



Julieta and Frank Staggs Academy
of International and STEM Studies

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Julieta & Frank Staggs
Academy of International and
STEM Studies
TAMIU-ISD

2025-2026
Student Handbook

Table of Contents

Article I. Introduction

Section 1.01 Welcome Message.....	1
Section 1.02 Administrative Directory	2

Article II. Texas A&M International University

Section 2.01 The University.....	4
Section 2.02 Our Mission	4
Section 2.03 Our History	4
Section 2.04 University Core Curriculum.....	5
Section 2.05 Core Curriculum Requirements.....	5

Article III. Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies

Section 3.01 History	7
Section 3.02 Mission Statement	7
Section 3.03 Application Requirements	7
Section 3.04 Honor Code	8
Section 3.05 Academic Probation.....	8
Section 3.06 Extracurricular & Elective Eligibility.....	8
Section 3.07 Staggs Academy National Honor Society Eligibility.....	9
Section 3.08 PSAT and SAT	9
Section 3.09 Recommendation for Success.....	9
Section 3.10 Research Opportunities	10
Section 3.11 Schedules	10
Section 3.12 Textbooks.....	10
Section 3.13 Violations of Academic Dishonesty.....	11

Article IV. Student Policies and Procedures

Section 4.01 Class Day	13
Section 4.02 Staggs Academy Seminar.....	13
Section 4.03 Signing In.....	13
Section 4.04 Student Dress Code.....	13
Section 4.05 Lunch	14
Section 4.06 Absences	14
Section 4.07 Classroom Conduct.....	14
Section 4.08 Academic Integrity.....	15
Section 4.09 Academic Dismissal or Withdrawal.....	15
Section 4.10 University GPA	15
Section 4.11 Grade Point Average Policy.....	16
Section 4.12 Academic Support Structure.....	16
Section 4.13 Office of Counseling and Services and Disability Services	16
Section 4.14 Health Services	16
Section 4.15 Pregnant and Parenting Students.....	17
Section 4.16 Anti-Discrimination/Title IX.....	17
Section 4.17 Emergency Notification	18
Section 4.18 ID Cards	18

Section 4.19 Program Charge	19
Section 4.20 Study Abroad	19
Section 4.21 Summer School or Coursework from another Institution.....	19
Section 4.22 Student Code of Conduct.....	20
Section 4.23 Student Life.....	20
Section 4.24 TAMIU Student Handbook.....	20
Section 4.25 Transportation	21
Section 4.26 Transcripts	21
Section 4.27 University Parking	21

Article V. Academic Achievement – District Policies

Section 5.01 Student Academic Records.....	22
Section 5.02 Grade Point Average.....	22
Section 5.03 Calculation.....	22
Section 5.04 Prior Course Work.....	23
Section 5.05 AP Exams.....	23
Section 5.06 Transcript Committee.....	23
Section 5.07 Dean’s List and Honor Roll.....	23
Section 5.08 Grade Point Levels.....	23
Section 5.09 Top Ten Graduates/Highest Ranking Student.....	24
Section 5.10 Dropping a Course.....	25
Section 5.11 Abandoning a Course.....	25
Section 5.12 Retaking a Course.....	25
Section 5.13 Courses outside of TAMIU	26

Appendix A Student Discipline Level System.....	27
Appendix B Frequently Asked Questions.....	30
Appendix C Julieta & Frank Staggs Biographies.....	33

Dear Staggs Academy Student:

Welcome to the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies!

On behalf of the entire staff of the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy, I am honored to welcome you to our esteemed institution. This unique and innovative learning opportunity is designed to accelerate your education and provide a seamless pathway to your post-secondary education. We are committed to academic excellence and cultivating a positive learning environment for all our students.

As an Academy student, you are required to follow the University and Academy regulations. It is your responsibility to become familiar with all the policies and procedures outlined in the TAMIU Student Handbook:

Texas A&M International University Student Handbook

This information is available on TAMIU's and the Staggs Academy's Web page.

<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>

**Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies
Student Handbook**

This information is available on the Staggs Academy's Web page.

We hope that this handbook serves as a helpful resource throughout your time here. It contains valuable information about school policies, procedures, and resources that will help you succeed academically and socially.

Congratulations on your decision to enroll in the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies. We look forward to a wonderful school year and providing an academic environment that supports collaborative educational opportunities that fuel student development, leading to a lifetime of accomplishment.



Mayra L. Peña, Ph.D.

Superintendent, TAMIU Independent School District

Director, Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies

Administrative Directory



Mayra L. Peña, Ph.D.

Director/Superintendent

mayra.pena@tamiu.edu | 956.326.2860

Dr. Mayra L. Peña currently serves as the director of the Julieta and Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies and superintendent of Texas A&M International University I.S.D. Prior to this work, Dr. Peña served as Director of Field and Clinical Experiences/Instructional Assistant Professor in the College of Education. Dr. Peña holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M Corpus Christi, a master's degree in Bilingual Education from Texas A&M International University (TAMIU), a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. Dr. Peña holds certifications in Bilingual/ESL Spanish grades (PK-6), Elementary Self-Contained Grades (PK-6), Principal (EC-12), and Superintendent (EC-12).

Previous to her work at TAMIU, Dr. Peña served in both teaching and administrative roles in Texas public school districts. Dr. Peña was a classroom teacher with Laredo Independent School District. She also served as a Curriculum/Staff Development Resources Specialist with LISD at which time she also served as an adjunct professor in the College of Education prior to joining TAMIU full-time. Dr. Peña is dedicated to the Laredo community and is actively involved in The Laredo Rotary Club as an acting board member and president 2023-2024 year as well a member of the Laredo Federal Credit Union Board of Directors.

Naiely M. Saldaña

Counselor

naiely.saldana@tamiu.edu | 956.326.2862

Naiely Martinez-Saldaña is the Counselor for the Staggs Academy. Mrs. Saldaña joins us with expertise in the dual credit curriculum, advising, counseling, and mentoring realms. Previously, she served as the Associate Director for the Office of Recruitment and School Relations at TAMIU. During her tenure as Associate Director, Mrs. Saldaña worked closely with the Laredo Early College High School



and served students in a widely similar scenarios such as the ones our students face. With over fifteen years of experience in higher education, Mrs. Saldaña is a strong advocate for student success. Through her position, she oversees the academic progress and performance of the students. She is also responsible for our chapter of the National Honor Society.



