



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

Hello, Academic Affairs!

I'll start off with a friendly reminder that registration for May Mini, Summer I, Summer II, and Fall has opened. Be sure to encourage students to register for classes!

There's a lot to be excited about at Texas A&M-Commerce, so I'll jump right in:

- Our university Counseling Center partnered with COEHS's Department of Health and Human Performance Department to host its inaugural Rural Mental Health Forum (RMHF) this past March 21st to discuss the demand for mental health services in rural Northeast Texas. Over 150 individuals participated in the forum, representing stakeholders including law enforcement, county officials, K-12 school counselors, private practitioners, community agencies, faculty and staff of A&M-Commerce, and nearly 50 students. The 6-hour event represented "the tip of the iceberg" with regard to addressing rural mental health issues. I am looking forward to continued collaboration on this important topic!

In addition to community concerns, over the past several years mental health awareness has been highlighted at institutions of higher education across the country. Like other universities, it is of the utmost importance that students, faculty, and staff have access to the resources they need to foster well-being throughout the Lion Family. I encourage you to take care of yourself, and please remind students to take advantage of the support offered on this campus, including the Counseling Center here at A&M-Commerce.

- Dr. Ricky Dobbs is making good progress in reenvisioning student success. Academic advising has made five hires in recent weeks, filling empty slots in the Honors College, COB, and COEHS. Faculty CCC (Communication, Connection, Collaboration) teams are active in both COB and COEHS as well. They aim to communicate concern and foster faculty connection with struggling students reported on five-week early intervention reports and midterm grade reports. They will also collaborate in training newly hired advisors in their colleges. On behalf of Dr. Dobbs and I, we would like to thank everyone who recently reported for spring early intervention. Last fall early intervention showed its value, giving students the heads-up they needed to turn their grades around for a successful semester. Students reported by faculty returned from fall to spring at a 2.1% higher rate than the overall undergraduate population. Those reported students who

attended advisor appointments as a part of early Intervention returned from fall to spring at a higher rate of 16%. Together, we are making a difference for our students!

Additionally, A&M University-Commerce will be hiring four college life coaches soon. These grant-funded positions will be available to work with all first-time, full-time students, focusing on general well-being. However, a special focus will be to provide individualized guidance to minimize barriers to student success for our students in developmental education courses for math and English. The academic coaching model is increasingly in use across the nation, including within our own system at College Station and A&M-San Antonio. Developmental education students will be enrolled in a new first-year seminar course, CID 1300, taught by college life coaches, starting this fall. CID 1300 will help students negotiate common challenges of their first year in college.

- Our institution was recently selected to participate in the First Scholars Leadership program, which is part of the NASPA professional association. Our First Scholars Leadership Team includes Dr. Mark Rudin, Judy Sackfield, Nechelle Bonds, Jayson Douglas, Dr. Ricky Dobbs, Dr. Dan Su, and myself. An initial event was held March 31-April 1 in Boston, MA, and many of the leadership and others committed to this initiative went to represent our institution and bring back valuable information and resources focusing on student success for first-generation students. There's no doubt that more will be shared in the future, with plenty of opportunities for you to get involved if interested.

- The TABPHE Awards and the Faculty Senate Awards ceremonies will take place on April 19th. I encourage you to make sure to add this to your calendar, as we come together to celebrate outstanding members of our Lion Family. In addition, the Texas Council of Faculty Senate President Dr. Joseph Velasco will be traveling to our campus to deliver a keynote speech about best practices for shared and sound governance in higher education. If you haven't already received it, more information about time and place will be forthcoming. Please make every effort to attend this event to celebrate our colleagues' achievements and success!

- Two final reminders:
 - The last scheduled open forum for this semester regarding enrollment and budget will be presented by CFO Tina Livingston and Dr. Dobbs this Wednesday, April 5th at 2pm in the Pride Room. Please join them and bring your questions!
 - I have open-door meetings on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm. This time is set aside on my schedule for anyone who would like to meet with me about any topic. Please contact Cynthia Rhodes at Cynthia.Rhodes@tamuc.edu to schedule a 15-30 minute time. I would love to meet with you and learn more about your experience at our institution.

On a final note, I want to thank you for all your hard work and continued dedication to our institution. Together, we are making great progress!

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