Historical Overview, Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles of the University

History of the University
Texas A&M University-Commerce is the fifth oldest institution of higher learning in the state. The second largest university in the prestigious Texas A&M University System, the institution was established in 1889 and began as East Texas Normal College. It was during this time that founder William Leonidas Mayo opened the doors to a one-building campus in Cooper, Texas and established as a creed, “Ceaseless Industry, Fearless Investigation, Unfettered Thought, and Unselfish Service to Others.” This motto continues today and is integral to the university’s mission, vision, and guiding principles.

The institution’s history of dynamic change began in 1894 when the original campus was destroyed by fire and "Mayo's College" moved to Commerce. When the state of Texas purchased the campus in 1917 the name changed to East Texas State Normal College. In 1923, the school was renamed East Texas State Teachers College. Graduate education entered the curriculum in 1935; in 1957 the state legislature, recognizing that the purpose of the institution had broadened from teacher education alone, changed the name to East Texas State College. Following the inauguration of the first doctoral program in 1962, the name was changed to East Texas State University.

In 1996, the institution entered The Texas A&M University System and became Texas A&M University-Commerce. The university currently has off-campus locations in downtown Dallas, Corsicana, Mesquite, Midlothian, McKinney, and Rockwall. In addition, through state-of-the-art telecommunications and internet-based instruction, the university meets the undergraduate, graduate, and professional needs of the citizens of Northeast Texas and beyond. The university offers 144 total areas of study at the undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral levels. In 2016 A&M-Commerce was classified as Doctoral University-Higher Research (R2) by the Carnegie Classification 2015 Update.

In an environment well-suited to study and inclusion, A&M-Commerce is a place where students enjoy productive relationships with professors, have opportunities to become leaders on campus, and become actively involved in campus life with a choice of over 120 clubs and organizations. The Honors College provides a tuition free college experience for the best and brightest. Fifty qualifying students are chosen each year to receive Honors College scholarships. The Regents’ Scholars Program provides a unique academic experience focused on leadership and international study as part of a four-year scholarship assisting with tuition, fees, and housing. Thirty new students are admitted to the program each year. A&M-Commerce is an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) committed to upholding the mission of the university to diversify the student population through recruiting, retaining, and supporting all students in their common endeavor toward degree completion.

Our Mission
Texas A&M University-Commerce provides a personal, accessible, and affordable
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educational experience for a diverse community of learners. We engage in creative discovery and dissemination of knowledge and ideas for service, leadership, and innovation in an interconnected and dynamic world.

Our Vision
Texas A&M University-Commerce, as part of the A&M family of universities, will become the university of choice for all those seeking a higher education in the Northeast Texas region and beyond. It will provide traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities through existing and new programs that set high expectations and goals for students, faculty, and staff. The University will provide a sense of community through a nurturing environment for all individuals in order to maximize learning, career, and personal development. A&M-Commerce will become a place where students, faculty, staff, and community are engaged in the pursuit of excellence.

Guiding Principles

Diversity: Foster a culture of inclusion whereby people of all backgrounds who live, learn, and work on campus feel welcome and valued. Represent the diversity of the region we serve while respecting individual differences and similarities.

Service: Promote excellence in service to members of all internal and external communities.

Student Success: Implement effective, research-based strategies, providing high-quality instruction and student support, through a variety of services, and resulting in timely degree completion by graduates who are prepared for the workforce or for continued study in graduate and/or professional programs.

Stewardship: Commit to affordability, efficiency, and effectiveness, pursuing wise stewardship of public resources through accountability and transparency while utilizing strong and innovative academic practices.

Globalization: Provide opportunities for exploration of, and engagement with, global dynamics in an effort to enhance students’ global competence and preparation for an interconnected world.

Scholarship: Collaborate in the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge and creative works through research and scholarly engagement that have a meaningful impact on the economic, social, and cultural vitality of our constituents and the world.

Communication: Disseminate a consistent, authentic, and reliable message that effectively engages internal and external stakeholders, and which results in sustained growth.