Anna Castillo

Student Services Coordinator

anna.castillo@tamiu.edu | 956.326.2864

Anna Acevedo-Castillo is the Student Services Coordinator for Staggs Academy. Mrs. Castillo holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Rehabilitation Services with a concentration in Deaf Studies from the University of Texas Pan-American (UTRGV). Through her position, she organizes & coordinates all activities associated with student development. Mrs. Castillo also assists the Director & Counselor in the areas of recruitment, admissions, scheduling, and college readiness activities.



Erika Valadez

Administrative Associate III

erika.valadez@tamiu.edu | 956.326.2860

Erika Valadez is the Administrative Associate for Staggs Academy. Ms. Valadez holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Multi-Disciplinary Studies from Texas A&M International University. She coordinates all office activities and provides support to the principal, counselor, and student services coordinator.

Texas A&M International University

THE UNIVERSITY

Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is an international University, poised at the Gateway to Mexico. It serves as the cultural and intellectual hub of a vibrant multilingual and multicultural community. A Member of the Texas A&M University System, TAMIU is committed to preparing students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society. The University provides over 7,500 students with a learning environment anchored by the highest quality programs built on a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences. To fulfill its mission, the University offers a range of baccalaureate and master's programs and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Business. All programs focus on developing undergraduate and graduate offerings with a progressive international agenda for global study and understanding across all disciplines. On average students come to the University from over 30 different countries each semester, creating a diverse learning and living community.

OUR MISSION

Through instruction, faculty, and student research, TAMIU embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

OUR HISTORY

In August of 1970, students were accepted at what was the Texas A&I University Laredo. While initially a “center” under then Texas A&I University, this was the start of a legacy of higher education for South Texas. The focus then was to address a demand in teacher education and business disciplines. Texas A&I at Laredo was organized under the upper-level concept of higher education, offering junior and senior-level coursework, and providing a local bachelor's degree opportunity. The upper-level University later expanded to include graduate degree programs. In September 1977, the University became Laredo State University, and its “center” status was officially removed in 1987. As the University grew, its scope widened, and an expanded faculty were recruited to deliver new programs. The University became a Member of The Texas A&M University System on September 1, 1989, and its name changed to Texas A&M International University in 1993.

UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM

At TAMIU, the core curriculum introduces students to academic disciplines which form the foundation of human thought: mathematics, science, history, language, literature, the arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Our core is conceived to open new areas of learning for our students and to foster skills necessary for success in higher education. The students of the Academy will be required to complete the core curriculum. As they move through this course of study, students are encouraged to develop the capacity to articulate and support a thesis, think critically, synthesize their observations, to perceive analogies and relationships between seemingly diverse ideas and intellectual pursuits.

According to the Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, Subchapter S, core curriculum requirements must be met by every student pursuing a baccalaureate degree at TAMIU, regardless of his or her major. A specific course may be used to satisfy only one core requirement. Individual academic programs may require courses contained as options in the university core curriculum to satisfy degree requirements. Students may be required to take extra courses if they fail to select these courses. Students following the 2013-2014 catalog and thereafter will be required to complete all core requirements before earning 90 semester credit hours applicable to their chosen degree. A student failing to achieve this milestone will be required to complete any remaining core curriculum requirements in the next semester of enrollment.

Core Curriculum Requirements

<u>COMPONENT AREA</u>	<u>COURSE OPTIONS</u>	<u>SCH</u>
Communication (010)	ENGL 1301 and 1302 or 2311	6
Mathematics* (020)	College Algebra and above	3
Life and Physical Sciences* (030)	Courses can be taken from: ASTR, BIOL, CHEM, EPSC, GEOL or PHYS	6
Language, Philosophy & Culture* (040)	Courses can be taken from: ENGL, PHIL or SPAN	3

Creative Arts* (050)	Courses can be taken from: ARTS, MUSI, or THAR	3
History (060)	HIST 1301 and 1302	6
Political Science (070)	PSCI 2305 and 2306	6
Social & Behavioral Sciences* (080)	Courses can be taken from: ECO, GEOG, LEDR, PSYC or SOCI	3
Component Area Option I (090)	Life and Physical Science	1
Component Area Option II* (090)	UNIV 1201	2
Component Area Option III (090)	UNIV 1302	3
TOTAL		42

** ENGL 2311 may only be used to satisfy the second 3-SCH requirement of the Core Communication Component in programs housed in the School of Engineering.

NOTE: For specific core requirements, consult the appropriate degree program.

Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies

UNIVERSITY HISTORY

Located on the Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) campus, Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies (formally known as The Texas Academy of International and STEM Studies) was created by State Senator Judith Zaffirini and authorized by the 79th Texas Legislature in 2005. The Academy opened in August 2014 and welcomes academically gifted and highly motivated high school students with a challenging university-level curriculum.

MISSION STATEMENT

Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies offers an innovative and accelerated curriculum for motivated Texas high school students. These students will be able to excel in areas of mathematics, science, technology, engineering, and international studies. The Academy seeks to encourage students to develop the creativity, curiosity, reasoning ability, and self-discipline that lead to independent thought and action, and to aid students in developing integrity that will enable them to benefit society. Prospective students must meet all the following requirements for consideration:

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility

1. Be a Texas Resident
2. Attempt TSIA in Reading/Writing and Math
3. 10th-grade high school student with at least 13 credits toward Texas high school graduation plan.
4. Minimum high school GPA of 85 or 3.0

Automatic Admissions

1. Meet Eligibility
2. Complete Staggs Application
3. PSAT 10 Benchmark Met: 430 Reading/Writing and 480 Math
4. Passed TSIA- Reading/Writing and Math

**** Limited Spaces available, automatic admissions is based on a first come first serve with a complete admissions application subject to a waitlist if capacity is reached.**

Holistic Review

Students who do not meet PSAT 10 Benchmark or did not test for PSAT 10 will be reviewed holistically, including an interview.

Fifty (50) high school sophomores will be admitted every fall semester, and an additional fifty (50) students will be admitted every year after that, completing the total enrollment of 100 students.

HONOR CODE

As a member of an academic community, Staggs Academy students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education, be mature, self-directed, and able to manage their own affairs. Students unwilling to abide by these basic expectations will face academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Students are expected to share the responsibility along with faculty and staff to challenge and make known acts that violate the TAMIU Honor Code. As previously stated, Staggs Academy students are subject to university rules and sanctions. For more information on the Honor Code, please visit <https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students will be placed on Academic Probation at the conclusion of any long semester (fall or spring) when their institutional cumulative grade point average at Texas A&M International University falls below 2.0. Such students are encouraged to participate to the fullest in academic support programs and to seek academic advising. Students who have been placed on Academic Probation will be allowed to enroll for one additional semester in an attempt to achieve the required institutional cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better. Students are subject to suspension/dismissal if their institutional grade point average falls below 2.0 for two consecutive semesters. (See TAMIU handbook for additional information.)
<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>

EXTRACURRICULAR AND ELECTIVE ELIGIBILITY

Students are encouraged to explore extra curriculums within the university curriculum to enrich their studies. Courses that may count as electives or part of extracurriculars on campus are welcome. Eligibility to register in courses outside of their high school requirements, core curriculum, or degree plan is subject to approval by the Staggs administration. Students may enroll in courses for self-enrichment or electives if they maintain a 3.0 TAMIU GPA and have a 90% attendance rate with Staggs Academy.

