

OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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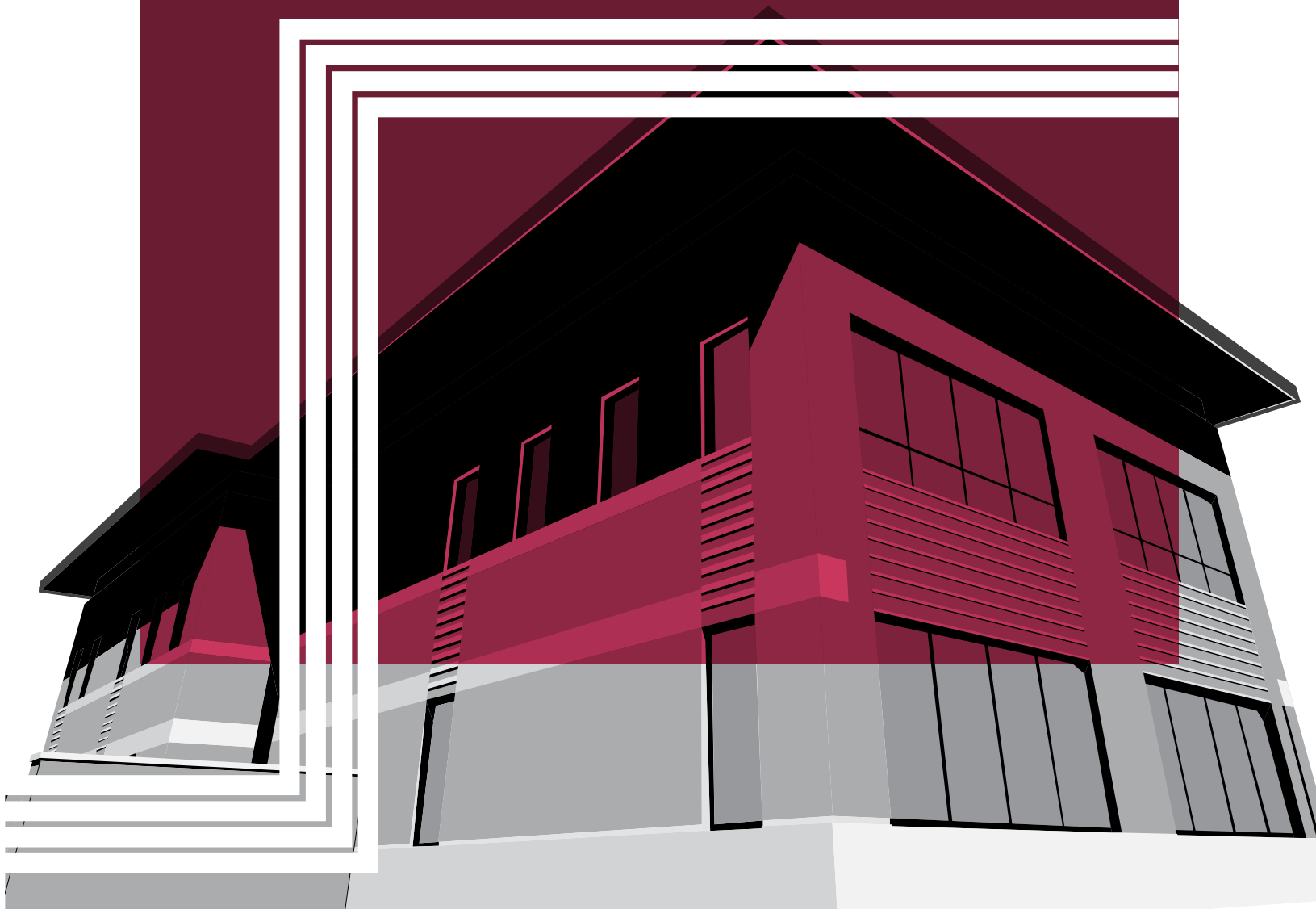
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OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



TAMIU'S MISSION AND JOURNEY CONTINUES TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

By Dr. Christopher Maynard

Texas A&M International University is a nationally ranked and regionally focused University with a rich and proud history of delivering transformative educational opportunities that change the trajectory of our students, their families, and South Texas. TAMIU combines an individualized educational experience with the resources of one of the world's largest and most prestigious university systems, all located on a vibrant campus at an international crossroad for trade and culture.

Our mission at TAMIU is straightforward yet powerful: to transform lives through higher education. Whether you are a first-generation college student, a transfer student, an international student, or a working professional, TAMIU welcomes you. Our rich University community will provide the support and encouragement needed to ensure student success. This mission as a social catalyst empowers South Texas by connecting regional needs with national and global opportunities. For 55 years, TAMIU has powered the progress and prosperity of South Texas by providing a skilled workforce to drive economic growth and expand opportunities. Together with our community and industry partners, TAMIU supports thousands of local jobs and creates bright paths for our students to succeed academically, professionally, and personally. In this way, TAMIU is not just a place of learning, but an engine of opportunity for South Texas.

Over 9,100 students pursued their dreams of higher education at TAMIU this Fall. They are preparing to become entrepreneurs, teachers, and public servants who will lead the economic future of our region. One thing that I have already learned is that TAMIU students are ambitious. They want to go beyond and invest in their futures, and that growth mindset will ensure that they are successful now and throughout their lives. TAMIU must match that ambition, and we will continue to push our University community to do more, to go beyond. And while we will enjoy celebrating our 55th Anniversary this year, I cannot wait to see what the coming years bring for TAMIU. We remain committed to growing our academic programs, strengthening workforce partnerships, and positioning TAMIU as a driving force for innovation, talent development, and economic opportunity in South Texas.



Dr. Christopher Maynard is the seventh President of Texas A&M International University.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY FOUNDATION GIFT HELPS TAMIU'S ENGINEERING STUDENTS FORGE THE FUTURE OF SOUTH TEXAS

A generous gift by the **CenterPoint Energy Foundation** will help TAMIU Engineering students forge the future of South Texas through access to specialized, high-performance laptops and robotic training kits.

In November, CenterPoint Energy Foundation shared its gift totaling over **\$56,000** with the College of Arts and Sciences' School of Engineering students and trusted partner and gift steward, the TAMIU Alumni Association.

June Deadrick, CenterPoint Energy vice president, Community Relations, said that CenterPoint considers this gift an investment in students and an investment in the future of South Texas.

"Education is vitally important to all our futures. We want to open up windows of opportunity, to help students chart a well-lit path to the future, and for these TAMIU engineering students to walk into brighter futures of purpose... in the most dynamic growth industries that will power the future," Deadrick said.

TAMIU Engineering students at the announcement showed that they're already keen on that future, demonstrating their newly acquired robotic dog with moves showcasing programming prowess.

Dr. Christopher Maynard, TAMIU president, lauded the generosity shown by the CenterPoint Energy Foundation.

"Alongside our trusted partners and gift stewards, the TAMIU Alumni Association, we're enormously proud that the CenterPoint Foundation shares our vision of futures powered by TAMIU. With this generous support, we will provide students with laptops with the powerful processing, high-resolution graphics, and multi-tasking abilities they need to be ready for that brighter future Ms. Deadrick envisions," Dr. Maynard said.



CenterPoint Energy Foundation of Houston presented its gift totaling over \$56,000 to the College of Arts and Sciences' School of Engineering students and trusted partner and gift steward, the TAMIU Alumni Association. The gift provides access to specialized, high-performance laptops and robotic training kits.

TAMIU RECOGNIZED WITH NRG'S SILVER EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR CAMPUS ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TAMIU was recognized with a **Silver Excellence in Energy Award** in the Energy Efficiency category during NRG's 6th Annual Awards Ceremony in November.

Robert J. Gaudette, executive vice president and president of NRG Business and Wholesale Operations, explained the importance of the national NRG Awards.

"Over the past six years, we have seen incredible dedication to progress in energy innovation and resilience. These Awards are about honoring that commitment and looking ahead to the possibilities still to come," said Gaudette.

During the virtual ceremony, NRG representatives said TAMIU won for its remarkable transformation into a model of energy excellence. Through strategic initiatives such as lighting retrofits, HVAC upgrades, and water conservation, the University significantly reduced utility consumption while enhancing operational efficiency. By embracing real-time data tools and predictive insights, TAMIU sets a national standard for sustainability and resource stewardship, creating a more resilient and forward-thinking campus, they observed.

TAMIU president **Dr. Christopher Maynard** said the national Award affirms the importance and long-term benefits of energy efficiency on campus.

"This Award underscores TAMIU's leadership in implementing more than \$20 million in energy efficiency upgrades, all funded through guaranteed savings. With our partner, **Schneider Electric**, the University has been positioned as a model for efficient campus operations. TAMIU improvements include advanced building performance monitoring and operational management programs that optimize energy use, enhance comfort, and reinvest savings into student success," Dr. Maynard explained.

Tammy Tolle, vice president at Schneider Electric, concurred and said TAMIU's investment anticipates the nimble needs of the classrooms of tomorrow.

"This recognition celebrates TAMIU's bold, ongoing vision to transform campus operations. By embracing advanced building automation, energy monitoring, and asset planning tools, the University is creating a world-class learning environment that anticipates the needs of tomorrow and empowers students, faculty, and the broader Laredo community to thrive in a rapidly evolving world," said Tolle.

The partnership with Schneider has been led on campus by **Juan J. Castillo**, TAMIU's vice president for Finance and Administration, and **Trevor Liddle**, associate vice president, Campus Planning and Safety.

"As with all of our projects, our goals are to control costs, ensure reliability, and position us for future growth and needs, and we believe NRG's recognition of TAMIU reflects the growing importance of energy stewardship in higher education," Castillo said, "In addition to this recognition, Trevor has co-presented on our successes with Schneider Electric at state and national conferences for business officers and facilities professionals. It is our hope other institutions will join us in adopting similar strategies."

Watch an Award replay at go.tamiau.edu/nrg-award25.



TAMIU LAUNCHES FIRST GRADUATION ENGINEERING PROGRAM

This November, TAMIU announced the launch of its first graduate engineering program, the Master of Science in Systems Engineering (MS SENG), scheduled to begin Fall 2026.

This landmark initiative marks a historic milestone for both the University and the South Texas border region, expanding graduate opportunities and driving innovation across regional industries.

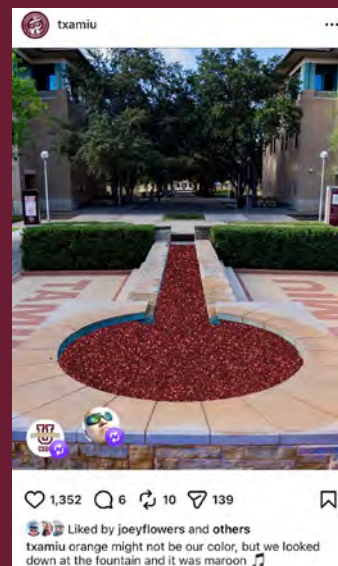
TAMIU president **Dr. Christopher Maynard** said the program which has been approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges will fuel the future of South Texas.

"This graduate program is a testament to TAMIU's enduring commitment to transforming lives through education," said Dr. Maynard, "By introducing advanced engineering studies to our campus, we're not only expanding academic horizons, we are fueling the future of South Texas with innovation, opportunity, and leadership."

TAMIU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, **Dr. Claudia San Miguel** concurred and said the new program reinforces the University's mission.

"The MS in Systems Engineering is a strategic response to the evolving demands of our region's industries. It equips our students to lead in high-impact fields like automation and data analytics, while reinforcing our mission to provide accessible, forward-thinking graduate education," Dr. San Miguel explained.

WE LOVE THE ENERGY
OUR DUSTDEVILS BRING TO SOCIAL MEDIA!
Here are some of our favorite social media posts.
Don't forget to tag @txamiu in your social media post statuses, stories and images!



@TXAMIU

ONLINE CJ GRADUATE PROGRAMS NOW INCLUDE HOMELAND SECURITY, CYBERSECURITY, CJ ADMINISTRATION



This Fall, TAMIU expanded its online Criminal Justice offerings with three new fully online Master of Science degrees: **Homeland Security, Cybersecurity, and Criminal Justice Administration.**

These programs prepare professionals for leadership roles in Criminal Justice fields vital to national security, public safety, and cyber defense. They are delivered in partnership with Risepoint, an education technology company advancing TAMIU's mission to increase access to life-changing education.

