

# **Historical Overview, Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles of the University**

## **History of the University**

Texas A&M University-Commerce is the fifth oldest institution of higher learning in the state. One of the largest universities in the prestigious Texas A&M University System, the institution was established in 1889 and began as East Texas Normal College. It was during this time that founder William Leonidas Mayo opened the doors to a one-building campus in Cooper, Texas and established as a creed, "*Ceaseless Industry, Fearless Investigation, Unfettered Thought, and Unselfish Service to Others.*" This motto continues today and is integral to the university's mission, vision, and guiding principles.

The institution's history of dynamic change began in 1894 when the original campus was destroyed by fire and "Mayo's College" moved to Commerce. When the state of Texas purchased the campus in 1917, the name changed to East Texas State Normal College. In 1923, the school was renamed East Texas State Teachers College. Graduate education entered the curriculum in 1935, and in 1957 the state legislature, recognizing that the purpose of the institution had broadened from teacher education alone, changed the name to East Texas State College. Following the inauguration of the first doctoral program in 1962, the name was changed to East Texas State University.

In 1996, the institution entered The Texas A&M University System and became Texas A&M University-Commerce. The university currently has off-campus locations in Dallas, Corsicana, Mesquite, McKinney, and Bryan. In addition, through state-of-the-art telecommunications and internet-based instruction, the university meets the undergraduate, graduate, and professional needs of the citizens of Northeast Texas and beyond. The university offers over 140 total areas of study at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels.

In an environment well-suited to study and inclusion, A&M-Commerce is a place where students enjoy productive relationships with professors, have opportunities to become leaders on campus, and become actively involved in campus life with a choice of over 120 clubs and organizations. The Honors College provides a college experience for the best and brightest that is substantially offset by scholarships for tuition, fees, books and meals. Fifty qualifying students are chosen each year to receive Honors College scholarships. A&M-Commerce is an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) committed to upholding the mission of the university to diversify the student population through recruiting, retaining, and supporting all students in their common endeavor toward degree completion.

## **Our Mission**

We Transform Lives

We transform lives by providing an accessible education coupled with uniquely targeted student support services and faculty members who care for all students throughout their academic career. We empower our students, faculty and staff to become the best version of themselves by supporting their continuous development and growth. Fueled by our resilience, tenacity, and talents, we strengthen the rural and urban communities we serve. Innovation is the heartbeat of Texas A&M University-Commerce, with career preparedness as a cornerstone of our educational mission. We are committed to ensuring our graduates are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Through robust career exploration, internships, industry partnerships, and skill development initiatives, we bridge the gap between academia and the workplace.

### **Our Vision**

As a premier institution of higher education in NE Texas, we are a student-ready university leading in social mobility and achieving academic excellence in a wide range of traditional and interdisciplinary programs, serving as a national leader in the advancement of competency-based education. We advance knowledge through impactful research and creative activity that benefits the region in which we serve and beyond. Recognized nationally for our innovative spirit and unique rural-urban identity, we promote an environment where all are valued, providing access and opportunities to ensure student success, career preparedness, and professional development for all members of the university community.

### **Strategic Priorities and Goals**

#### ***Student preparedness:***

- Develop students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and information literacy
- Grounded in innovative pedagogies and creative learning environments, ensure instructional excellence in a variety of new and enhanced academic programs and interdisciplinary degrees driven by workforce needs
- Provide relevant experiential learning opportunities and internships that prepare students for their first job in their selected field of study or their pursuit of graduate or professional studies
- Strengthen student advising and mentoring to ensure career preparedness and social mobility

#### ***Elevate Research:***

- Gain and maintain distinction as an institution of high research activity (as identified by the Carnegie Foundation) through advancing targeted research initiatives and creative activity
- Advance and support the scholarship activities of students, faculty and staff that elevate the profile of the university

#### ***Create an Inclusive Community:***

- Ensure that all members and friends of the university community experience a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment and feel included as part of the Lion family
- Empower students, faculty, and staff to achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals

***Align Our Initiatives with our Unique Rural-Urban Identity:***

- Serve as the hub for educational opportunities in the DFW metroplex, rural NE Texas, and beyond
- Leverage the assets of the university to strengthen partnerships and maximize the economic, cultural, health and social opportunities in the rural and urban communities we serve

***Modernize University Operations and Business Practices:***

- Incorporate best practices to develop and update operations, platforms, business processes, policies, and procedures that are collaborative and data-informed
- Enhance institutional brand and continue to build national visibility
- Increase and diversify revenue streams