GPA requirement also applies to officers and members of the Staggs Academy Student Council and National Honor Society.

University coursework and high school requirements are our priority and to ensure our students' success they must meet these standards. If a student falls below a 3.0 GPA at the end of the semester, they will not be allowed to enroll in elective courses until further notice.

STAGGS ACADEMY NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY ELIGIBILITY

Each prospective member of NHS must meet all the criteria of the Four Pillars of the National Honor Society (Academics, Service, Leadership, and Character) to be selected for membership. Each pillar is of equal value in the selection process. Staggs Academy students will be invited to join the National Honor Society Chapter, after the spring semester of their junior year if they meet the eligibility requirement of a 3.25 university GPA. Students are not granted automatic admissions to honor society based on previous membership of the NHS Chapter. Please refer to NHS Bylaws for more information about membership and policies.

PSAT, SAT AND ACT

All 1st-year students are required to take the PSAT exam during their first semester at the Academy. This is the exam used to identify National Merit Semi-Finalists, essentially all of whom become National Merit Finalists which qualifies them for prestigious scholarships. All Staggs Academy students will test in the Fall of their Junior year. If students took the SAT before enrolling in the Academy, it is recommended that this exam be taken again during the spring of the 1st year or the fall of the 2nd year. Students will be registering for both SAT and ACT college entrance exams beginning in the Spring of their Junior year. Registration materials are available online (www.collegeboard.com), at www.act.org, or in the Academy Office. Fee waivers for students are available upon eligibility.

RECOMMENDATION FOR SUCCESS

Because University courses are so much more intense, move at a very fast pace, and assume immediate recall of prior knowledge, students must adopt a much more rigorous study pattern than was required in high school. Grades for most courses are assigned based on only three or four exams and most courses require a comprehensive final examination. Classes meet either two or three times per week. Homework is assigned but not necessarily collected and graded. To be successful, it is imperative that Academy students:

- Attend all classes.
- Pay attention to the professor.
- Do all assigned work and study ahead.
- Prepare homework the same day that is assigned.
- Study each subject at least four days each week regardless of how many times the class meets per week (study each subject 30-90 minutes each day—studying is like taking medication in that you spread it out and don't do it all at once!)
- Form study groups and participate actively in the study sessions.
- Make use of the professor's office hours or other tutorial services provided for additional help—do not hesitate to ask for help and don't wait until the last minute.
- Questions or concerns must be known to the Principal or Counselor of the Academy.
- Begin to prepare for exams a week in advance.
- Rewrite class notes and outline text material
- Be disciplined and responsible for your learning.
- Enjoy learning.
- Get plenty of rest, physical exercise, and eat healthy.
- Continue to study during breaks between semesters and during the summer.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

A unique feature of Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies is that students will have opportunities to conduct research with university professors from Texas A&M International University.

SCHEDULES

The Academy counselor will assist students with registering for approved courses according to the core curriculum, degree plan, and high school graduation requirements. Students will meet regularly throughout the semesters for academic counseling and support. Students are eligible to take up to 30 SCH per year, no more than 60 for the two years in a combination of Fall and Spring.

TEXTBOOKS

The Academy provides textbooks for all courses during the academic year, this **does not** include summer sessions. These books must be returned at the end of the semester or at any time the student withdraws from the Academy. Textbooks are distributed only during the first two weeks of class, and it is the responsibility of the student to pick them up at the designated time. **Textbooks will not be issued to the student until all**

required forms have been submitted and the program charge has been cleared. Students are required to pay for lost, stolen, or damaged books and materials. Failure to turn in textbooks or payment for lost, stolen, or damaged books may place a hold on student records.

VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Violations of Academic dishonesty **may result in dismissal** from the Staggs Academy. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

Plagiarism – The act of passing off another person’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. It includes but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a “gift,” or obtaining, by any other means, another’s work for the submission as one’s own academic work. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- If, in a paper or assignment, you do not include material that you researched in a book, magazine, newspaper, and/or on the Web, you **MUST** cite the source.
- If you copy somebody’s test answers, take an essay from a magazine, and pass it off as your own, lift a well-phrased sentence or two and copy and paste them without crediting the author or using quotation marks, or even pass off somebody’s good ideas as examples of your own genius, you are committing plagiarism.
- If you borrow another’s term paper, hand in, as one’s own work, a paper purchased from an individual or off the Net, or submit, as one’s own, any papers from living groups, clubs, or organization’s files.
- If you hand in the same paper in more than one class without the permission of the instructor.

Cheating—an act of deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information related to an academic exercise. Examples include:

- Copying from another student’s tests, lab reports, computer files, data listing, logs, or any other type of report or academic exercise.
- Using unauthorized materials during a test.
- Consulting a cell phone, text messages, and programmable calculators with materials that give an advantage over other students during an exam.
- Using crib sheets or other hidden notes in an examination or looking at another student’s test paper to copy strategies or answers.
- Having another person supply questions or answers from an examination to be given or in progress.
- Having a person other than oneself (registered for the class) attempt to take or take an examination or any other graded activity. In these cases, all consenting parties to the attempt to gain an unfair advantage may be charged with an Honor Pledge violation.
- Deliberate falsification of laboratory results, or submission of samples or findings not legitimately derived in the situation and by the procedures prescribed or allowable.

- Revising and resubmitting a quiz or exam for regrading, without the instructor's knowledge and consent.
- Giving or receiving unauthorized aid on a take-home examination.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate the Honor Pledge.
- Signing in another student's name on attendance sheets, rosters, and scantrons.
- Submission in a paper, thesis, lab report, or other academic exercises of falsified, invented, or fictitious data or evidence, or deliberate or knowing concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin, or function of such data or evidence.
- Procurement and/or alteration without permission from the appropriate authority of examinations, papers, lab reports, or other academic exercises, whether discarded or used, and either before or after such materials have been handed to the appropriate recipient.
- Collaborating with others on projects where such collaboration is expressly forbidden, or where the syllabus states the default as being one's own work; and
- Using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, the contents of un-administered tests, a required assignment, or a past test which has, by the professor, not been allowed to be kept by their students.

