



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

Hello, Academic Affairs!

It is hard to believe that we are just finishing midterms, and I want to commend everyone on a successful semester thus far. I am consistently impressed with your hard work and devotion to our students and this institution.

As you know, our university mission to serve all students, particularly those whom a college education might feel out of reach, has continued to push our institution to look at numerous ways to meet students' needs. Many of you have provided vital leadership efforts and essential community connections in these endeavors. For decades, our off-campus educational sites have extended our reach to better serve students who weren't able to come to our main campus. In November of 2021 A&M Commerce moved Dallas operations to 8750 North Central Expressway—often referred to as “8750” for short—to strengthen our focus on meeting needs in Dallas. A look back identifies that at that time, our university had approval to offer classes only at the junior, senior, and graduate levels. Several months ago, we received approval to offer classes at all levels, which in many ways is a game-changer for us. Thus, over the past several months the Provost Office has engaged the deans in an exploratory exercise, asking them to identify programs that might be offered in Dallas, based on factors such as market need, competition, use of similar core courses, and connection to graduate programs. In hopes of identifying programs that have the best chance of being successful in the Dallas market, we are also working closely with Vice President Nechell Bonds and her team, as well as Hanover Research, to complete market analyses and identify potential student pipelines. Based on the initial information from early exercises focusing on each college, deans have been reaching out to department heads and their faculty to explore interests and possibilities of Dallas offerings. Dean Schroeder has been leading the exploration of increasing graduate-level offerings in Dallas as well. Starting this summer, we will be offering a defined core curriculum, with the intention to follow with undergraduate programs that can best utilize this core and address unmet needs in the Dallas area. We are making good progress, but as you can imagine, there is still much work to do! Feel free to talk with your department head or dean if you are interested in learning more about what is going on in your department or in the college, and of course, we are always interested in learning more about your ideas to best serve our students. In addition to Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Marketing/Communication are also exploring approaches and resources to best meet current and future student needs. I will make sure to provide updates as we continue to move forward.

From the first time I set foot on this campus, I have openly acknowledged the unmatched passion in this faculty's work with our students, and the strength of our faculty members' teaching and scholarship— both are truly outstanding. Yet, I believe that many do not always receive the recognition that they truly deserve, especially outside of our institution. To help better support our faculty and their career paths, I have convened an inaugural Faculty Recognition Committee, chaired by Cece Gassner. Please join me in thanking the following individuals for agreeing to serve on this committee:

Dr. Gracie Brownell
Dr. Brooke Clemmons
Dr. Ayal Feinberg
Dr. Kriss Kemp-Graham
Dr. Jino Kim
Dr. Mark Moreno
Dr. Asli Ogunc
Dr. April Sanders

This committee will work to create a procedure to strategically identify awards, honors, and recognition from associations, societies, and other organizations, and then follow up to move nominations forward. Committee members will serve as ambassadors to their respective colleges, staying abreast of opportunities that arise, in addition to connecting candidates to resources to help them present their best application for consideration. I appreciate the committee's willingness to acknowledge our faculty's good work and give us and others an opportunity to not only increase the visibility of their talents, but to also celebrate them.

In addition, I am happy to announce the call for the Faculty-Led Student Experiences initiative for the spring 2023 semester. In alignment with our University Strategic Plan, faculty can submit proposals that support their efforts in creatively engaging with students and offering opportunities to enrich their educational experience, both inside and outside the classroom. Funds can be requested in amounts up to \$4,000 to be utilized for the direct benefit of currently-enrolled students. Campus-wide collaboration is encouraged with other colleges, student affairs, and student organizations, as long as a faculty member is leading and contributing to the event. Funding can also be used to supplement pre-existing funding for events already scheduled. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis through the spring semester and/or until funding has been depleted. I want to thank Dr. Yvonne Villanueva-Russell for her leadership and encourage you each to take a closer look at the attached PDF for the application. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Villanueva-Russell directly at Yvonne.VRussell@tamuc.edu.

On a final note, I want to remind everyone that my open-door meetings are on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm, and there is no need to have an identified topic or purpose. I am interested in learning more about you and your teaching and scholarship interests. Please contact Cynthia Rhodes at Cynthia.Rhodes@tamuc.edu to schedule a 15-30 minute time.

As always, thank you all for your continued hard work and dedication to our students and this University. Together we are making significant progress and transforming lives. Go Lions!

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