Dr. Claudia San Miguel TAMIU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs noted that online course delivery at the graduate level remains popular among students.

"This really is an exciting time at the University for degree program growth that answers the needs of our students," she said, "In collaboration with our faculty, we've strategically grown our online degree delivery in areas desired by and relevant to our students' career aspirations and dynamic employment opportunities."

This fueled a nearly 13% increase in graduate student enrollment, Dr. San Miguel noted.

College of Arts and Sciences Dean **Dr. Marcus Ynalvez** observed that with a 100 percent online format, TAMIU offers working professionals and career changers access to the same distinguished education without compromising their personal or professional obligations.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/cj-expands.

TAMIU SOCIAL POST SETS HISTORIC VIRAL BENCHMARK WITH 3M+ VIEWS

"We've gone viral."

That phrase can signal fear or pride for any entity as it refers to a social media post that has generated an uncommonly high number of views.

Fortunately, sharing good news helped drive an historic viral benchmark for TAMIU in June.

An Instagram post on the main **txamiau** account became the University's first-ever viral post, racking up **3.18 million (and counting)** views. The post paired May's traditional Diploma Party with a look back at the highly ornamented graduation caps that provide a visual highlight at TAMIU's Commencement Exercises.

The content received a major boost after being reposted by Pubity on June 10, a highly influential media outlet known for viral content and global reach. Pubity's repost, which included an account tag, amassed **758,686 likes** and **3,548 shares** in less than **48 hours**, amplifying TAMIU's visibility and reach.

The social media coup was led by the award-winning TAMIU Office of Public Relations, Marketing, and Information Services' social media team of **Christine Rojas**, manager, social media and communications, and **José "Joey" Hernández**, communication specialist.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/viralpost.

Follow us on instagram at instagram.com/txamiau.



TAMIU NAMES NEW DEANS WITH START OF FALL SEMESTER

This Fall at TAMIU, new leadership faces welcomed new and returning undergraduate and graduate students and faculty.

After national searches, TAMIU named three new deans: Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and its Dr. F. M. Canseco School of Nursing, **Dr. Elda G. Ramírez**; Dean of the College of Education, **Dr. Alfredo Ramírez**, and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, **Dr. Marcus Antonius Ynalvez**.

Dr. Elda Ramírez' selection as Dean of the TAMIU College of Nursing and Health Sciences marks a full-circle moment for the daughter of Laredo and South Texas who traces her interest in nursing to serving as a junior volunteer at Laredo's former Mercy Hospital.

Ramírez is an Emergency Nurse Practitioner and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Texas Health Science Center School of Nursing in Houston. Find out more at go.tamiau.edu/eramirez-conhs.

As Dean of the College of Education **Dr. Alfredo Ramírez's** new post continues his mission to nurture public school leaders who can create high performing schools. He credits the inspiration and successes of his father, a TAMIU alum, and grandfather, a public-school teacher and administrator, with the drive that fuels his life in education.

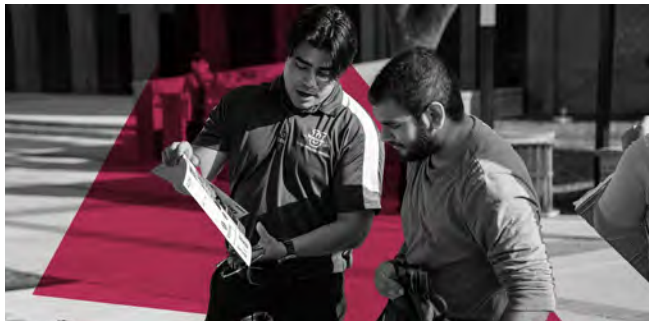
He's a proud TAMIU alum and completed his Ph.D. at The University of Texas at Austin's College of Education. Find out more at go.tamiau.edu/aramirez-coe.

Dr. Marcus Antonius Ynalvez is the new Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest of TAMIU's Colleges and Schools.

Dr. Ynalvez's appointment sees the College being led by a scholar whose global journey is grounded in rigorous inquiry, teaching excellence, and a lifelong dedication to positive social transformation.

He began his journey at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, securing degrees in Statistics and Sociology. Ynalvez's Ph.D. in Sociology was earned from Louisiana State University with a focus on the Sociology of Science. Find out more at go.tamiau.edu/ynalvez-coas.

TAMIU AND LC OPEN 'PATHWAYS' TO STREAMLINED TRANSFER, ENGAGEMENT



Laredo's two higher education institutions, TAMIU and Laredo College (LC), have continued their collaborative tradition with the **TAMIU Open House at LC**, a strategic opportunity for LC students to explore transfer to the University.

Juan G. García, Jr. TAMIU vice president for Student Enrollment, praised the future-focused shared initiative.

"We're enormously grateful to LC president **Dr. Minita Ramírez** and the entire LC team for their partnership and shared vision. The TAMIU Open House reinforces our strong partnership and our mutual commitment to student success," García noted.

The Open Houses are offered each semester. They've taken on additional importance as TAMIU and LC collaborated to streamline transfer **Pathways** that align to help LC students navigate a clear transfer pathway to TAMIU ensuring credits aren't wasted.

The collaborative spirit between TAMIU and LC also extends to shared community engagement events like "**The Big Event**," a March community service event where 500+ TAMIU and LC students shared service projects.

In October, the **16th Annual Make a Difference Day**, a National Day of Service, saw TAMIU and LC students, faculty, and staff, focus on three distinct areas.

Find out more on [page 30](#).

TAMIU GETS NODS FOR #2 LOWEST NET PRICE AND #3 AMONG BEST FOUR-YEAR HISPANIC SERVING COLLEGES

TAMIU was recognized by *Washington Monthly Magazine's 2025 College Guide* and ranked **#2** for Lowest Net Price in the South and **#3** in the nation in its new Best Four-Year Hispanic-Serving Colleges ranking.

Additional rankings included **#4** for Affordability in the South, and **#5** for Lowest Student Loan Debt in the South.

TAMIU repeated as one of the nation's Top Ten-ranked Southern Colleges in the "Best Bang for the Buck" category, ranking **#10** among 100 institutions. TAMIU has appeared in the Top Ten since the *College Guide's* inception.

Of the ranking as **#3** in the nation for Hispanic-Serving Colleges, the highest-ranked of Texas A&M University System campuses, the *Guide's* authors observed, "Texas A&M International University is in third place, with an incredibly low price of **\$3,833** and a graduation rate for Hispanic students equal to that of the general population."

The rankings underscore TAMIU's commitment to being Accessible, Affordable, and Exceptional. These rankings, coupled with the most affordable tuition of any South Texas university, have helped drive TAMIU's enrollment milestone this Fall of over 9,000 students, clearly delivering on its core, founding mission.

Since 2005, the *Washington Monthly College Guide* has ranked colleges based on what they do for the country, according to *Guide* authors. Many consider the *Guide* an answer to *U.S. News & World Report*, which relies on measures of exclusivity, prestige and wealth, the *Guide* maintains.

Washington Monthly surveys over 1,400 public, private nonprofit, and for-profit colleges and its rankings are based on their contribution to the public good in four broad categories: access, affordability, outcomes, and promoting public service.

For more visit go.tamiau.edu/wm-rankings.

TAMU MARKS 55TH ANNIVERSARY WITH HISTORIC ENROLLMENT, INTRODUCING 7TH PRESIDENT

On a balmy October morning TAMU students, faculty, staff, and alumni became a part of another milestone in the University's history.

"55 Years of Making Milestones, A TAMU Celebration" kicked off the University's 55th Anniversary with new harbingers of change and growth: the appointment by The Texas A&M University Board of Regents of TAMU's seventh President, **Dr. Christopher Maynard**, and securing its largest enrollment in history, 9,000+ students.

Dr. Maynard, enveloped by the celebratory crowd mood, offered his appraisal after less than two weeks on the job.

"Texas A&M International University is a nationally ranked, regionally focused university with a rich and proud history of delivering transformative educational opportunities that change the trajectory of our students, their families, and South Texas. This University's impactful force is delivered daily by over 486 gifted faculty members from around the world, leading 55-degree programs at bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels...all on a dynamic residential campus that's just posted its highest enrollment in our history," he observed.



"In the short time I have been here, I've seen the remarkable commitment, pride, and affection for this University that's palpable throughout the region. I am honored to be able to extend TAMU's 55-year legacy and ensure the promise and success of the future begins here, focused clearly on student success," Maynard continued.

The University's 9,000th student, **Mel Velázquez**, a TAMU freshman and Lopez Scholar majoring in Criminal Justice, was also on hand for the celebration.

Adding to the historic day was a spirited countdown to the record-breaking enrollment, commemorative "9K" cookies, miniature deer and duck souvenirs, and a giant inflatable version of the University's

popular mascot, Dusty the Dustdevil, towering above the festivities at 10 feet tall.

View a recap at go.tamui.edu/55milestones-vid.



TAMU'S ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WEBB COUNTY TOPS \$374M; 6,300 JOBS

When TAMU graduates cross the stage to receive their diploma, it's the most energizing sign of the University's impact. But there's also a sizable economic impact delivered daily by South Texas's fastest-growing university...and it's just as far-reaching.

A *Fiscal Year 2024 Economic Impact Analysis* by TAMU's A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development (TCBEED) showed TAMU generated \$374 million in economic impact for Webb County's economy, supporting nearly 6,300 jobs during fiscal year 2024.

TCBEED director and report author **Dr. Daniel Covarrubias**, explained the ripple effect of that impact.

"The University strengthens local businesses through increased regional spending, providing a pipeline of skilled graduates enhancing the region's human capital. TAMU transforms individual lives by increasing graduates' lifetime earnings, creating broader societal benefits and a more prosperous regional economy," Dr. Covarrubias explained.

He said TAMU's impact represents 3.3 percent of Webb County's total Gross Regional Product, placing the University among the top two percent of the county's industry sectors.

In FY24, TAMU disbursed \$77 million in payroll/benefits to 1,778 full and part-time employees. Operations and student spending generated \$183 million, supporting 2,361 jobs. TAMU alumni working in Webb County contributed \$186 million to the regional economy, supporting 3,885 jobs.

Through a powerful multiplier effect every dollar invested in and by TAMIU creates an additional 76 cents in regional economic activity. The employment multiplier of 1.21 indicates each TAMIU position supports one-fifth of a job in the broader economy.

In workforce development, TAMIU graduates earn significantly more than high school diploma holders. In Webb County, those with bachelor's degrees earn an average of \$52,125 annually, a \$24,036 premium over high school graduates.

Access TAMIU's Economic Impact Analysis FY 2024 Report at go.tamiau.edu/eia.

TENNIS COMES TO TAMIU WITH NEW CITY OF LAREDO TENNIS COMPLEX

The long-cherished dream of tennis at TAMIU became a reality last January when the new 18-court facility was dedicated.

go.tamiau.edu/tennis-ceremony25.

Known as the City of Laredo Tennis Complex at TAMIU, the project grew from the combined efforts of the City of Laredo Parks and Recreation Department, TAMIU Athletics Department, Laredo Tennis Association (LTA), and the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

On hand to usher in a new age for tennis at TAMIU was alumna **Tina Treviño '80**, of the LTA. She and her late husband **Dr. Alfredo Treviño** championed the addition of tennis to TAMIU for years.

"I'm filled with great excitement, joy, and pride to see that the courts have come to fruition. My late husband and I dreamed of a facility like this to serve all present and future tennis players in our



beloved City of Laredo. Our community deserves this high-quality facility," Treviño enthused.

At 2021 groundbreaking ceremonies the late TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** lauded the project.

"This is a public-public project. We worked long and hard to get this done in a great partnership with the City of Laredo," he said then.

The Tennis Complex is a recipient of the USTA's annual Outstanding Facility Awards recognizing excellence in tennis facilities construction throughout the nation see go.tamiau.edu/usta-award25.

For more, contact Director Jaime Donjuan at jaime.donjuan@tamiau.edu, call 956.326.3741, or click on tamiau.edu/tennis.