Student Policies and Procedures

CLASS DAY

A typical class day is from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; however, there may be some classes that fall outside this daily schedule. Please note that during the day when you are not in class, you should use this time as “independent study” and use your time wisely to form study groups, complete reading assignments, and use any of the technology labs to complete assignments. Pellegrino Hall Rm 205 is your classroom that can be used anytime during the day for independent study. Classes taken outside the 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. day must be approved by the Director.

STAGGS ACADEMY SEMINAR

This course will serve as a local elective for Staggs Academy. A grade will be given for this course and will be included on the high school transcript and averaged into the GPA. Once a week, Staggs Academy Students will be assigned a time and date each semester designated as “homeroom.” During this time, attendance will be taken, announcements will be made and additional academic support such as PSAT prep, SAT prep, mentoring, etc. will be provided. Attendance to homeroom is **mandatory** and is handled by Staggs Academy Administration. Failure to show up to homeroom will result in points being deducted from the course. If for some reason you will not be attending homeroom you are responsible to contact the Staggs Academy staff and let them know **before** the meeting time.

SIGNING IN

Students are required to sign in every morning before 10 AM at the Academy office. Please note that even if a student’s first class does not begin until 11 AM, they are expected to be on campus every day by 10 AM. The extra time can be used to study or visit the tutoring/writing center. Repeated violations for failing to sign in before 10 AM **may be cause for dismissal**. An accumulation of five (4) unexcused tardies shall be equal to one unexcused absence and will be reflected in the Staggs Academy Seminar grade. A student is considered absent if not signed in by 12:00 pm.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

While there is no formal dress code, Academy students are expected to dress appropriately for school. A standardized dress code adheres to common practices of modesty, cleanliness, and neatness to dress respectfully within the acceptable standards

of the community and in such a manner as to contribute to the academic atmosphere, not detract from it. **Dress respectfully. UNACCEPTABLE to Wear includes:** Sheer, see-through shirts/blouses, tank tops, muscle shirts, halter-tops, or any shirt/blouse with exposure to backs or midriffs, t-shirts with inappropriate language or messages, and short shorts. Dress code violation may result in points being deducted from the Staggs Academy Seminar course.

LUNCH

The University offers a meal plan that helps make the most of your time on campus. Aramark provides a range of meal plans, flexible dining hours, and convenient locations near your classes that will allow you to grab a quick bite with your friends. You can also bring lunch from home and store it in the Academy refrigerator. Microwaves are also available. Students are asked to take belongings with them daily. The Academy refrigerators will be cleaned out weekly.

ABSENCES

Class attendance **is required**. Students are expected to be in class Monday through Friday. Students or parents must call to report absence(s) to the Academy Office before or on the day of the absence before 8:30 AM. Students will be asked to complete an Absence Report Form. **The Academy does not have the authority to grant excused absences from class.** Only the professor can approve class absences and should be consulted regarding assignments. Please note that more than **three absences** per semester may jeopardize a student's GPA and may put the student at **risk of dismissal** from the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies. It is the sole responsibility of the student to coordinate their absences with their professors. University faculty will not discuss those matters with anyone other than the student.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Students are expected to be alert, attentive, energetic, and eager to learn. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior or show disrespect to a professor in the classroom are subject to disciplinary sanctions.

Course Communication Guidelines (Netiquette)

There are course expectations concerning etiquette or how we should treat each other online. It is vital that we consider these values as we communicate with one another.

Visit [Instructional Technology and Distance Education Services' web page on Netiquette](#) for further instruction.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to be above reproach in all scholastic activities. Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies. “Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give an unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (See TAMIU catalog for more information)

<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL OR WITHDRAWAL

Student dismissal is based on approval from the Director and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Once joining the Staggs Academy, students commit to fulfilling the 2-year STEM program. Students may be dismissed from the Academy due to academic circumstances failing below 2.0 minimum GPA requirements or disciplinary infractions. Student voluntary withdrawal from the program before the 2-year commitment may result in the student being required to reimburse the Academy for any cost incurred from tuition, fees, and books from the semesters leading up to the withdrawal.

After one semester of probation, if a student fails to meet 2.0, the student will be placed on Academic Suspension at the university level and thus will be dismissed from the Staggs Academy. Any student seeking to voluntarily withdraw from the Staggs Academy must set up a meeting with the Staggs Academy administration. Formal written requests must be submitted and cleared through Academy administrators.

UNIVERSITY GPA

University grades are available online through UCONNECT, 7-10 days after finals are completed. Grades are obtained through the University Registrar’s office and uploaded to student records, available online. Unofficial transcripts and grades are available via UCONNECT.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE POLICY

High school GPA and Rank will be calculated by merging (former) high school credits and grades to their completion of Academy credits by the Staggs Academy counselor and transcript committee. Students will have access to their high school Rank/GPA through their Academy counselor. For further details on Course Levels, Class Ranking Policies, and GPA Calculations please refer to GPA Rank policies. (Appendix A)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STRUCTURES

The Staggs Academy, through the university, offers several academic support structures such as the **Writing Center** which provides free individual and small group tutoring sessions, peer review sessions, and writing workshops. **The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)** provides students with FREE academic support services focused on the development of critical study skills and learning strategies necessary for a successful academic career. For more information

<https://www.tamtu.edu/provost/ace/index.shtml>

OFFICE OF COUNSELING AND SERVICES AND DISABILITY SERVICES

The Office of Student Counseling and Disability Services works to promote a supportive learning community to empower all TAMTU students to be capable adults while adjusting to the challenges and transitions to University life and a multicultural setting. The services include individual, couple, and group counseling; mental health awareness programs; special events; and academic and facility accommodations for students with disabilities. (University Success Center Rm 138, (956) 326-2230)

As a student selected for the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies, you are expected to practice self-discipline and assume a shared responsibility for ensuring this development. We make every effort to assist you in managing your behavior by educating you about university policies. Violating school or university policy may subject you to dismissal from the Academy. (See Appendix B)

HEALTH SERVICES

The Office of Student Health Services offers a variety of services for the students of TAMTU. Since the students of the Academy are considered minors, the parents would have to sign forms allowing students to be treated at the clinic. By consenting, you are

providing permission for the student to receive all types of care/treatment available through Student Health Services. Available services include care and screenings by Registered Nurses and contracted staff (physician and Nurse Practitioner), diagnostic testing, provision of over-the-counter medications under physician protocols, provision of prescriptions as ordered by physician or Nurse Practitioner, women's health services (well-woman exams and family planning), sexual health education and prevention of sexually transmitted illnesses (male and female condoms), sexual health screenings, screenings provided by City of Laredo Health Department. *Please note parents can opt out of this service.*

PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions, is prohibited. A pregnant/parenting student must be granted an absence for as long as the student's physician deems the absence medically necessary. It is a violation of Title IX to ask for documentation relative to the pregnant/parenting student's status beyond what would be required for other medical conditions. If a student would like to file a complaint for discrimination due to his or her pregnant or parenting status, please contact the TAMIU Title IX Coordinator (Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, KL 159B, Laredo, TX 78045, TitleIX@tamiu.edu, 956.326.2265) and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office, U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600).

