and I hope everyone's semester is going well. By working together for the benefit of students, we did a great job of getting students into their classes. Thank you for all your efforts! Here are a few updates:

- A call will be forthcoming for applications to be considered for the Ombudsman position. Until an ombudsman can be appointed, inquiries are being monitored by the Office of Ethics and Compliance. For more information, you can visit the [Ombuds Office webpage](#).
- As you have likely heard, there is a nationwide financial aid crisis affecting thousands of students. The U.S. Department of Education underwent changes with the goal of streamlining processes for families but it has created complications and extremely difficult situations for colleges and universities. The FAFSA Simplification Act has caused calculation errors and slow processes for our Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. These problems were unexpected and unprecedented. Our financial aid teams are working diligently on solutions to expedite disbursements and ensure our students receive their necessary funding. As always, please prioritize student support as we work through this disruption. For the latest updates, please visit our website <https://www.tamuc.edu/fafsa-simplification-act/>.
- I just received the final statement from the ABET Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC). I am pleased to inform you that all three engineering programs (Electrical, Construction, and Industrial) received the full six-year accreditation. They are now accredited to September 30, 2030. Congratulations on a job well done!
- Please join me in congratulating Dean Lanee Dunlap on her promotion to Assistant Vice Provost. As we continue to reimagine student success, Lanee will work closely with Ricky to drive results on behalf of our students. As Assistant Vice Provost and Dean of Library, Lanee will keep her current duties and responsibilities, but will also 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; and playing a pivotal role in leading efforts towards the continued creation and implementation of the Student Success Center.

She will collaborate with relevant stakeholders; develop strategic initiatives and implement programs aimed at increasing student success; and collaborate with the Dean of Students and Office of Student Affairs on issues related to student success and well-being. In this position, she will also oversee the development and implementation of the formation of a new teaching and learning center.

- This past year CHSSA and HHP/COEHS have undergone a pilot program of using D2L as a digitized process for tenure and promotion review. The pilot will continue again this year as the Deans Council explores this option for the rest of academic affairs. Under this new system, each year the Office of Academic Technology will assist us in setting up a shell for each candidate under review for retention, review, or promotion. Candidates will have a set time to upload all their documentation after which the shell will close, then it will be open to the departmental tenure-promotion committees for a set time before closing again and opening to the college-level committees. This process has proven to be efficient for the use of time, reducing paper waste, and improving accessibility.
- Although the final decision on the FY24 Carnegie Classification is not announced until early Spring 2024, there is good news regarding research expenditures (one piece of the information used in determining the Carnegie Research Classification). In fiscal year '24, our research expenditures were approximately \$6.5M. This is only the second time the university has reached a level of more than \$5 million in research expenditures. Great job! For a bit more information:
  - 78 grants were submitted in FY24 vs 62 in FY23 (25.8% increase). COSE led the group with 38 grants being submitted. Assistant professors were responsible for 47% of grants submitted, with associate professors following at 29%.
  - \$7,744,678 awards in FY24 vs \$5,228,337 in FY23 (48.1% increase)

As always, there is more information to come and be on the lookout for my future updates. I'd like to end this one on a fun note by directing you to [this video](#) of President Rudin driving students to class. It's always great to hear about what our students are studying and what brought them to the Lion Family.

tvh