The 18-court City of Laredo Tennis Complex at TAMIU Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

89TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION HAS POSITIVE IMPACT FOR A&M SYSTEM, TAMIU

Texas A&M International University leaders had two big words for the leaders of the 89th Legislative Session: **THANK YOU.**

Texas lawmakers delivered significant funding increases to The Texas A&M University System members during the Session, strengthening its ability to serve Texas and meet the needs of its people, from higher education and healthcare to emergency response and workforce development.



Dean Senator Judith Zaffirini

A&M System universities received a \$60.4 million increase in formula funding, part of a \$226.5 million statewide increase to support instruction, operations, infrastructure, and research. Higher Education Fund appropriations for the System's eligible universities increased by nearly \$20 million annually, helping address capital, library, and equipment needs.

For TAMIU, the legislative team's championing of the University's growth and strength helped yield an \$8.8 million general revenue (GR) funding increase, to total **\$77.7 million** in Net GR for the biennium.

TAMIU's success, growth, and excellence have been empowered by the stalwart efforts of Dean Senator **Judith Zaffirini** (District 21), who has championed every step of the University's development and growth throughout its now 55-year history.

Senator Zaffirini said the increase is reflective of the Texas Legislature's commitment to higher education in South Texas.

"Texas A&M International University's increase in General Revenue funding, as well as \$3 million in supplemental funding for new Civil Engineering and Computer Science degree programs, underscore the Texas Legislature's strong commitment to higher education in South

Texas. These investments will help meet our State's growing workforce needs while expanding opportunities for our students.

"I was proud to sponsor this critical funding and thank **Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, Speaker Dustin Burrows, Reps. Richard Peña Raymond and Don McLaughlin** and TAMIU interim president **Juan J. Castillo** for their collaborative leadership roles in making this possible," Senator Zaffirini said.

Castillo noted there were clear drivers for the funding increase at TAMIU.

"This was largely driven by our strong growth in enrollment and, more importantly, in semester credit hour production, which contributed to an increase in formula funding. In addition, steady gains in our number of graduates led to a modest boost in Comprehensive Regional University funding," he explained.

He observed that TAMIU's enrollment growth and the State's support of it has generational implications for Laredo and beyond.

"As the University of choice for Laredo and South Texas, Texas A&M International University plays a transformational role—changing lives, fulfilling dreams, and creating brighter futures. This impact, however, is only possible through the State's pivotal investment in our institution, and that is why we were so pleased with the outcome of the 89th Legislative Session," Castillo concluded.

CHANCELLOR GLENN HEGAR MAKES INAUGURAL VISIT TO TAMIU

Shortly after officially assuming his duties as Texas A&M University System **Chancellor Glenn Hegar** hit the ground running...straight to TAMIU for a first-time, sit-down visit with TAMIU students, faculty, and staff this past summer.

His campus visit saw him participate in focused forums to build his awareness of TAMIU, its programs, services, strengths, and plans, and to gather input and outline his priorities as Chancellor.



Texas A&M University System Chancellor Glenn Hegar joins Juan J. Castillo and TAMIU students on his visit to campus.

Speaking with students, he said that as a first-generation graduate himself, he shared their priorities of access and that the A&M System is committed to them and their success.

"This System is full of dedicated public servants — from faculty and researchers to campus staff and agency field workers," Hegar said, "It's a privilege to lead them, and together we're going to continue building a future Texas can be proud of."

With faculty and staff, he shared his reason for accepting the role as Chancellor.

"I've spent my entire career serving the people of Texas," Hegar said, "But what drew me to this role is the opportunity to positively influence the next generation of Texans — to give them the tools, the education, and the values they need to lead. That's what the Texas A&M System does better than anyone."

ENROLLMENT GROWTH AT TAMIU FUELS ADDITION OF 32 NEW FACULTY MEMBERS



Dr. Claudia E. San Miguel

"Our search committees spent an incredible amount of time and energy in working to recruit and secure these new members of our gifted faculty. We're thrilled to have them join our growing campus and community. We are eager to have them share their contributions to TAMIU's accessible, affordable and exceptional education, and to engage with our community, South Texas, and beyond in research and service," Dr. San Miguel said.

The largest concentration of new faculty, 16, is in the College of Arts and Sciences, TAMIU's largest College. The College of Nursing and Health Sciences follows with 11 new faculty members. New faculty for the A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business number three and the Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library has added two librarians.

Continuing to keep pace with dynamic enrollment growth this Fall semester at TAMIU, 32 new faculty members have taken their place to lead learning and research in undergraduate and graduate classrooms.

TAMIU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs **Dr. Claudia E. San Miguel** said these additions to the University's faculty are the result of national and international searches focused on teaching and research excellence.

The new faculty will help drive new and developing degree programs including Civil Engineering, Computer Science, and Physical Therapy, in addition to dynamic growth in online graduate program delivery.

For a full listing of faculty who have joined TAMIU this past Fall visit go.tamtu.edu/newfaculty25.

SPRING SEMESTER ENROLLMENT AT TAMIU 'QUACKS' UP RECORD

The 2025 Spring Semester at TAMIU was another one for the record books...and the ducks have it.

Students enrolling at TAMIU set a historic record for the highest Spring Enrollment in the University's history: **8,254 students**, a **3.95%** increase in headcount, and a **5.17%** increase in Semester Credit Hours, upon which State funding is configured.

TAMIU celebrated the milestone with a fun event named, "Release the Quacken." Students collected a special commemorative silver duck from thousands afloat in the campus's central Acequia Fountain. The ducks symbolized the thousands of TAMIU students enrolled this Spring at the University.

Ahead of the celebration, dozens of branded and customized silver rubber duckies were hidden across campus daily. University social media 'fowl-owers' tracked and found the hidden ducks in a digital scavenger hunt.

"We're tremendously proud of our University enrollment team and their vital roles in meeting with potential students to explore the opportunities TAMIU can make real for them. These efforts, along with those of our gifted faculty and administrative support, combine to create a welcoming environment where students can and do succeed," said **Juan G. García, Jr.**, TAMIU vice president for Enrollment Management.

Learn more at go.tamtu.edu/luckyducky.

See an event video at go.tamtu.edu/discoduck-vid.





500+ LC, TAMIU VOLUNTEERS FOCUS '25 'THE BIG EVENT' ON LOCAL IMPACT

Over 500 TAMIU, faculty, staff and alumni rolled up their sleeves for a day of service to their community as part of the annual commemoration of "The Big Event" March 22, 2025.

Volunteers made a significant local difference, with an estimated monetary impact of \$711,456 and over 20,000 community service hours generated.

Joining TAMIU for the first time were Laredo College students through the earlier signing of a Memorandum of Agreement by Laredo's maroon-and-silver and green-and-gold institutions of higher education.

The agreement explores future opportunities for joint service-learning initiatives, providing students with leadership experiences

and empowering them to become active contributors to their community.

Volunteers committed to service projects at the Haynes Recreation Center, Arturo Benavides Park, and Slaughter Park. Beautification projects included tree planting, mural painting, trash pick-up, seed ball planting, tending to a monarch butterfly garden, brush removal, and much more.

The event was made possible through the University's Office of Student Affairs, in collaboration with TAMIU's Student Government Association's Leaders Organizing Volunteer Events Committee, the City of Laredo, Keep Laredo Beautiful, TAMIU Housing and Residence Life, the Rio Grande International Study Center, and ARCA Continental Southwest Beverages.

For a look back at past 'The Big Event' initiatives, visit go.tamtu.edu/serve.

TAMIU, LC TEAM UP FOR 16TH ANNUAL 'MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY'

Some 300+ volunteers from TAMIU and Laredo College joined to create a lasting impact in their community during Make a Difference Day 2025 held Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025.

Now in its 16th year, TAMIU and LC students, faculty, and staff, focused on three distinct areas, including downtown Laredo, the City of Laredo Health Department and its surrounding neighborhood, and the Larga Vista Community Center.

Planned activities included tree planting, bulk trash collection, mulch application, house painting, yard cleanup, gardening, wood staining, and graffiti removal.

Additionally, students from both institutions jointly hosted a Kids Clothing Donation Drive benefiting the Larga Vista Community Center.

This annual event, led by the University's Office of Student Affairs in collaboration with the University's Student Government Association's Leaders Organizing Volunteer Events Committee, is made possible through the support of community partners, including the City of Laredo, Webb County, Keep Laredo Beautiful, H.E.B, Laredo Main Street, the Outlet Shoppes at Laredo, and Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages.

Since 2010, University volunteers have worked on various community-wide projects benefiting groups such as Habitat for Humanity, Volunteers Serving the Need, the Laredo Animal Care Facility, the Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation Center, and many more.

Learn more at go.tamtu.edu/maddandtbe.





BANKING ACADEMY PLEDGES TOTAL \$1.4M, BUOYING SANCHEZ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS PROGRAM

Banking is big business in Laredo, a crossroads of international commerce.

TAMU is leading the charge to make the industry even bigger through its A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business Banking Academy... and business leaders here say it's something they want to bank on.

Banking Academy students are provided with specialized training, networking opportunities, and hands-on experience in the financial industry. Bankers in the community have been generous in their support, realizing the Academy offers a local and regional conduit of future banking industry leaders who can nimbly address the highly varied banking needs of the U.S.-México border.

Funding from donors further enhances academic programs, scholarships, co-curricular training aligned with industry standards, and provides additional professional development initiatives.

Dr. Luis Perez-Batres, Dean of the School of Business, said donor investment helps bridge academia and industry for mutual success.

"The generosity of our banking partners reflects a shared belief in TAMU's Banking Academy mission to develop highly qualified banking and finance leaders for South Texas and beyond. Their collective investment and our academic expertise exemplify how we bridge academia and industry for student success and community impact," Dr. Perez-Batres explained.

To date, donors pledging the Banking Academy with substantial support have included:

In September, 2024, **The Matias De Llano Charitable Trust**, administered by the International Bank of Commerce (IBC Bank), provided the first gift of **\$100,000** earmarked to benefit the newly established Banking Academy.

Dennis E. Nixon, CEO of IBC Bank, said the Trust was steadfast in its commitment to realizing the late philanthropist's dream for his Trust.

"Mr. De Llano directed that the Trust continue his legacy by helping the community he lived in and loved. This special gift expands that

legacy of caring by providing new opportunities for our community to engage with and be empowered by our hometown University," Nixon explained.



In October 2024, **Texas Community Bank (TCB)** concurred, providing a **\$1 million gift**. **Douglas Macdonald**, TCB president and CEO spoke of TCB's commitment to the banking industry, the communities it serves, and TAMU.

"As our name affirms, we are a community bank and believe that partnering with TAMU, the primary source of this community's human capital, is a perfect way to elevate our community and prepare generations for growth. Texas Community Bank is all about service and our gift will help ensure our service and all banking services remain superior in Laredo and beyond," Macdonald observed.

In December 2024, **Falcon Bank** added its donation of **\$50,000** in support of the Banking Academy.

Gilbert Narvaez, Jr. Falcon Bank president and CEO and TAMU alumnus ('84) said the gift will empower the next generation of bankers.



"It is with great pride and commitment to our shared values of excellence and innovation that we announce our donation to the A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business Banking Academy. We believe in empowering the next generation of bankers and providing them with the resources necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving global market. This contribution represents more than just financial support; it is an investment in the future of education, leadership, and community development. We look forward to seeing the remarkable achievements that will undoubtedly arise from this collaboration," Narvaez said.

In March of 2025, the **Rio-South Texas Education and Community Development Foundation (RSTEF)** presented a **\$250,000** gift in support of the Banking Academy at its RSTEF 2025 Awards Ceremony.

RSTEF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit focused on Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development. It serves a seven-county region comprised of Willacy, Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Webb counties. It provides financial support to 501(c)3 nonprofits whose programs increase skilled employment and educational attainment for area residents.



Opportunities to support TAMU initiatives, students, and programming can be explored further by contacting the University's Office of Institutional Advancement at 956.326.2178.



DR. ANYANWU RECEIVES CATE AWARD FROM TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

A TAMU faculty member's exemplary and innovative work prompted his selection as one of only three statewide recipients of the Chancellor's Academy of Teacher Educators (CATE) Award of The Texas A&M University System.