The University advises a pregnant or parenting student to notify his or her professor once he or she is aware that accommodations for such will be necessary. It is first recommended that the student and professor attempt to work out reasonable accommodations with each other. The Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement (Mayra Hernandez, mghernandez@tamiu.edu) can assist the student and professor in working out reasonable accommodations. If a student needs a leave of absence for a substantial period from the University, the University urges the student to consider a Leave of Absence as outlined in the Student Handbook. As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students toward graduation, TAMIU provides LOAs for students, including pregnant/parenting students, by the Attendance Rule and the Student LOA Rule. Both rules can be found in the TAMIU Student Handbook

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION/TITLE IX

TAMIU does not discriminate or permit harassment against any individual based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity in admissions, educational programs, or employment. TAMIU does not tolerate illegal discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation.

Under Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, sex discrimination includes all acts of sexual misconduct including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation; definitions for these terms can be found in the Student Handbook. For further information concerning the TAMIU Title IX procedures, please visit Appendix G of the Student Handbook and <https://www.tamiau.edu/compliance/Title%20IX.shtml>

If you would like to file a complaint relative to Title IX or any civil rights violation, please contact the TAMIU Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity/Title IX Coordinator, Lorissa M. Cortez, 159B Killam Library, 5201 University Boulevard, Laredo, TX 78045, TitleIX@tamiau.edu, (956)326-2265 and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office), U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810 (214)661-9600. Reports may also be made through the TAMIU electronic, anonymous reporting site located at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TexasAMIntlUniv&layout_id=40

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

TAMIU is enhancing security and support for the University community by launching SafeZone, a unified safety, communications, and well-being service.

SafeZone is a free mobile app for all University faculty, staff, and students.

Once installed, you can:

- Report safety concerns 24/7.
- Get connected quickly with mental health professionals if you are feeling depressed, anxious, or overwhelmed.
- Activate location sharing with authorities if alone and concerned for safety.
- Anonymously report incidents via text message, photograph, and location.
- Control your profile data and what is shared; location is only shared when you raise alerts, check in, send reports, or request assistance.

For more information concerning SafeZone registration, visit the following TAMIU link: <https://www.tamiau.edu/adminis/police/safezone/index.shtml>

ID CARDS

Each student will be issued a TAMIU photo Identification card, which must be always carried and presented to the Academy or University officials upon request. Lost identification cards must be replaced and there is a \$10.00 charge for the replacement.

PROGRAM CHARGE

Staggs Academy's Program Charge (the entire amount) is due on or before the first class day of each semester (fall/spring). We recommend that you pay the first installment in July/November and the second installment on the first-class day. Students are expected to pay all financial obligations to the University when due. *A late fee of \$100 will be assessed. **Students will be dropped from the courses after the 12th class day for non-payment and will have no recourse but to return to their comprehensive high school.***

(Note: Students on waivers are exempt from this policy)

For Students on Waivers: *Failure to maintain a cumulative 2.5 GPA at the end of each semester will result in a loss of waiver. Note: Application for waivers is only accepted during the Fall semester.*

STUDY ABROAD

At the end of senior year, students will be given an opportunity to attend a study abroad excursion. Studying abroad is a discovery process, a discovery of foreign languages and academics, countries, and cultures, but most importantly it is a discovery of yourself. Destinations will be determined during their tenure at the Staggs Academy. The cost of the program will be incurred by the student. TAMIU has a comprehensive offering of study abroad programs, financial aid, and student services to guide you in this process. Depending on funds, the Staggs Academy will also be offering scholarships. (Student must be 18 years old before the first travel date.)

SUMMER SCHOOL, AP CREDIT OR COURSEWORK FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION

Courses taken in the summer before the entrance to the Academy at a college or university will be taken for college credit and not for numerical value. Grades will not be used to contribute to Staggs Academy GPA or Rank, as coursework will come with a Letter grade only and no numerical value.

AP Exams

Any AP Exams taken will be considered for credit for the courses without a direct impact on GPA since no actual grade point average will be given for these credits.

Summer School at the Staggs Academy

All courses taken in the summer between junior and senior year for students of the Staggs Academy at an institution other than TAMIU will be taken for numerical value and college credit. Grades will be used to contribute to Staggs Academy GPA or Rank. Students will be responsible for submitting numerical grades to the counselor. If no documentation is provided, grades will be taken as follows:

A=90, B=80, C=70, D=60, F=50

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Upon registration, students automatically become members of the University community and assume full responsibility for proper conduct until their separation from the institution. Misconduct at the University is not tolerated as it diminishes the overall value of the degrees awarded by TAMIU. All students at the University should be involved in assuring the honesty of all students through their actions and deeds. Conduct standards at the University are outlined in writing to give students general notice of prohibited conduct. See Appendix A and TAMIU Code of Conduct.

<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>

STUDENT LIFE

TAMTU is rich in student life and the Office of Student Orientation, Leadership & Engagement (SOLE) provides many opportunities for you to grow as a young professional while unleashing your pride for our University. With over 90 student organizations, there is an opportunity for all students to find a co-curricular group that suits their academic or individual passions. Each year, SOLE helps to promote events such as Spirit Week, Resolutions Week, The Tree Lighting Ceremony, and the SOLE Speaker Series- an opportunity for students to become engaged in discussions on leadership with each new month. The New Student Orientation, also known as Dusty Camp, is also coordinated through SOLE. New students are introduced to important information regarding their transition to TAMTU.

TAMTU STUDENT HANDBOOK

It is the responsibility of the administration, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of and abide by all approved policies, procedures, rules, and regulations set forth by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents that are posted on the System home page or that are disseminated through handbooks and manuals to all component campuses that make up the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS). The TAMTU Student Handbook, which contains a description of the rights and responsibilities of all students enrolled at this institution, is posted on the University website for quick reference and easy access to students, faculty, and staff. TAMTU Student Handbook Link is posted below:

<https://www.tamtu.edu/handbook/>

TRANSPORTATION

The Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies does not offer transportation. It is the responsibility of the student (and parents/guardians) to get to and from the University.

