



Good afternoon, Academic Affairs!

Happy first several weeks of the new semester! I hope everyone is able to stay warm and is ready for (hopefully soon) less winter-like weather. Here are some updates as we kick off the spring semester:

- It was wonderful to see many of you at the President's Spring Assembly last week. There are a few points from his presentation that I would like to highlight:
 - President Rudin thanked everyone who had participated in the creation of the refreshed strategic plan, and from the new document shared the following:
 - Our mission: We Transform Lives
 - The five priorities and goals:
 - Ensure Student Preparedness
 - Elevate Research
 - Create an Inclusive Community
 - Align our Initiatives with Our Rural-Urban Identity
 - Modernize University Operations and Business Practices
 - He highlighted the importance of ensuring student preparedness, meaning we meet their professional, academic, and personal needs. This involves workforce-driven and innovative programs, experiential learning opportunities, and strong mentoring. Additionally, he emphasized that it is crucial we meet students where they are and show flexibility in the classroom to ensure they are succeeding in their learning, as we go from a student-focused campus, to a student-centered one, to our ultimate vision of being a student-ready university.
 - In his comments, President Rudin spoke about the value of student engagement. As an example, he referenced Dr. Andrew Baker and his efforts in the classroom, including focusing on soft skills the first couple weeks of the semester; that is, lecturing for 20 minutes, and then, asking students about the notes they took, what were the important takeaways, what did they learn, and as a group they discussed how to take notes and identify important topics. Dr. Rudin also noted that with students having increased challenges working outside of class, Dr. Baker demonstrated flexibility and meeting students where they are, as he has moved to assign more projects and "homework" in class, with less focus on long writing assignments out of class, and more on short writing in class.

Dr. Rudin clearly recognized that like Dr. Baker, there are many, many faculty doing outstanding work to engage their students in the classroom. I couldn't agree more! So, in each of my memos this semester, I would like to highlight faculty members and their innovative approaches to engaging our students, as they address the unique challenges they face. Please send examples of your efforts directly to my email. I look forward to sharing more about our institution's many creative approaches to working with our students!

- I also want to bring your attention to the Faculty-Led Student Initiatives. We have seen so many amazing projects with this funding and I suspect this semester will prove the same. If you are interested in previous student activities or want to learn more about applying for funds, please take a look at the [webpage](#).
- As a reminder, the opportunity to apply for a Provost Fellowship is currently open. For tenured professors and associate professors who are interested in applying for a position as a Provost Fellow during the Academic Year 2024-2025, please see the attached documents. The Provost Fellowship offers valuable leadership experiences and a chance to gain knowledge about administrative duties within the Division of Academic Affairs and throughout the entire institution. If you have any questions regarding the fellowship or application process, please email Dr. Tami Morton. The applications should be submitted electronically to Cynthia.Rhodes@tamuc.edu **no later than 5 pm on January 31st**.
- The SACSCOC Accreditation team will be on campus the week of March 25. Please make sure to attend preparation meetings for the on-site peer review whenever possible. As a quick update to the preliminary review, the accreditation reaffirmation process identified 18 concerns out of 72 standards. We are currently preparing the Focused Report and prepping for the on-site review this semester. Contact Dr. Ricky Dobbs with any questions.
- Please keep in mind that the [Lion's Study website](#) is still live and accepting faculty's work. As a reminder, if you have any articles published in the past year or a book/book chapter from the past three years, please email Lilly.Rudin@tamuc.edu to get them uploaded. Physical copies of books should be brought to our office in BA 280 to be put on display. If you have any questions, please reach out to Dr. Tami Morton at Tami.Morton@tamuc.edu.
- To support my ongoing efforts in promoting open communication with faculty and to learn more about your interests, thoughts, needs, and concerns, I am continuing the Listening Lunches this semester. These lunches provide an informal environment where we explore faculty experiences and brainstorm solutions for moving forward. Thank you to the assistant and associate professors who joined me during the fall semester; your insights were invaluable! If you are interested in being invited to a Listening Lunch in the future, please contact Brenda.Walker@tamuc.edu in the Provost Office.
- In addition, I will continue to have open-door meetings this semester. These are for you to come chat with me about anything of interest to you. I would love to learn more about your research goals and interests, your teaching, ideas for campus improvement, and more. I have set aside Tuesdays from 4-6 pm and Wednesdays from noon to 1 pm for

these meetings. Other times are available upon request. Please email Cynthia.Rhodes@tamuc.edu to schedule a 30-minute appointment.

With that, I wish everyone a fantastic start to 2024 and the new semester. It's a great time to be a Lion!

tvh