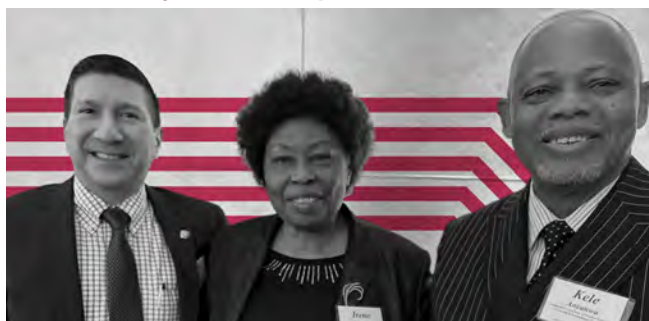
Dr. Kele Anyanwu, associate professor of Educational Programs, College of Education, was notified of his selection by TAMU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs **Dr. Claudia San Miguel**.

The Award recognizes individuals and university teams making exemplary contributions to quality, innovation, and continuous improvement in teacher preparation. Dr. Anyanwu was presented with his Award by former **Chancellor John Sharp** and members of the A&M System Board of Regents at the Chancellor's Century Council 2025 Annual Meeting.

Dr. San Miguel said Dr. Anyanwu's contributions to teacher preparation at TAMU have been impressive.

"Dr. Anyanwu's work with Mixed Reality Simulation replicates real-world classroom challenges that allow the professor to take corrective action in real time to enhance students' learning and preparedness. This is a bold and innovative approach with measurable impact," Dr. San Miguel observed.

Read more at go.tamui.edu/anyanwu-cate.



DR. BERKTAY CONDUCTS RESEARCH EXAMINING HISTORY OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS IN COLOMBIA

TAMU assistant professor of History **Dr. Asligul Berkta**y recently traveled to Colombia to undertake archival research and community-engaged scholarship on the experiences of enslaved and freed Africans in Latin America.

Her visit to Cartagena and Barranquilla, two Caribbean port cities, was part of larger-scale research projects on the legacy of slavery and race relations across Latin America and the African diaspora.

In Cartagena, she worked at the Archivo Histórico de Cartagena de Indias (Historical Archive of Cartagena de Indias), examining historical records documenting the lives

of enslaved people, including estate inventories, bills of sale, and censuses sharing the free/unfree status of individuals.

In Barranquilla, she held activities with *Plataforma Caníbal* and *Fundación Casa de Hierro*, gave a radio interview for Universidad del Norte, and met with doctoral students at Universidad Simón Bolívar.

"My work contributes to the larger effort of accessing the lives of Africans and their descendants," she said.

Dr. Berkta's Colombian field experience will contribute to two articles and a historical monograph she is preparing.

Read more at go.tamui.edu/berktay-colombiaresearch.



Dr. Asligul Berkta

TAMU FACULTY DR. GALLARDO HONORED AS 1ST ICPEL JAMES BERRY EMERGING SCHOLAR

A TAMU faculty member's national and international contributions to educational leadership, data-driven research, and instructional motivation earned her the first International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership (ICPEL) James Berry Emerging Scholar Award.

Dr. Cynthia A. Gallardo, College of Education assistant professor of Educational Administration, was named the recipient of the honor recognizing early-career scholars whose research, teaching, and service demonstrate exceptional promise and impact in educational leadership.

Her research explores how principal preparation, instructional leadership, and dual enrollment influence educational opportunity and outcomes across diverse learning environments in South Texas and the U.S.–México border region.



Dr. Cynthia A. Gallardo

Dr. Gallardo said she was honored to earn the Award.

"I'm incredibly honored and elated to receive this recognition and be the first ever-recipient. Through data-driven research, reflection, and service, I'm committed to the field and preparing future school leaders who lead with purpose, think critically, and are driven by a deep sense of responsibility to those they serve," she said.

A dedicated scholar-practitioner, Gallardo serves as Principal Investigator of Project UP (Unveiling Perspectives), a TAMIU University Research Development Award-funded initiative examining dual enrollment across six school districts.

Read more at go.tamui.edu/gallardo-icpelaward.

DR. KOZACKZA AWARDED YALE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES RESEARCH GRANT

TAMIU associate professor of English **Dr. Adam Kozaczka** was recently awarded a highly selective **Lewis Walpole Library Travel Grant** by Yale University Libraries.

The grant supported a fully funded two-week research residency at Yale's prestigious Lewis Walpole Library in Farmington, CT.

Dr. Kozaczka's research, "Pinkerton's Racism and the Law-Literature-Architecture Axis in Walpole and Scott," focuses on 18th Century antiquarian John Pinkerton, whose arguments outlined early theories of racial and ethnic differences in the British Isles.

"The project seeks to discover how Pinkerton's ideas were influenced by the ongoing popularity of antiquarian research in an era still quite early in the history of writing history and of doing ethnographic research," Dr. Kozaczka said.

He emphasized the scholarly significance of the study.

"Much of this is significant because it follows new scholarship from scholars like UCLA professor **Saree Makdisi**, who contends that in the 19th Century, discussions of what we now understand as race applied just as much to perceived differences among Europeans as it did to perceived differences between white and non-white people," he said.

The Lewis Walpole Library, a department of the Yale University Library since 1980, is an internationally recognized research collection in British 18th Century studies.

Read more at go.tamui.edu/kozaczka-walpolegrant.



Dr. Adam Kozaczka

DR. MEHNAAZ MOMEN RECEIVES FULBRIGHT U.S. SCHOLAR AWARD



Dr. Mehnaaz Momen

Longtime TAMIU professor of Public Administration and author **Dr. Mehnaaz Momen** was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program Award to Canada for the 2024-2025 academic year from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Dr. Momen, professor in the TAMIU College of Arts and Sciences,

department of Social Sciences, was the Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Digitization and Democracy, based in McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
(more on page 19)

Dr. Momen's research project focused on the acculturation processes that Bangladeshi immigrants residing in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area of Canada undergo as they utilize technology to create a comfort zone in navigating between their Bangladeshi and Canadian identities.

Momen said she was honored to receive the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program Award.

"I am thrilled to receive the Fulbright Scholar Award," Dr. Momen said, "I have been dreaming about such an opportunity and consider this an honor to have represented TAMIU and Laredo in Canada."

With her Fulbright selection, Momen joins an elite group of current, former, and retired TAMIU faculty members who have been Fulbright Scholars.

LIBRARY DEAN BLAZES PATH TO EDITING, NOMINATION AND PUBLICATION



Dr. Colleen Harris

By day, **Dr. Colleen Harris**, dean of TAMIU's Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library, directs the 1.2 million-plus-item Library for staff, students and faculty.

But after-hours Dr. Harris is blazing a prominent path in poetry creation, editing, and publication. She's signed contracts for three poetry books: *The Light Becomes Us* (Main Street Rag, 2025), *Toothache in the Bone* (Boats Against the Current Press, 2025), and

Babylon Songs (First Bite Press, pending 2026 release).

A fourth unpublished poetry book manuscript, *Tell the Bees*, was longlisted for the International Beverly Prize for Literature. In mid-April Harris was appointed a poetry editor at Iron Oak Editions Press, working with that team to publish new books of poetry from other writers.

Harris revealed that poetry has long been a passion, but admitted finding time to write is often a challenge.

"It's not easy with such an active Library team and campus, but creative writing clears my head and makes me feel better, the way going to the gym does for other people. I get most of my writing in at night...usually in the corner of my couch at the window overlooking my neighborhood, with my laptop, curled up like a croissant with terrible posture," she revealed.

Find out more at go.tamiau.edu/harris-poetry.

TAMIU EARNS PRESTIGIOUS RCU AND OCU CARNEGIE DESIGNATIONS

The prestige of a TAMIU degree took on additional luster this past Spring as the University learned it was one of just 33 nationwide to earn both Research College & University (RCU) and Opportunity College & University (OCU) designations in the new 2025 Carnegie Classifications.

Both Carnegie designations elevate the University's research and teaching and affirm its daily mission. They are considered a crowning achievement and a source of tremendous pride for TAMIU's gifted faculty who daily drive discovery in and out of the classroom.

The designations strongly affirm TAMIU's solid foundational and service support to students and its tight focus on their success.

The Carnegie Classification® is the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education began developing a classification of colleges and universities to support its program of research and policy analysis in 1970. It published its first framework in 1973 which is now updated every three years to reflect changes at colleges and universities.

Find out more at go.tamiau.edu/carnegie25.

PROFESSOR PRESENTS RESEARCH ON A.I. TEACHING INTEGRATION IN SPAIN



Dr. Heriberto Godina

A TAMIU faculty member traveled to Spain in July to present his innovative research at the 32nd International Conference on Learning hosted by the Universidad de Granada.

Dr. Heriberto Godina TAMIU assistant professor of Curriculum & Instruction in the College of Education presented "*Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Teacher Education en la Frontera: Enhancing*

Literacy Instruction and Ethical Frameworks for Culturally Diverse Teacher Candidates."

Dr. Godina's research explores the transformative use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) to support teacher candidates, particularly in linguistically and culturally diverse communities.

His work centers on bridging technology with educational equity in the U.S.-México border region. His research highlights how A.I. tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly can be used ethically and effectively in preparing future educators for certification, including the rigorous Science of Teaching Reading exam mandated in Texas.

"Participating in the Conference allowed me to share our local experiences in South Texas with a global audience," Godina said.

His presentation built upon findings of his 2025 publication, "*Empowering Teacher Candidates of Mexican Descent: Adapting A.I. for Science of Teaching Reading in the Southwestern United States*," in the International Journal of Technologies in Learning.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/godina-aiconf25.

TAMIU, UTSA PROFESSORS RELEASE BOOK ON SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL STATISTICS



Dr. Roberto Heredia



Dr. Richard Hartley

Cambridge University Press recently released a new book on statistics authored by **Dr. Roberto Heredia**, TAMIU Regents Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Psychology and Communication, and **Dr. Richard Hartley**, Professor and Chair of the University of Texas at San Antonio's (UTSA) Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Titled "Social Behavioral Statistics," the book introduces statistical principles and examples from social and behavioral research and incorporates jamovi, a free open-source statistical software.

Dr. Heredia said the authors' goal was to bring statistics closer to readers.

"Our goal was to do away with the mindset that statistics is difficult and that they are not good at math," he said.

Dr. Hartley added, "Our vision was to write a book with the student in mind that simplified the learning process; a book written in simple and clear language to help students understand critical statistical principles."

The textbook emphasizes doing and understanding statistics through practical applications.

Dr. Heredia has been a TAMIU faculty member since 1998.

Dr. Hartley, a former TAMIU faculty member, has served at UTSA since 2008.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/heredia-socialstats.

FACULTY MEMBER CO-AUTHORS PUBLICATION ON DRUG POLICIES IN SOUTH AMERICA, EUROPE

A recently co-authored publication by a TAMIU faculty member focuses on the experiences of Argentina, Portugal, and Uruguay in their efforts at depenalization, decriminalization, and legalization/regulation of recreational drugs.



Dr. Nilda M. García

The publication, *Drug Policy Revolutions: Scenarios, Impacts, and Trajectories*, was written by TAMIU associate professor in Social Sciences **Dr. Nilda M. García**, with **Dr. Sebastián A. Cutrona**, senior lecturer in Criminology at Liverpool Hope University.

Their work presents the successes and challenges in approaching impacts on drug use, public health, and security, while debunking myths surrounding flexible drug policies.

"The findings in our book debunk some myths around the adoption and implementation of more flexible drug policies. We observe that softening or removing criminal penalties did not transform any of the three country case studies of this book into a 'drug paradise,' as prohibitionists often contend," García said.

The publication offers policy recommendations and lessons from the historical trajectories and reforms in addressing drug consumption and harms, she added.

García is also the author of *Mexico's Drug War and Criminal Networks: The Dark Side of Social Media* and other peer-reviewed publications.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/garcia-revolutions.

MELANIE WORSLEY BECOMES FIRST GRADUATE OF TAMIU'S INAUGURAL PHD PROGRAM IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In Fall 2024, a TAMIU student crossed the Commencement stage as the first graduate of the University's Ph.D. program in Criminal Justice.