TRANSCRIPTS

Students can request transcripts online for their university coursework. Staggs Academy High School Transcripts will be available upon request directly from the Administration. High School Transcripts will include their 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th year of coursework and scaled on a 100-point scale. University Transcripts are available upon request through the University Registrar's office.

UNIVERSITY PARKING

The campus parking zones are distinguished by two areas: **General Parking (free)** and **Reserved Parking (for Faculty and Staff)**. Students are allowed to park in the general parking area which does not require a permit. ***Each driver is responsible for properly parking his or her vehicle in the spaces provided. Vehicles parked improperly are subject to a citation.***

- **Parking Violations and Fines**

- On the street, parallel parking is permitted in the designated areas along West Road and East Road. On-street parallel parking is **not permitted** in any other areas of the University regardless of the **color of the curb**.
- Parking is NOT permitted at red curbed areas at any time.
- Parking is prohibited in all campus loading docks and driveways. Vehicles found there will be subject to fines, wheel locks, immediate towing, or impoundment.
- Vehicles displaying improper permits that park in the reserved parking area will be immobilized with a wheel lock device (Boot)
-

For additional parking information, please visit the following webpage:

<https://www.tamtu.edu/adminis/police/trfrgs.shtml>

Academic Achievement- District Policies

STUDENT ACADEMIC RECORDS

Staggs Academy student academic records consist of the student's prior coursework from their former high school (9th and 10th grade) as well as their dual credit grades for the courses completed at Texas A&M International University. Advising and registration is conducted by the Staggs Academy counselor to ensure high school graduation requirements are being fulfilled through their dual credit coursework.

All student coursework considered for credit towards a student's graduation plan will be calculated for GPA and rank purposes, regardless of the origin of the credits, for example, Homeschool, Private Entity, Public School District, Out of State district, etc. Equivalences will be conducted by the Staggs Academy counselor following the TEA Standards for Distinguished Achievement Graduation Plan in the State of Texas.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) provides certain rights for parents regarding their children's education records. FERPA gives these rights to custodial and noncustodial parents alike, unless there is a court order, legally binding document, or State law that specifically provides to the contrary. When a student reaches 18 years of age **or attends an institution of postsecondary education at any age**, he or she becomes an "eligible student," and all rights under FERPA transfer from the parent to the student. As such parents/guardians will be required to complete a student Information Release Authorization form in order to obtain student records.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All dual credit coursework completed while enrolled as a Staggs Academy student and completed at TAMIU shall be calculated on a 100-point system using their final semester averages. The maximum points for all grades will be 100 points and will be entered as whole numbers (Professor's discretion to round up or down).

CALCULATION

The TAMIU District shall include in the calculation of class rank and grades earned in the 9th and 10th grades of high school courses that are part of the graduation requirements. Student high school grades will be recorded as numerical grades in the counselor's office and further reviewed by Transcript Committee for accuracy. Numerical grades for all courses shall be assigned grade points described below for the purpose of obtaining grade point averages (GPA) and determining

class rank. These grades and class ranks will be used to provide direct information about the student's academic achievement.

PRIOR COURSE WORK

Courses taken during summer before the entrance to the Academy at a college or university will be accepted for college and high school credit, but grades will not be calculated in the Staggs Academy GPA or Rank calculations, as coursework will come with a letter grade only and no numerical value.

AP EXAMS

All AP Exams taken will be considered for college and high school credit without a direct impact on GPA since no actual grade point average will be given for these credits.

TRANSCRIPT COMMITTEE

A committee made up of university faculty and staff (Registrar, Instructional Technology, College of Education, University College, College of Arts and Science, etc...) will assist the Staggs Academy Administration in verifying GPA calculations.

DEAN'S LIST AND HONOR ROLL

The Dean's List requires a grade point average of 3.65 on all work attempted for a particular, semester, with a **minimum of fifteen hours completed**.

The Honor Roll requires a GPA of 3.50 on all work attempted for the semester with a **minimum of twelve hours completed**.

GRADE POINT LEVELS

The following weight grading and conversion scales will be used for grades 9-12 and students graduating in 2016 and thereafter. All high school grade point averages will be computed to 4 decimal points for rank determination. All university/dual credit courses on the high school transcript are awarded 1 credit for high school graduation requirements. All Staggs Academy coursework will be used as whole numbers on the student transcript. Numerical course averages will be obtained directly from university professors.

Courses shall be classified as follows:

Staggs Academy Course Levels		
Levels	Weight	Description
Level 1 (J)	1.00	Classes with a weighted 1.0 – all classes considered “regular” in destination (not GT, Honors, Pre-AP, AP, Dual Enrollment, or College)
Level 2 (Q, H)	1.05	Classes with a weighted 1.05 – all classes designated as GT, Honors, and Pre-AP by the sending district
Level 3 (P, U)	1.10	Classes with a weighted 1.10 – all classes designated as AP, Dual Enrollment, Concurrent Enrollment and courses are taken at the University. (Any courses taken at TAMIU will be considered weighted at 1.1)

CLASS RANKING EXCEPTIONS: Grade points for the following courses shall not be used in computing averages for the selection of top students or scholastic honors.

1. Courses are taken by correspondence.
2. Courses where credit was obtained through testing.

STUDENT RANK: A student’s class rank shall be determined according to the following:

1. Initial rank shall be determined after all grades are recorded starting with the Fall semester of the student’s Junior year.
2. All dual credit high school courses taken at TAMIU regardless of when they were taken will be calculated in the student’s GPA.
3. Students can take courses outside of TAMIU (LCC, Lone Star, etc.) for college credit. Credits obtained at another institution while enrolled in Staggs Academy will not count toward your GPA Average.
4. Courses taken before admission to the Academy will be honored by their GPA on the student’s former transcript and weight indications.

TOP TEN GRADUATES/ HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

Class ranking shall be determined by averaging all grades earned for high school credit through the Fall of their senior year. The grade point average shall be computed and carried out to the third decimal place.

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian shall be the eligible senior with the highest and second highest grade point average carried out to the 3rd decimal point who have completed a Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished program.

The top ten percent of graduates including Valedictorian and Salutatorian are announced at the end of the Fall of their senior year. A student must be continuously enrolled in the same district high school for 4 semesters preceding graduation to be eligible for top ten graduate recognition and Valedictorian and Salutatorian honors. If a tie occurs for the following titles, TAMIU institutional GPA will be used to break the tie.

DROPPING A COURSE

Dropping a course: Students are expected to complete all courses for which they were registered. Students are not able to drop a course, so we ask them to be mindful of the courses they select each semester. If students are having difficulty with a class, we expect them to take full advantage of the academic support structures provided to them by the Academy. (Writing Center, Tutoring Center, Library, Counseling, etc.).

ABANDONING A COURSE

Students are expected to complete all courses for which they were registered. If a student abandons a class or fails the class because he/she did not attend classes as required, he/she may be required to reimburse the Academy for tuition and textbook of the class they failed. If a student is having difficulty with a class, the expectation is to communicate with the Academy administration for support and take full advantage of academic support structures provided to them by the Academy. (Writing Center, Tutoring Center, Library, Counseling, etc.).

Students with a D or F are required to retake the course for high school credit. The new academic grade will be replaced on the transcript once the course is retaken and completed.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the Academy before the end of the Academic year may be required to reimburse the Academy for all registration fees.

RETAKE A COURSE

A passing grade is considered a 70-grade point average or above; students with a D or F are required to retake the course for high school credit. If the student fails the course, they are expected to pay out-of-pocket expenses for retaking the course. Failure to retake failed courses may result in a delay in high school graduation.

Students wishing to retake a course over the summer to improve a grade of a C or better will be allowed to retake it for credit if it is taken at TAMIU. Students who wish to retake a course in the summer will be responsible for tuition, fees, and books. The new numerical grade will be used for GPA calculations. As TAMIU policy indicates, the last grade will stand for GPA purposes.

TAMIU Catalog Policy: Repetition of a course: If a student repeats a course that may not be taken for additional credit, it is the policy of the University to count as part of a student's cumulative grade point average only the last grade received in the course, whether passing or failing, other than a grade of "W." However, for purposes of grade point average calculation on coursework for graduation, grades stand as recorded unless the same course is repeated at this University.

Courses Outside of TAMIU

Courses taken outside of TAMIU must be approved by the Director. The Academy does not incur the cost of courses taken outside of TAMIU and are the sole responsibility of the student.

Appendix A

Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies Student Discipline Level System

LEVELS -INTRODUCTION

The following level system is intended as a guideline for assessing the nature of given policy violations and for administering disciplinary responses consistently. The following list of specific policy violations (and the levels listed after each policy in the alphabetical section of “Student Life Policies”) is an attempt to specify consequences for more obvious types of violations and should not be considered an all-inclusive list without flexibility in individual circumstances. Sometimes behavior might fall under several categories, and in these cases, the Staggs Academy administrative staff reserves the right to determine the level and assess appropriate point values. The staff also reserves the right to determine the appropriate disciplinary level for violations of policy not listed.

LEVEL 1 (10-20 POINTS)

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

- Missing or arriving late to mandatory functions (homeroom, supplemental instruction, etc.)
- Noise violations
- Violates dress/grooming code.
- Insubordination
- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Not signing in by 10:00 AM (daily)
- Use of obscenities, profanities, vulgar language, etc.
- Misusing school property (includes not maintaining cleanliness in STEM room)
- Roughhousing

LEVEL 2 (20-30 POINTS)

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

- Fraudulent use of identification/signing in for someone else
- Safety and security violations, incense, candles, open flames, unauthorized electronic devices, possession of combustible materials
- Using electronic devices inappropriately
- Inappropriate verbal/physical contact

LEVEL 3 (30-40 POINTS)

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

- Unruly, persistent, disruptive behavior

- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Being non-compliant
- Harassing someone (May also be Level 4 or Level 5)

LEVEL 4 (50-90 POINTS)

May result in suspension from the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

- Participating in vandalism
- Verbally abusing staff
- Fighting
- Bullying
- Serious misbehavior
- Violating computer policy
- Violating safety and security policies (May also be Level 5)
- Harassing someone
- Interference or disruption of the educational mission of TAMIU; inappropriate behavior in class, Academy offices, STEM room, etc.
- Safety and security violations: incendiary devices, possessing firearms or prohibited weapons, fireworks, lasers, arson, etc.
- Activities that endanger the lives of self or others
- Vandalism (willful & malicious destruction/defacing of property)
- Falsifying Staggs Academy or TAMIU documents
- Possession of knife (can include pocketknife)
- Threatening behavior” verbal, physical (includes online blogs or social media)
- Conduct unbecoming a Staggs Academy student.

LEVEL 5 (100 POINTS-ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES)

Zero tolerance means that certain actions will not be tolerated under any circumstances and violations **will result in an immediate dismissal review** by the Staggs Academy administration. Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

- Possessing and/or using alcohol or illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia (includes selling, delivering)
- Acts that would constitute violations of law, other than a minor traffic violation or smoking.
- Theft, (Violations of University Policy)
- Violating safety and security policies
- Violation of computer policy
- Under the influence
- Terroristic Threat

- Using/Exhibiting/Possessing Firearm
- Title 5 Penal Code Felony
- Assault Class A

Other

- Students who repeatedly violate Level I, II or III offenses may also be viewed as not ready for the Staggs Academy experience and may be dismissed.
- Aiding & Abetting: Assisting or encouraging others in the violation of rules and regulations. The student is found equally responsible for the violation.

APPEALS PROCESS

Parental questions or complaints regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the Staggs Academy administration. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Director of the Staggs Academy within fourteen (14) school days of the assessed penalty. The Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences will conduct the hearing. All decisions at this level are final.

Appendix B

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies?

Located on the Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) campus, the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies (formally Texas Academy) is an additional option for high school students in this region. High school juniors and seniors will be able to complete their last two years of high school while earning college credit.

2. How was the Academy formed?

The Academy was created by State Senator Judith Zaffirini and authorized by the 79th Texas Legislature in 2005. The Academy will follow the regulations of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (THECB)

3. How many students will be selected?

A cohort of 50 “rising juniors” will be selected each year. Selected students will receive free tuition, fees, and books and will be able to make substantial progress towards a University degree in any area while exploring research and collaborative educational opportunities with project partners including the University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio’s (UTHSCSA) Laredo campus.

4. Will I earn a high school diploma?

Upon completion of their two years in the Academy, students will have earned their high school diploma concurrently with college credits toward a bachelor’s degree.

5. How much does it cost to attend the Academy?

After meeting all the requirements of the Academy and being admitted to the program, students are responsible for a non-refundable program fee of \$750/semester. However, this fee may be waived after a complete Financial Aid application is approved.

6. How do I apply?

You can directly apply online at: <https://www.tamiau.edu/coedu/theacademy/Apply.shtml>

7. Can I attend classes during the summer?

The Academy only pays for courses during the fall and spring semesters. Students will be responsible for paying their tuition if they attend summer school.

8. How will I know when you receive all my application documents?

The Academy Selection Committee will review all applications and give you a call if you are missing any documents.