Dr. Melanie Worsley, associate provost and professor at Washburn University, completed her doctoral work online from Kansas while working full-time.



Dr. Kate Houston and Dr. Melanie Worsley

Her dissertation focused on intimate partner violence from the perspectives of victims-survivors, perpetrators, victim advocates, police officers, psychologists, educators, and legal professionals.

"I believe the lived experiences of individuals within the Criminal Justice system are essential for further exploration," Dr. Worsley said, "My research will focus on highlighting these experiences, with the goal of amplifying their voices."

Dr. Kate Houston, TAMIU associate professor of Psychology and Worsley's dissertation chair, described the research as groundbreaking.

"Melanie's research represents a new direction," she said, "While there will always be a place for big data in this field, research which elevates and gives voice to the lived experiences of those who have engaged with our justice system at times of crisis is increasingly a focus of a modern scholarship in Criminal Justice."

TAMIU's PhD in Criminal Justice program aims to produce graduates who have the theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and marketable skills to assume high level leadership roles in various areas of Criminal Justice practice.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/drworsley-grad.

SOUTH KOREAN TAMIU EXCHANGE STUDENTS SHARE THEIR STORIES

Four university students from Sungshin Women's University in Seoul, South Korea, embarked on a six-month student exchange at TAMIU this Spring.

Their experience has been marked by new friendships, cross-cultural interaction, and personal growth. They said Laredo and

TAMIU welcomed them to a warm and embracing community where peers treated them with respect and genuine interest.

Eunji Ok, a senior Kinesiology major, joined the program to learn English and experience U.S. student life before graduate school.

"What impressed me most at TAMIU was that my friends treated me without prejudice and genuinely wanted to get to know me," she said.

Minji Oh, a junior majoring in Service Design and Engineering with a focus on UX/UI, found her time inspiring and transformative.

"Collaborating with students and faculty from diverse backgrounds was a huge motivator for me," she said.

Gahee Yang, a senior Computer Engineering major, said the program broadened her perspective.

"Even a short period abroad can be a turning point in one's life," she said.

Yerin Kwak, a senior in Political Science and International Relations major, said she wanted to step out of her comfort zone and understand the wider world.

"I want to help the world move in a better direction," she said.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/sk-studentstories.



Exchange students from South Korea's Sungshin Women's University studying this semester at TAMIU include from left to right: Minji Oh, Eunji Ok, Yerin Kwak, and Gahee Yang.

TAMIU ESPORTS TEAM MAKES HISTORY, COMPETES IN NAT'L GRAND FINALS

TAMIU Esports student-athletes made history after traveling and taking part in the 2025 Grand Finals LAN tournament for the National Association of College Esports (NACE).

For the first time in the program's four-year history, the TAMIU's Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 (CoD) team traveled to nationals in Orlando, FL.

The team, seeded in the Top 8 nationally in CoD, included the talents of varsity gamers **Angel Galván**, **Joshua García**, **Abdiel Meléndez** and **Diego Torres**.

The team defied odds by making the Grand Finals, attributing much of their success to their team connection, chemistry and their constructive efforts in supporting one another.



Abdiel Meléndez, Joshua García, Angel Galván and Diego Torres

University Rec Sports director **Robert Garza** praised the University's Esports Team for their relentless dedication and hard work as they advance to compete on the national stage.

"We were thrilled to have our Call of Duty team representing TAMIU in the Top 8! This was our first time participating in a Tournament of this magnitude, and we were confident that our team would make the University proud," Garza said.

Previously, TAMIU Esports teams have made significant strides within collegiate gaming, including finishing fourth in the nation during the Call of Duty: Vanguard Starleague National tournament.

Learn more about Esports at TAMIU at go.tamiau.edu/esports.

TAMIU SHARES STREAMLINED FUTURE WITH INNOVATIVE STUDENT INCUBATORSHIP PROJECTS

A glimpse into a future of streamlined mobile applications were presented by the **TAMIU Academic and Industry Readiness in Engineering and Science (TAMIU AIRES)** Incubatorship Project students.



Three student teams presented their applications.

The ReferredBy Team, mentored by **Dr. Elvira Terán**, assistant professor, School of Engineering, focused on a team application that

connects customers with service providers. The platform aims to streamline service transactions, helping small businesses thrive in local communities.

The Wild Snap Team, mentored by **Dr. Vijayan Sundararaj**, assistant professor, College of Arts and Sciences, crafted a mobile application empowering citizens to record ecological data. It includes images, species details, and location data to contribute to research and environmental monitoring via a shared data platform.

The CrossView Team, mentored by **Dr. Mustafa Al Lail**, associate professor, School of Engineering, created an application providing a holistic resource for accurate border-crossing traffic information. Key features include A.I.-enhanced wait time analysis, toll-collection service management, and enhanced accessibility through CarPlay/Android Auto and mobile widgets.

TAMIU AIRES was a five-year grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Title V to provide academic support services and career readiness training.

TAMIU STUDENTS SHINE AT AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY NATIONAL MEETING



Ten TAMIU undergraduate chemistry and biology majors attended the American Chemical Society (ACS) Spring 2025 National Meeting held in San Diego, CA.

The ACS National Meeting is one of the largest scientific gatherings in the world, attracting thousands of scientists, educators, and industry leaders. Students attended technical symposia, interacted with graduate school recruiters, and explored diverse careers in science.

Participating students included **Edgar Alan Canales Alvarez**, **Victoria García**, **Carolina Lomelín**, **Rojelio Lujano**, **Evelyn Martínez**, **Karla Páez**, **Jema Rebeles**, **Mirelys Velez Rivera**, **Vivian Rodríguez** and **José Sánchez**.

(more on page 23)

Dr. Kameron Jorgensen, TAMIU associate professor of Chemistry, research faculty member, and advisor for TAMIU's ACS Student Chapter, led the group, accompanied by **Dr. Alfred Addo-Mensah**, TAMIU professor of Chemistry.

Seven students presented original research during the Undergraduate Research Poster Session, sharing projects conducted under the mentorship of TAMIU faculty. Six student leaders delivered an oral presentation highlighting the achievements of the ACS Student Chapter, which culminated in the group receiving a **Commendable Student Chapter Award**.

"Our students not only demonstrated academic excellence but also modeled leadership, professionalism, and scientific curiosity," said Dr. Jorgensen.

To learn more about LSAMP at TAMIU, visit the LSAMP program page at go.tamtu.edu/lsamp.

TAMIU STUDENTS CONDUCT SERVICE ABROAD IN COSTA RICA

This summer, TAMIU students traveled internationally for service through the University's newly established Service Abroad program.

Ten TAMIU students, four graduate and six undergraduates, embarked on an excursion to Costa Rica, where they engaged in hands-on community service experience and cross-cultural exchange.

The life-changing initiative took place June 21 – 27, as the group visited San José and Sarapiquí, where they partnered with the Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation to support various community-focused initiatives in La Carpio, one of the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the region.

There, TAMIU students assisted the Foundation's food bank delivery services, participated in reading sessions with children and youth, led icebreaker games, and hosted educational cultural activities.



Additionally, students volunteered at the Centro de Cuidado y Desarrollo Infantil, a local daycare center serving children from low-income families.

Elisa Saldivar, a University graduate student and program participant, noted the importance of the Service Abroad program.

"Volunteering in Costa Rica was a powerful experience that deepened my connection with locals and my TAMIU team. Our projects and donations made a meaningful impact on the children we served and inspired me to continue volunteering both locally and globally," said Saldivar.

TAMIU'S DR. THOMPSON, THREE GRAD STUDENTS PRESENT AT TSHA MEETING



Dr. Jerry D. Thompson

Dr. Jerry D. Thompson, Regents Piper Professor of History at TAMIU, has taught history first at Laredo College and then TAMIU for 56 years, encouraging hundreds of students to pursue graduate degrees.

At the Annual Meeting of the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) in Houston, held **Feb. 27 – March 1, 2025**, three of his top graduates joined their current and former TAMIU professor for a session he chaired, "Political, Economic, and Social Leaders on the 20th Century South Texas Borderlands."

Zach Nora completed his master's in history at TAMIU and is now a PhD student in History at the University of Oklahoma. Nora presented his TAMIU Master's thesis on "King Petrol: Oliver Winfield Killam and the South Texas Oil Boom."

Diana Medina-Rendón, who finished her TAMIU Master's thesis last Spring, presented, "Abraham 'Chick' Kazen and the Creation of the Kickapoo Nation Reservation" in Eagle Pass. Rendon holds a bachelor's in history and two additional graduate degrees, all from TAMIU.

Grace Maciel, who also finished her TAMIU Master's thesis last Spring, presented "Heinrich Portscheller: Famous Only by Design."

Dr. Thompson said he was gratified to share the TSHA stage with current and former students.

"All three are among some of the best graduate students I have ever had," he offered, "This TSHA session I chaired offered a fascinating exploration of South Texas history," said Thompson.

TAMIU CELEBRATES UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH DAY

At TAMIU, student research extends beyond the classroom, blending curiosity with rigor to explore questions that matter far beyond campus. To celebrate this love of curiosity, TAMIU hosted its Undergraduate Research Day (URD) last April.



Some 24 student poster presentations were shared at URD. The event emulates the statewide URD at the Capitol in Austin.

This year, University Honors Program and undergraduate researcher **Minelly Camargo** represented the University with her work, Glucose is Required for Polyamine-induced Filamentation in *Candida albicans*. She was guided by **Dr. Ruvini U. Pathirana**, assistant professor of Biology.

"I think research is amazing because when you look at what really is – it's a combination. I imagine it's kind of like a puzzle. Everyone has a little puzzle piece. Every little puzzle piece is a new piece of research," said Camargo.

TAMIU Q.E.P. director **Cihthalli G. Pérez** highlighted the importance of undergraduate research.

"Engaging in research provides students with an opportunity to engage in hands-on inquiry while working directly with real-world challenges to gain skills and knowledge that go far beyond the classroom," said Pérez.

Undergraduate Research Day at TAMIU is made possible through the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, which helps enhance

student learning and transfer their knowledge outside the classroom, including toward their future careers.

Learn more at go.tamiau.edu/qep.

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING STUDENTS DEVELOP LPHD DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

TAMIU software engineering students from TAMIU's School of Engineering showcased bold digital solutions for critical needs identified through a remarkable partnership with the Laredo Public Health Department (LPHD).

The goal of the partnership was to further improve LPHD internal processes and offer innovative solutions to advance delivery of community services. By working closely with public health professionals, software engineering students gained hands-on experience in developing impactful solutions.

Among services projects addressed were a vital records database, a community resource finder, interactive health maps and a map of the LPHD complex; event management and feedback software, a volunteer scheduling system, a healthy recipe database, and an internal course management software.

Dr. Mahmoud T. Khasawneh, TAMIU director of the School of Engineering, praised the partnership.

"I want to express our sincere gratitude to the City of Laredo and the LPHD for their commitment to engaging with our students. I would also like to commend our **Dr. Mustafa Al Lail** for his outstanding mentorship of our students through the semester.

"This partnership is a powerful example of how universities and communities can work together to achieve meaningful outcomes. This is clear evidence of what happens when academic excellence meets civic engagement," Dr. Khasawneh said.

Laredo Public Health assistant director **Erika Martínez** concurred.

"This collaborative represents a significant step in bridging technology and public health, reinforcing LPHD's commitment to innovation and service excellence," she concluded.

Learn more about the students' projects at go.tamiau.edu/lphd25.



2025 MARKS EXCELLENCE, GROWTH FOR TAMIU DUSTDEVIL ATHLETICS

The 2025 calendar year was one of excellence and continued growth for TAMIU Dustdevil Athletics, with record-breaking performances, academic success, and national recognition across multiple programs.

In January, the men's Cross-Country team was honored as part of the 2024 NCAA Division II All-Academic Team, setting the tone for a year defined by achievement on the field and in the classroom.

February saw 98 Dustdevil student-athletes named to the Lone Star Conference (LSC) Fall 2024 Commissioner's Honor Roll, recognizing their dedication to academic success.

Spring brought historic performances and postseason honors for several programs. In April, Women's Golf's **Margret Nyamukondiwa** recorded the program's best-ever finish at the LSC Championship Tournament, tying for third place. TAMIU Cheer and Dance continued to shine on the national stage, with Cheer placing fifth and Dance earning an impressive second-place national finish at the NCA/NDAA Collegiate Nationals in Daytona Beach, FL.

May proved to be a standout month for Dustdevil Athletics. Softball's **Kennedy Griego** capped off an outstanding season by being named to the Second Team All-LSC, earning the LSC Gold Glove Award at third base, and securing a spot on the NFCA Division II South Central Region Second Team. She went on to make national history, becoming an NCAA Division II Rawlings Gold Glove Award recipient at third base—marking the second consecutive year a Dustdevil earned the prestigious honor.

Men's Golf delivered a championship performance by winning the PGA WORKS Collegiate Championship, led by standout **Elvis Steen**, who finished second individually. Success continued with TAMIU's **Juan Monckeberg** an individual competitor at the NCAA Division II

West/South Central Regional. Women's Golf secured a 10th-place finish at the NCAA Division II West Regional. On the diamond, **Abiam Medina** (Baseball) earned Third Team All-LSC honors. In coaching news, **Casey Fowler** was hired as the next head coach of TAMIU Women's Basketball.

The Dustdevils continued to excel academically in June - July, with 80 athletes named to the Spring 2025 LSC Commissioner's Honor Roll and the Volleyball program earning the 2025 AVCA Team Academic Award. In August, TAMIU hosted its annual Fall Kickoff Party at Golondrina, celebrating the new sports

season, while 46 student-athletes were honored with D2 ADA Academic Achievement Awards for their outstanding academic performance.

Fall competition brought some remarkable athletic milestones.

In September, freshman **Ian Rono** shattered two school records, running the men's 4-mile in 18:45 at the UIW Invitational and the 8K in 23:26.6 at the Mountaineer Meet. The department hosted the second annual Mob Fest, energizing campus spirit and student engagement. October continued the momentum as Rono captured the individual title at the LSC Championship Meet and was named USTFCCCA Division II National Athlete of the Week. Also featured was one of the department's marquee traditions—Maroon Madness, celebrating Dustdevil pride and the basketball season kickoff.

At the end of October, director of Athletics **Griz Zimmermann** announced his retirement after 13 years of dedicated service to TAMIU. Under his leadership, the athletics program experienced academic success, community engagement and tremendous growth, leaving behind an inspiring and lasting legacy for future Dustdevils.

TAMIU Dustdevils Athletics also strengthened its staff in 2025, welcoming several new hires: **Marilyn Bautista** (Assistant Director, athletic development and external affairs), **Ana López** (assistant



Maroon Madness

athletic trainer), **ZaQuae Downton** (associate Volleyball coach), **Seth Yates** (associate Men's Basketball coach), **Norman Ramos** (associate Men's Soccer coach), **Carlos Ordaz** (associate Women's Soccer coach), **Jonathan Ramos** (head Strength & Conditioning coach), **Christian Piñeda** (assistant Men's Basketball coach), and **Carolina Mendez** (coaching assistant, Golf).

Throughout 2025 Dustdevil Athletics celebrated a culture of achievement, progress, and unity —continuing to raise the standard of excellence on and off the field.

Story by former TAMU Sports Information Assistant Director Caitlin Fowble.



Margret Nyamukondiwa



Kennedy Griego



Dustdevil Athletics Members join AD Griz Zimmermann to celebrate his retirement.



Elvis Steen



Abiam Medina



LC-TAMIU STEM CONNECTOR PROJECT BROADENS ACCESS WITH SCHOLARSHIPS

During a joint announcement in June, Laredo College (LC) and TAMIU unveiled new scholarship opportunities as part of their ongoing LC-TAMIU STEM Connector Project. This two-year federally funded initiative is designed to streamline the transfer process for STEM students and expand access to high-impact learning experiences.

Launched in 2023, the project represents a pivotal advancement in STEM education for the region. It was initially funded through \$963,000 in congressionally directed support secured by **Congressman Dr. Henry Cuellar**.

Led by Principal Investigator **Dr. Kenneth Tobin** of TAMIU in collaboration with LC's Director of Engineering, Design and Construction Management Technology **Dr. Alfonso Hinojosa**, the initiative has focused on aligning engineering curricula between LC and TAMIU, enhancing instruction in foundational computer science courses and implementing a vertically integrated academic framework to reduce time-to-degree.

A key highlight of the project is the introduction of scholarships specifically designed to support economically disadvantaged and first-generation students pursuing STEM fields aligned with NASA's mission. A total of \$124,000 has been allocated to fund these scholarships, with each eligible student receiving \$1,000 per semester. The program aims to award at least 31 scholarships each term.

Read More at go.tamtu.edu/stem-connector25.

LEDC STRENGTHENS LEADERSHIP WITH SANCHEZ SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS

This year, the Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) appointed two leaders from TAMIU's A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business to its Board of Directors.

LEDC Chairman **Ignacio Urrabazo, Jr.**, president and CEO of Commerce Bank, appointed **Dr. Luis Perez-Batres**, dean, and Radcliffe Killam Distinguished Professor of the Sanchez School of Business, as a voting member.

Dr. Daniel Covarrubias, director of the Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development, was named special advisor to the Board.

These appointments come at a pivotal time as Laredo solidifies its position as the largest port of entry in the Americas while reflecting TAMIU's expanding role in economic development, Dr. Perez noted.

"At the Sanchez School, we believe business education should be a catalyst for regional economic development," said Dr. Perez, "These appointments enable us to translate academic expertise into real-world impact, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable growth for Laredo and beyond," he continued.

Established in 1966, the LEDC serves as Laredo's primary private-sector liaison for new and expanding businesses. It is one of only 74 organizations nationwide accredited by the International Economic Development Council.



Dr. Daniel Covarrubias



Dr. Luis Perez-Batres

TAMIU RECEIVES \$400K THECB GRANT TO REDUCE MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

TAMIU received a \$400,000 grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) Minority Health Grant Program to help reduce mental health disparities among low-income adults in Laredo.

The two-year project will conduct robust data collection, targeted outreach, and workforce development.

The project is led by **Dr. John Kilburn**, professor of Social Sciences; **Dr. Cindy Lynn Salazar-Collier**, assistant professor of Nursing and Health Sciences, and **Dr. Adriana Blasco-Rubio**, instructional associate professor of Psychology and Communication, in partnership with the City of Laredo Public Health Department and Mid Rio Grande Border Area Health Education Center.

Laredo faces significant mental health challenges, including a 20% diagnosis rate of depression, frequent mental distress affecting 16.2% of residents, and limited access to services, according to project principal investigators.

"We are excited about being able to perform this study that will fill an urgent need in this region," Dr. Kilburn said, "This program works toward understanding how friends and family may offer support to those suffering."

The project will expand community outreach, screenings, literacy, and professional training to build sustainable mental health support.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/theqb400.

DR. CYNTHIA SOSA NAMED TCEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESIDENT

The Texas Computer Education Association has appointed TAMIU College of Education instructional associate professor **Dr. Cynthia Sosa** as president of its Board of Directors.

Dr. Sosa took office in April. She is the first Latina president from South Texas to hold the office since its inception in 1980.

TCEA is a nonprofit, member-based organization that has supported the use of technology in education since 1980. Its primary focus is on integrating technology into the PreK-16 environment and providing members with cutting-edge knowledge and resources through conferences, online and print publications, workshops and collaborations between higher education and business.

Dr. Sosa joined the TAMIU faculty in 2018. She holds her Doctor of Education from Concordia University-Portland and a Master of Science and Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, both from TAMIU.

NEW LECTURE SERIES TARGETS COMMUNITY, ENGAGEMENT

TAMIU's new lecture series aims to rekindle the spirit of community by fostering meaningful engagement.

The TAMIU Community Engagement Lecture Series was launched this October with an inaugural speaker with national visibility in civic leadership, fiscal responsibility, public administration and urban growth -- **Sheryl Sculley**, former San Antonio City Manager.

Sculley presented her talk, "From Challenges to Change: Redefining Growth for Our City - A Talk with Sheryl Sculley," before an appreciative and varied audience of business and community leaders and undergraduate and graduate students in the Student Center Ballroom.

The lecture, free and open to the public, was generously sponsored by **David Killam**. To expand access, it was livestreamed for students enrolled in fully online programs.

Sculley's address was followed by an energetic Q&A session moderated by **Dr. Andy Hillburn**, associate professor, TAMIU College of Arts and Sciences, department of Social Sciences.

Sculley retired as city manager of the City of San Antonio in April 2019 after 14 years as CEO and a total of 45 years in public service in local government management in Kalamazoo, MI; Phoenix, AZ, and San Antonio. She is the author of "Greedy Bastards: One City's Texas-Size Struggle to Avoid a Financial Crisis."



Sheryl Sculley

TAMIU PROFESSORS PRESENT WEBB COUNTY RESEARCH



Dr. Peter Haruna, center, and Dr. Mehnaaz Momen, right, Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) Public Administration professors, present research findings and recommendations to the Webb County Commissioners Court. They were joined by TAMIU MPA graduate student and research assistant Victoria Alfaro (left).

A research report prepared by TAMIU faculty providing insight from a “Structural and Administrative Analysis of Webb County (2000-2020)” was presented to members of the Webb County Commissioners’ Court this summer.

Researchers **Dr. Peter F. Haruna**, professor of Public Administration and director of the Master of Public Administration Program, and **Dr. Mehnaaz Momen**, professor of Public Administration, prepared the Report.

Dr. Momen said the Report project had three main objectives.

“One... to conduct a structural administrative analysis and address the challenges related to the County’s continuous growth and development; two, to identify gaps in understanding such a vast, rural County, especially regarding various stakeholders and processes in its governance and resource management, and three, to extract the lessons learned and provide suitable recommendations that we hope will improve governance,” Momen explained.

Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina concurred with the value of the Report.

“On behalf of Commissioners Court, I [...] extend our heartfelt thanks to TAMIU, Dr. Peter F. Haruna, Dr. Mehnaaz Momen, and all key players whose dedication made this comprehensive research report possible,” Judge Tijerina said.

HISTORY CONFERENCE FEATURES TAMIU GRAD STUDENTS, ALUMS

The first-ever Alliance for Texas History (ATxH) Conference at Texas State University in San Marcos included a session presentation made up entirely of TAMIU alums.



Zachariah Nora, Rebecca Romero, Dr. Deborah Blackwell and Pablo Rangel

Presenting at the conference were **Zachariah Nora**, TAMIU MA in History/Political Thought alum and current PhD. student at the University of Oklahoma; **Pablo Rangel**, MA in History/Political Thought alum and former College of Arts and Sciences writing consultant, and **Rebecca Romero**, MA in History/Political Thought alum and University College academic advisor.

Serving as a moderator for the session was **Dr. Leah LaGrone**, assistant professor of History at Weber State University... who also holds a Bachelor of Arts from TAMIU.

Commenting at the session was **Dr. Deborah Blackwell**, TAMIU associate professor of History. She noted the need for these opportunities to further rigorous historical research through critical thinking practices.

“To understand the past, we need to be able to appreciate both its differences from our own times and the ways in which that past influences our lives,” said Dr. Blackwell.

TAMIU, LC FORGE SHARED 'PATHWAYS' STREAMLINING TRANSFER



Juan J. Castillo and LC president Dr. Minita Ramirez present the signed Pathways launch.

Laredo's higher education giants, Laredo College (LC) and TAMIU, have always shared a commitment to success through educational opportunities.

Now, they're fully aligned in a shared process dubbed "Pathways" that helps LC students navigate a streamlined transfer to TAMIU, ensuring no credits are wasted.

LC has historically been the greatest source of transfer students to TAMIU.

Both entities joined to map out stress points students were facing and determine course-by-course transferability and better ways to align. Each examined internal processes that could be optimized and streamlined to focus on a mutually beneficial transfer experience for students.