9. How much do the PSAT scores count? What about teacher references and transcripts?

No pre-determined weights are assigned to any file elements, and no formulas or computer programs are used to select students. Candidates are evaluated on a case-by-case basis but must have competitive scores and transcripts, although no specific GPA or PSAT score guarantees entry. Admission is based not only on scores and transcripts, but also on apparent motivation, maturity, career interest, interviews, teacher and counselor evaluations, and behavioral records.

10. What are graduation requirements?

Students will complete 60 - 68 semester credit hours with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. A wide range of elective course options is available. Graduates receive an advanced high school diploma including college credits.

11. What curriculum does the Academy offer?

All courses offered at the Academy are University courses taught by University faculty. The mission of the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies is to offer an innovative and accelerated curriculum for motivated Texas high school students. These students will be able to excel in areas of mathematics, science, technology, engineering, and international studies. The Academy seeks to encourage students to develop the creativity, curiosity, reasoning ability, and self-discipline that lead to independent thought and action, and to aid students in developing integrity that will enable them to benefit society.

12. Will I be required to take standardized tests?

No, the Texas Education Agency will waive the last STAAR EOC exam.

13. What is a typical day for the students at the academy?

Academy students will report to campus by 8:00 a.m. and will be dismissed at 3:30 or 5:00 p.m., depending on their schedule. Students will follow their class schedule as would any other TAMIU student. Students will be required to start their day in an assigned classroom (Pellegrino Hall 205). Students are required to sign in every morning before 10 AM at the academy office.

14. How much does it cost to attend the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies?

The Academy is funded by TAMIU, the Texas Education Agency (ADA), and the Frank Staggs Family. The Academy will pay for tuition, fees, and books. A program charge of \$750 (non-refundable) per semester will be required and the student will be responsible for their meals. Payments can be made online, mailed, or in person at the Bursar's Office (Zaffirini Success Center, Room 137).

15. Where are the Academy Students housed?

All Academy students will be housed in Pellegrino 205 (classroom) and 215 (offices).

16. Can students participate in University life?

Students will be able to participate in University life. Some organizations offer numerous leadership and service opportunities, from Student Government to campus clubs, to musical and theatrical groups and intramural athletics. The University sponsors dances, game and activity nights, movies, plays, and recreation. Academy students are at liberty to participate in many of the TAMIU-sponsored organizations and events.

17. Is transportation provided to Texas A&M International University (TAMIU)?

Currently, the Academy does not offer transportation to its students. It is the student's family's responsibility to transport their student to and from the Academy.

18. Are home-schooled students admitted?

Yes, but they may require additional documents and screening.

Appendix C

Julieta & Frank Staggs Biographies



Julieta Farias Staggs

María Julieta Farias Staggs was born to Francisco F. Farias and María Julieta de la Garza Farias in July 1925. "Julie" graduated with honors from Martin High School in 1942. She studied Education and Spanish at what is now Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. Julie taught school in D'Hanis, Texas for one year and returned to Laredo to teach at Martin High School, and then Bruni School. She met Frank Staggs in August of 1952, and they were married on May 28 the following year. They moved to Greeley, Colorado that summer and returned to teaching in Frank's hometown of Mirando City. She taught third grade while awaiting the birth of Frank, Jr. who was born in February 1953. That summer, the Staggs returned to Colorado where Frank completed his Masters in School Administration.

Laredo became their permanent home that fall, and Julie began a 30+ year teaching career at the new M.S. Ryan Elementary where she made many lifelong friends doing what she enjoyed most- teaching. In August 1957, they welcomed another son, Raúl. Soon after, in 1963, they moved into their new home at Ryan and M.B. Lamar Junior High School, where Frank still lives. The home was constructed from materials from the old Farias home in downtown Laredo. In 1987, Julie was selected to portray Martha Washington as part of Laredo's Washington's Birthday Celebration.

Frank was her "George". Julie was beset by Alzheimer's in 2003 and passed away on October 1, 2015. To say she was a wonderful person isn't enough. Frank often says her only fault was in choosing him as her husband. She is missed by all.

Frank M. Staggs

Born in July 1927 in Laredo to Frank W. and Gertrude Frizzel Staggs, Frank Maurice has never been known for sitting still. His career spans teaching, insurance, coaching, ranching, refereeing, and even bus driving.

The family lived in a small oil town south of Mirando City called Petroleum which died out about 1929 when they moved back to Mirando where Frank received most of his "schoolin'". During the 1930s Depression, the family moved several times around

Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas; often to new schools two to three times a year. In fact, during fifth grade, Frank attended four different schools. The moves were the result of the generosity of Mr. O.W. Killam, who employed Frank W. and kept all of Killam's crew working despite the Depression.

The Staggs always returned to Mirando City, and Frank graduated from Mirando High School along with his close friend Hern Charles. Frank studied at Texas A&M University for a short time before enlisting in the United States Armed Services. His assignment was to the U.S. Army Hospital Mercy, which sailed across the Pacific Theatre of Operations. After finishing his extended tour of duty in 1947, he continued his education at Texas A&I University-Kingsville, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science. During his senior year, he became licensed to sell life insurance, doing so part-time for many years while teaching. Also, while in college, he taught at San Benito for one year. As happened often in his life, he returned home to Mirando City. At the high school, he taught English and History, and coached boys' football, basketball, and track, and girls' basketball and track. Driving the school bus was also one of his many duties.

His life changed in August of 1951 at a Laredo café in the Heights when on a business trip he was introduced to Julie Farias. They married one year later. Soon after, they moved to Laredo, and he taught English and Speech at M.B. Lamar Junior High School. Five years later, he was appointed Assistant Principal there. When Milton Elementary opened, he became its first principal and returned to Lamar as its principal in 1969. During that time, he began ranching with Julie's uncle, Dr. Raúl de la Garza, at the family ranch near Oilton. The Central Office came calling and in 1972 he was named Director of Special Programs. Eight years later, Frank retired from education and pursued a career in the insurance business. Staggs and Leonard Insurance, which focused on life and group medical insurance, came to be when he entered a partnership with Ed Leonard. The partnership dissolved 19 years later when Mr. Leonard passed away and ranching became Frank's principle business. As the 94-year-old approached his "middle age", he claimed he would retire in 2021.

Mr. Staggs credited his success to luck. "I've always been lucky- good parents married a wonderful girl and had two good boys. A good life. I am lucky. But the harder I worked the luckier I got! As my grandma Betty Frizzel used to say, ' The Lord has a hand on your shoulder, boy!' I say Amen."

Mr. Frank Staggs, Sr. passed away peacefully at home at the age of 95 on December 20, 2022.