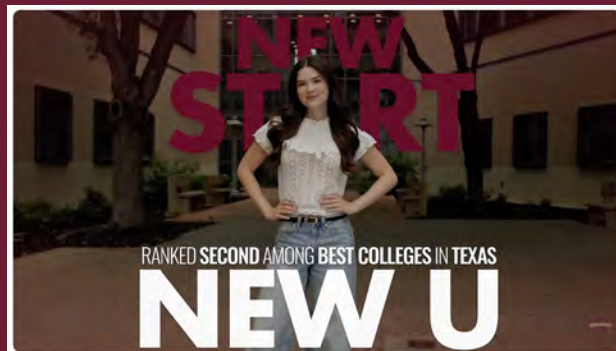
LC students choose a Pathway with their LC advisor based on their major. The Pathway provides a vital framework for future advising and shows exactly which LC courses transfer seamlessly to their TAMIU degree program. The Pathway is shared with TAMIU prior to their transfer.

A dedicated website provides clear information on Pathways and other TAMIU transfer resources are available online on its Transfer Student Resource Page including a Transfer Calculator. Find out more at go.tamiau.edu/pathways25.



We've captured some unforgettable moments that showcase our vibrant campus and the inspiring stories of our students.

Click the links below to watch these videos on the University's official YouTube channel. Don't forget to like, share, and subscribe!



go.tamiau.edu/see-u-at-tamiau



go.tamiau.edu/chronicles



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HAVE KAYAK? WILL PADDLE FOR TAMIU! OUTDOOR ADVENTURES LAUNCHES

You might say there's some different modes of transportation at TAMIU now.

In fact, there's also an expanded sense of the great outdoors at your fingertips as well.

It's all part of TAMIU Outdoor Adventures (TOA) a new program that sees students kayaking their way across Lake Casa Blanca International State Park or camping there to embrace an education that celebrates the great outdoors.

Funded by a competitive grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department TOA hopes to foster a lifelong connection to nature through camping, kayaking, and outdoor education, said **Juan G. Pérez**, TOA program coordinator and associate director of TAMIU Rec Sports, which oversees the program.

"Through TOA we want to connect varied and underrepresented communities to the outdoors by providing accessible and impactful

recreational opportunities. We'll do so through activities like camping, kayaking, and outdoor education, focusing on welcoming all and encouraging skill-building," Pérez explained.

TAMIU vice president for Student Engagement **Rosalinda García** concurred and said TOA offers opportunity and promise for all.

"We're thrilled to have TAMIU Rec Sports receive this TPWD grant to support TOA. This will provide broad, multi-season opportunities for our students and community to immerse themselves in nature. Participants share experiences that promise to enrich lives, foster environmental stewardship, and promote healthy lifestyles right here...close to campus and home," García observed.

The new TAMIU Outdoor Adventures program is offered at no cost to participants, she noted.

For details, visit go.tamtu.edu/adventures.

See an award-winning overview video at go.tamtu.edu/oa-video.

NEW TAMIU VIDEO TRACES PURSUIT OF UNDERGRAD DEGREE



Gina De la Miyar González and Tanya González de La Miyar

A TAMIU video offered insight into earning an undergraduate degree at TAMIU through the perspective of Spring 2025 graduate **Tanya González de La Miyar**, Distinguished Student Scholar for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

In "TAMIU Graduation Chronicles," produced by the Office of Public Relations, Marketing, and Information Services, González shares her path to graduation. Her story is anchored by childhood memories on campus and involvement in TAMIU community outreach efforts like Discover TAMIU – events that her mother, **Gina De la Miyar González**, a TAMIU graduate ('99, '01) and former associate vice president for Student Success, helped lead.

"I was lucky to have found this beautiful campus as a baby. My mom worked as a TAMIU administrator...long before I was a student I was roaming around campus," González said.

González earned a Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a 4.0 GPA. At TAMIU, she was active in the TAMIU National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, studied abroad in Japan, and completed a clinical practicum.

This Fall, she began her pursuit of a Master's in Speech-Language Pathology at UT Health San Antonio.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/gradchronicles-tanya.

Watch the Video at go.tamiau.edu/tanyagrad-vid.

TAMIU'S MPA PROGRAM MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH CELEBRATION



In October, TAMIU's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program commemorated its 25th Anniversary with a campus event recognizing its impact and alumni contributions to public service in the Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library's Helen Richter Watson Gallery.

Accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs

and Administration (NASPAA), the TAMIU MPA was created for mid-career professionals working in the nonprofit and public sectors.

Since its 1999 launch, the program has evolved in curriculum, enrollment, faculty strength, and productivity, said **Dr. Peter Haruna**, program director and professor of Public Administration.

The program has earned national recognition by graduating 250 professionals and maintaining NASPAA accreditation.

"Initially, our students were primarily Webb County residents," Dr. Haruna said, "Over the years, we've seen growing interest from across South Texas and other states. What began as a traditional in-person program has become fully online, allowing us to better serve working professionals," he said.

Graduates now serve in roles including city managers, treasurers, directors, administrators, and school officials.

The celebration included reflections on the program's history and recognition of distinguished alumni.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/mpa25anniversary.



Dr. Peter Haruna and Dr. Christopher Maynard join City and UISD officials.

TAMU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

TAMU's Alumni Association kicked off the Fall semester by awarding 10 well-deserved scholarships to currently enrolled Dustdevils during an August Alumni meeting.

This year's Alumni Association Endowed Scholarship recipients were **Arnold Cazares, Jazmin Flores, Mindy García, Karen Martínez, Sara Montiel, Ximena Ríos, Francheska Rodríguez, Jorge Rodríguez, Daniela Sánchez Gomez, and Leslie Sánchez.**

Students were joined by family, friends, and Association members.

This year's awards were presented by **Luis Sánchez ('20)**, Alumni Association vice president, and **Christy Rangel Bryant**, Alumni Association secretary.

The Alumni Association supports the University's mission by inspiring alums to give back in various ways and hosts events throughout the year with the Office of Alumni Relations.

Since 2006, the University's Alumni Association has awarded **116 scholarships totaling \$128,000** to deserving students.

Scholarships were awarded to undergraduate students who applied via **TAMU's Fund\$Finder**, an interactive search tool for scholarship opportunities.

To receive the Scholarship, students must meet the University's scholarship criteria, be enrolled full-time, and hold an overall GPA between 2.0 – 3.0. Eligible students should also meet the federal guidelines as a financially disadvantaged student.

Individuals interested in joining the Alumni Association can visit **alumni.tamui.edu**.

Learn more here at **go.tamui.edu/alumni10**.



The TAMU Alumni Association awarded 10 scholarships to deserving students recently. Students and members of the Alumni Association pictured left to right, are Arnold Cazares, Sara Montiel, Jazmin Flores, Christy Rangel Bryant, Luis Sánchez, Mindy García, Jorge Rodríguez, Daniela Sánchez Gomez, Francheska Rodríguez and Leslie Sánchez.

'17 ALUM MOVES FROM FRENCH STUDENT-ATHLETE TO TECH-SAVVY FATHER AND BUSINESS LEADER

Amid the quiet hum of a high-tech workspace, where algorithms are written and data flows freely, there's a man whose journey to success is anything but conventional. Once a fierce former athlete on TAMU soccer fields, he's traded cleats for code, and corner kicks for key performance individuals.



Former TAMU Soccer Player Tayeb Ahmadi has gone from playing on the pitch to leading in the boardroom.

Born and raised in France, **Tayeb Ahmadi's ('17)** journey is one of grit, love, and an unwavering drive to excel—on and off the field. Growing up, soccer was a way of life. Mornings were spent perfecting his touch, evenings to endurance drills, and weekends to matches determining more than game outcomes. His skill and discipline earned him a soccer scholarship to TAMU, where he pursued a degree in Systems Engineering.

His time at TAMU brought more than accolades and a diploma—it introduced him to the love of his life, Christie. Their connection at TAMU was immediate; 10 days after walking the graduation stage, they walked down a wedding aisle. They are now parents of a son, Mikail.

Ahmadi went on to earn a master's degree in Data Analytics from Penn State, deepening his understanding of how data can drive meaningful decisions. Today, he holds a leadership role at a growing tech company, combining his engineering mindset with a data-driven approach to solving complex challenges. His background as an athlete shines through in his leadership style: collaborative, motivational, and fiercely strategic.

He sees himself not just as a leader in business, but as a mentor for those navigating similarly complex paths...and he's very grateful for the opportunities TAMU presented.

"Laredo is a special place. I have met many individuals who have graduated and miss Laredo every day. The people are so welcoming. As someone who did not know Spanish when I arrived and struggled sometimes with English, I am now fluent in both," he notes.

From a soccer ball at his feet to a laptop in his hands, he continues to chase goals—only now, they look a little different.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/ahmadi-athlete.

Story by former TAMIU Sports Information Director Austin D. Childress

'15 ALUM GOES FROM SOCCER CAPTAIN TO SOCCER COACH AT TAMIU

For TAMIU women's soccer coach **Jovany Macias ('15)** the road to the sidelines started where it all began — under the scorching Laredo sun, wearing the same Dustdevil brand he still wears.

It's a full-circle moment years in the making. From soccer cleats to clipboards, captain to coach, student-athlete to mentor, his journey is proof that with heart, resilience, and vision, home can be both launchpad and legacy.



TAMIU Women's Soccer Coach Jovany Macias

"Everything the game teaches you — discipline, resilience, how to handle tough situations — it made me who I am today," Macias says, "TAMIU gave me that. And now I'm giving it back."

Coming to TAMIU wasn't just about soccer. It was about transformation.

As a student-athlete, he found himself surrounded not only by great coaches such as TAMIU's **Claudio Arias**, who has mentored so many... but great people — administrators, professors, and staff who fueled his success on and off the field. The experience lit a fire that's never gone out.

Today, that drives the culture he's creating. Discipline is the foundation of his leadership, but mental health, visualization, and self-care are also cornerstones — a nod to his own practices as a player.

"I used to envision myself scoring goals. Now, I try to help my players envision greatness in themselves," Macias noted.

Now, he's in charge of a program that helped shape his life, and the stakes feel both deeply personal and profoundly professional.

Macias is writing TAMIU soccer's next chapter with the same energy, pride, and hunger he had as a student-athlete. And he's not doing it alone.

Brother José and sister Valeria both wore Dustdevil colors. His proposal to now-wife Alexandria happened on the TAMIU pitch — at a 2015 match against West Texas A&M. They now share a son, Kristiano.

"This University took a chance on me. Coaching here — it's not just a job; it's a dream come true. All my career goals were to lead me back here... right here. At TAMIU. And I'm not done yet," he confirmed.

Read more at go.tamiau.edu/macias-athletics.

Story by former TAMIU Sports Information Director Austin D. Childress



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 and Jesus Gaytan
 Jessica Palacios '03
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 Bea and Mario Pena '78
 Elias G. Perales, Jr. '21
 Alfredo Perez '89, '09
 Jessica '09 and Jose Ibarra, Jr.
 Sergio A. Perez '14
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 Rio Grande International
 Study Center
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 Angel Robles '16, '21
 Mariana Rodriguez '21, '24

Miguel A. Romero, Jr.
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 Jesus A. Sanchez-Perales '05
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 Armando Villarreal, Jr. '01
 Webb County District Attorney
 Domestic Violence Unit
 Zapata Lions Club



A GIVING STORY FROM A PROUD 'READING THE GLOBE' AND TAMIU ALUM

Selina Gutiérrez, ('15) credits TAMIU's popular Reading the Globe Program with opening her eyes to a whole new world.

"The Reading the Globe Program was the first opportunity I had as a young adult to travel internationally and step out of my comfort zone. The experience not only broadened my vision of the world educationally, but also culturally," Gutiérrez recalled.

And Gutiérrez's experience set the stage for what would become an enduring family connection to Reading the Globe.

"I am grateful for this ongoing program and the opportunity that was also given to my brother, **Carlos Fuentes**, and cousins, **JC de los Santos** and **Rene Garza**," she explained.



Gutiérrez said these shared experiences prompted her decision to give to and support Reading the Globe during Giving Days.

"I look forward to continuing to support TAMIU for the great education I received, the excellent mentors, and the foundation that set me on a successful path today," she said.

Her Path:

Gutiérrez left TAMIU in May 2014 to start dental school at then-UT Health San Antonio (now UTSA) through TAMIU's Dental Early Acceptance program that allowed her to substitute her fourth year of undergraduate studies with her first year of dental school.

She graduated from TAMIU in May 2015 and attended dental school through 2018. She completed an Advanced General Dentistry Residency at UT Health San Antonio to further her clinical skills.

Her Present:

She has since purchased her own dental practice in San Antonio, Inwood Family Dental, and offers a range of in-house dental services from Botox for TMJ relief, dental surgery, IV dental sedation, Invisalign, cosmetic dentistry and more.

She currently serves as a Director for the Board of the San Antonio District Dental Society, and is a member of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

This year, she was nominated for the 2025 Texas New Dentist of The Year by the Texas Academy of General Dentistry. She previously served as a Director for the Board of the San Antonio Christian Dental Clinic and as a past-President for the Greater San Antonio Hispanic Dental Association.

She and husband Ramón enjoy spending time raising their one-year-old daughter, traveling, and visiting with family, especially their grandparents.



CHILE 2012

Scholar's Circle (\$1,000 +)

Dr. Deborah L. Blackwell
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Dr. Jui-Chin Chang
Colleen S. Harris
Dr. Nereu F. Kock
Alejandro A. Martinez, Jr. '89
Dr. James G. O'Meara
Rosanne Palacios
Cordelia G. Perez '14
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University Partner's Circle (\$500 +)

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Juan Castillo
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Cynthia Y. Mendiola
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Dr. Claudia E. San Miguel '97, '99
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Dr. Patricia I. Abrego '85
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Michelle A. Begwin
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Sarai Costa
Daniel Covarrubias '07
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Dr. Stephen M. Duffy
Laura Elizondo '95
Abigail Fernandez '15
Anne R. Frey
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Pat Garcia
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Juan G. Garcia, Jr. '05, '07
Dr. Nilda M. Garcia, '06, '09
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Rosalinda Garcia
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Dr. Amit Ghosh
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Dr. Peter F. Haruna
Gloria P. Hernandez
Mayra G. Hernandez '07
San Juanita Hernandez '03, '12
Yelitza M. Howard '11
Dr. Nicholas L. Hudson
Alma V. Jasso Chavez '02
Dr. Adam S. Kozaczka
Dr. Narim Lee
Scott E. Libby
Dr. Runchang Lin
Dr. Kevin D. Lindberg
Patricia G. Lopez
Nayeli Lopez-Diaz
Dr. Jose C. Lozano
Santiago Marina '18, '20
Elena Martinez '93
Dr. Gilda Y. Martinez '04, '08, '12
Dr. Jessie M. Mena
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Dr. Aaron L. Modic
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Amelia Palacios '08, '11
Dr. Ruvini U. Pathirana

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Juan G. Perez '13, '19
Keaton J. Powers '18, '21
Rene G. Prado '02, '11
Jerry Quintero '97
Melisa R. Rangel '95, '08
Damaris Rivera '06, '22
Michelle L. Rodriguez '03
Elizabeth Rubio
Yezmin D. Salazar
Gloria Z. Sanchez '05, '09
Miguel A. Saucedo '05, '09
Dr. Filiz E. Shine
Dr. Vijayan Sundararaj
Jessica P. Tamez
Dr. Ajith Venugopal
Linda V. Villarreal
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Dr. Ruby A. Ynalvez

Maroon & Silver Circle (\$50 +)

Mika S. Akikuni '02
Stephanie L. Alderete
Kele Anyanmu
Mariana Barberena '08
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Rosario Benavides '12, '14
Denisse Botello '12, '14
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Roberto Trevino '95
Carlos A. Vallarta
Azeneth Vazquez '25
Sonia L. Vela
Juana E. Villagran
Charles A. Whitfield '87
Georgina Zamudio '09

**Denotes deceased*

'DARK MATTER' SHINES A LIGHT ON PARTICLE PHYSICS WITH SPECIAL LECTURE SPONSORED BY PHILANTHROPIST BENAVIDES

A world-renowned authority on particle physics presented a special lecture at TAMIU this October that drew back the curtain on the mysterious world of Dark Matter.

Dr. Timothy R. Andeen, associate professor of particle physics at the University of Texas at Austin, presented "The Search for Dark Matter: Collision Course – Particle Physics on the Energy Frontier" to an overflow crowd at the TAMIU Center for the Fine and Performing Arts Recital Hall.

The special lecture was made possible through the generosity of **Memo Benavides**, longtime TAMIU partner and Laredo philanthropist who welcomed the crowd to the lecture and helped introduce Dr. Andeen.



Dr. Andeen said he enjoys sharing the fascinating world of particle physics.

"I'm always excited to share the new surprises that researchers from Texas are uncovering looking at the smallest building blocks of the universe. This is a great time in particle physics as we're developing powerful particle colliders and detectors and finding ways to apply our discoveries to enhancing everyday lives," Andeen explained.

Andeen conducts experimental searches for new particles and interactions and investigates electroweak symmetry breaking through his research. His research in experimental particle physics is focused on searching for exotic new particles using the ATLAS Detector at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, while improving its sensitivity through new instrumentation.

Find out more at go.tamtu.edu/darkmatter25.



Left to right, Memo Benavides, Dr. Timothy R. Andeen, Rosanne Palacios, and Rick Pauza.



Diamond Society
(\$10,000,000 +)

Sue* and Radcliffe* Killam and Family
Maria J. and A. R. Sanchez, Jr.
and Family
Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust

Platinum Society
(\$1,000,000 +)

Belia R. Benavides and Family
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Gold Society
(\$500,000 +)

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Mercy Health Center

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(\$250,000 +)

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Garza-Robles
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TG
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(\$100,000 +)

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Consulate General of Mexico
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Drs. James DeBruin and
Dana Matthews
Doctors Hospital Auxiliary
Doris* and Isaac Epstein
Falcon International Bank
Helene Fuld Health Trust
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Cristina and Radcliffe Killam, II
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Dr. Edmund L. King*
Laredo Daybreak Rotary Club
Laredo Medical Center Gift Shop
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Mrs. Nora Muñoz Leal
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Los Caballeros De La Republica Del
Rio Grande Inc. c/o WBCA
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Rosanne Palacios
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Richer Family
Sandia National Labs
Frank M. Staggs, Jr.
Raul C. Staggs
Rob and Bessie Welder
Wildlife Foundation
Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.
Women's City Club
Audrey and Carlos M. Zaffirini, Jr.

Pewter Society
(\$50,000 +)

American Chemical Society
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(\$25,000 +)

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Zahara Caravan
Aramark Corporation
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Jo Emma P. and Edward L. Sherfey, Jr.

Sony USA Foundation
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 Loan Corporation
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 Trellis Company
 VOS-MITA
 Winn Exploration, Co.
 Josephine P. and Fernando Zuniga, Jr.
 and Family

**Denotes deceased*

GIVING DAY 2025



Giving Day 2025 was a landmark success for TAMU, with the highest number of donors in the tradition's history participating in the philanthropic celebration. Designed to mobilize as many Dustdevils as possible, the event brought together student programs and University leaders for social media collaborations, scholarship creation, and fundraising tips to connect our students to our expanded Dustdevil network.

Six challenge blocks encouraged friendly competition, where DustyMOTOR, Student Nurses' Association, and TAMU Esports earned top honors and donation matches. Thanks to our Alumni, friends, and supporters this Giving Day set a new standard for impact and engagement at TAMU.

TRIBUTES

IN MEMORY OF

Dr. Pablo Arenaz*
 Isabel Carreon Pineda
 Severiano Carreon Pineda

Louie Casares
 Juan "J. J." Castillo
 Barbara Garza

Mercurio Martinez, IV
 Olga Mireles
 Maria Luisa Amelia Reséndez Salinas

IN HONOR OF

All the students
 The Alzheimer's Walk
 Jan Aspelund
 Cash Bailey
 Cash A. Bailey
 Michelle Begwin
 Sandra Bryand
 Faith Butler
 Daisy Cantu
 Larizza Cantu
 Tina Cerda
 Clan ATRX
 Derrick Crooks
 Viviana De la Cruz
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 Sandy Sendas
 Maura Suarez
 Evelyn M. Summers
 TAMIU Ballet Folklórico
 Dr. Tariq Tashtoush
 The students
 Olivia Varela
 Sophia Vega
 Marco Zapata
 Renato Ramirez, for his recognition by Voces
 Griz Zimmermann

WALK OF FAME

TAMU's Walk of Fame is located on the south end of the native stone water fountain that graces the plaza in the center of campus. Purchase of the inscribed bricks is great way for students, organizations, parents, alumni, and community supporters to be part of a permanent tribute that supports TAMU.

Sergio Barrera '24
 Cesar L. Cantu '76
 Erika L. Cavazos '24
 Julio C. Dominguez '21, '24
 Madison R. Eckols '22
 Ana K. Garcia '19, '21
 Mary Esther and
 Stanley C. Green, PhD
 Rolando Hernandez '25
 Ana V. Hinojosa '24

Gema Ibarra '25
 Clara L. Lockridge '72, '75
 Dr. Jose Lozano
 Diana P. Medina-Rendon '97, '04, '25
 Angelica '01, '10 and
 Rolando Michelangeli '98
 Dr. Linda G. Mora '75
 Marisol and Juan A. Orozco '99
 Jubrina N. Pace '25
 Barbara S. Perez '22, '24

Etelvina I. Perez '72, '76
 Lydia P. Perez '91
 Matthew R. Perez '20
 Sherlie Polo '25
 Rodolfo H. Rendon '25
 Karyme A. Rodriguez '25
 Deisy B. Sanchez '24
 Linda Thienel '72, '76
 Valentin Vela '22

2025 FRESHMAN CLASS (1,457 LARGEST IN TAMIU'S HISTORY)

87% NEW Freshmen from local High Schools

13% from out-of-town high schools

110 from different high schools

97% full-time students

17% of this class graduated in Top 10% of their high school class

44% graduated in Top 25% of their class

only 3% with undeclared major

Top Majors for Freshmen:

Nursing
Business Administration
Criminal Justice

FINANCIAL AID

85% of students received financial aid

\$93M+ financial aid awarded

FALL ENROLLMENT BREAKDOWN

(UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE ENROLLMENT)

9,141 **TOTAL ENROLLMENT**

4,462 College of Arts and Sciences

1,853 A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business

1,788 College of Nursing and Health Sciences

1,038 College of Education

102,500+ Semester credit hours generated

Top 3 undergraduate majors:

- Nursing
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice

62% Undergraduate students take an Online Course

Top 3 graduate majors:

- Business Administration
- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Curriculum and Instruction

87% Graduate students take an Online Course

OVERALL STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

62% WOMEN | **38%** MEN

94% identify as a minority | **97%** are from Texas | **77%** are from Webb Country

Our student body:

30 U.S. States and Territories represented | **38** Countries represented

Undergraduates:

80% full-time students | **21** average undergraduate age

Graduates:

77% full-time students | **35** average graduate age

Doctoral:

39 average age | Youngest/Oldest Student **13** yrs **76** yrs

39K+ Graduates worldwide

BRAGGING RIGHTS

TAMU RANKED
#2 FOR LOWEST
NET PRICE IN THE
SOUTH

Washington Monthly Magazine's 2025
College Guide



TAMU RANKED #3 AMONG NATION'S
BEST FOUR-YEAR, HISPANIC-SERVING
COLLEGES

Washington Monthly Magazine's 2025 College Guide



TAMU RANKS #4
FOR BEST VALUE IN
TEXAS

Niche

TAMU NAMED #4
MOST AFFORDABLE
COLLEGE IN TEXAS

Research.com

Research.com

TAMU RANKED #8 AMONG TEXAS TOP
TEN UNIVERSITIES



WalletHub College & University
Rankings 2025

TAMU EARNS PRESTIGIOUS
DESIGNATIONS FROM CARNEGIE
CLASSIFICATION

2025 Carnegie Classifications



As you can see, TAMU is no stranger to having its
share of spotlights!

As a top-ranked institution of higher education committed to being
Accessible, Affordable and Exceptional, we live for this stuff!

Track our Accolades online on the dedicated website,
Bragging Rights at go.tamtu.edu/accolades.



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