University Awards Ceremony

APRIL 24, 2023
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The Student Employee of the Year Award recognizes students who excel in communication, teamwork and problem-solving, and who possess an outstanding work ethic.
JORDAN GOMEZ ’25
Veterinary Medicine Major

Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital
School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Jordan Gomez is a second-year veterinary medical student and student technician in the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital’s Clinical Microbiology and Immunology Laboratory where she has worked for four years. She is passionate about helping animals through diagnostics and upholding antimicrobial stewardship in veterinary medicine.
Amanda Hoth is a senior oceanography student who has worked in the Department of Student Activities with Campus Engagement and Traditions for the past year. In this role, she has learned about and attended many of the events put on by the Student Government Association and Class Councils. She has loved the creative outlet this job has given her, a stark difference from all of her STEM coursework. Post graduation, she will be moving out of state to work in the tourism industry, continue to build interpersonal relationships and help others.
The President’s Meritorious Service Awards, sponsored by the Office of the President and The Association of Former Students, are given to individuals who demonstrate their commitment to the Aggie Core Values of Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity, and Selfless Service.
ALYSSA ZARCO
Admissions and Recruiting Coordinator

Admissions
Texas A&M School of Engineering Medicine

Alyssa Garcia Zarco is the admissions and recruiting coordinator for the Texas A&M School of Engineering Medicine and has worked at the university for seven years. She received her bachelor’s in psychology from A&M in 2019. She works to constantly innovate new pathways for recruitment and admissions while remaining adaptable under pressure. She is empathetic and genuinely cares about delivering excellent quality while continually learning and developing best practices in admissions and recruiting. Her colleagues recognize her for going above and beyond in creating a welcoming Aggie atmosphere that reflects the Core Values of Texas A&M University.
Kelley O’Neal is the executive director of the Marilyn Kent Byrne Student Success Center in the School of Education and Human Development. He has worked at Texas A&M for six years and is currently working on his Ph.D. in higher education administration here at A&M. He received his undergraduate degree in elementary education and his graduate degree in reading education from Houston Baptist University. Kelley is an advocate for students and collaborates with colleagues across the Texas A&M campus to support student success.
Alex Troyer obtained his bachelor’s degree in visual arts from Goshen College, where he developed a keen eye for design, creativity and innovation. Through his work in several makerspaces and workshops, he has developed extensive experience and technical expertise in a wide range of precision manufacturing equipment, as well as advanced fabrication tools. Troyer is passionate about encouraging and inspiring students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. He has volunteered his time and resources to various STEM initiatives, helping to create opportunities for students to learn and explore their interests. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence, earning a reputation for his attention to detail and technical expertise.
Chandler Guardado Rivera is an enrollment services advisor at Aggie One Stop and has worked at the university for nine months. She received a bachelor’s in international studies from Texas A&M in 2015 and is currently studying for her master’s in higher education administration. She said she is always ready to be an advocate for every student she interacts with and strives to ensure the well-being and support of others in her department. She is known for her tenacious personality and passion for Texas A&M and its many traditions.
Dr. Ashley Seabury is the program director for research and graduate studies in the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (VMBS) and has worked at the university for 21 years. She received her bachelor’s in animal and veterinary sciences from West Virginia University in 2001 and her Ph.D. in genetics from Texas A&M in 2005. Seabury is known to colleagues as a true servant leader who views her role as an opportunity to serve the VMBS faculty, students and staff. She is always available to teach and mentor, and her guidance is consistently expert, empathetic and respectful. She is known for her ability to work well under pressure, and the ability to pivot when necessary to resolve any unforeseen issues that may arise.
Chris Court is an executive director in Technology Services and oversees The Bush School of Government and Public Service, Mays Business School and The School of Law. He has worked for Texas A&M for more than three years and quickly excelled in his role. He has over 18 years of experience in IT administration, including project management, network administration, and IT policy in both the public and private sectors. He said he enjoys the opportunity to serve and has a strong dedication to public service. Court is the chair of the Information Technology Advisory Committee and the Mayor of the City of Kurten. He is known by colleagues for his excellent work ethic, professional presence and strong leadership.
José Arrisola Jr. is a systems administrator for the Athletics Department and has worked at the university for six years. He received his bachelor’s degree in computer science at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and is a certified Azure Administrator. He led the adoption of Microsoft Cloud technologies for his team and his department.
Chad Barger is a senior data analyst with Scholarships and Financial Aid and has worked at the university for eight years. He received his bachelor’s in sociology from Texas A&M in 2005. His colleagues describe him as a “one-man powerhouse” whose self-motivation and internal drive set a strong example for others in the office to follow.
Trudy K. Bennett serves as assistant department head of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology (VTPP) in the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and is the executive director of The Michael E. DeBakey Institute for Comparative Cardiovascular Science and Biomedical Devices. Actively involved in fundraising efforts for the DeBakey Institute, as well as VTPP, Bennett provides logistic support for the department and the institute, including management, research and education teams, and provides oversight of financials. Prior to joining Vet Med, she served as a director in Division of Research, and administered and coordinated the operations for the vice president for research. Also included in her 23 years of service to The Texas A&M University System, Bennett helped oversee the day-to-day activities of the Office of the Chancellor. She earned her bachelor of arts in history with a minor in business, and a master’s in educational human resource development, both from Texas A&M.
JEN BLOOM

Senior Administrative Coordinator II

J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering
College of Engineering

Jen Bloom is a senior administrative coordinator II in the J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering and has worked for the department for almost seven years. She received her bachelor’s in history in 2011 and master of science in higher education in 2013.
Florence Davies ’09 is an assistant director at The University Writing Center (UWC) and will have worked at Texas A&M for 10 years this June. She received her master of fine arts in writing and literature from Stony Brook University in 2013. At the writing center, besides being one of the office’s two ‘extroverts,’ Davies oversees the writing center’s tutor training program, along with the director, and recently recertified the center through College Reading and Learning Association for the next five years. Davies also oversees the writing center’s marketing and media team. She said she remains very proud of UWC’s YouTube channel with its nearly 25,000 subscribers — the third largest after the main A&M channel and athletics. Davies has led and taken part in several programs and service opportunities on campus, including as a governing board member for the African American Professionals Organization, serving as the advisor for Texas A&M’s undergraduate literary journal “The Eckleburg Project,” and coordinating creative writing residences such as The Aggie Creative Collective. As a creative writer in her spare time, she continues working on her third novel project for young adults.
John Fellers is an assistant director in Environmental Health and Safety and has worked at the university for 25 years. He received a master of science degree from Texas A&M-Commerce in 2011. Fellers is known as a service-minded individual who constantly looks for ways to enhance efficiencies and improve processes. His colleagues say he is helpful, supportive and makes people feel part of a team. Any question or situation that arises, his colleagues say he works quickly to resolution, is very supportive and promotes growth both professionally and personally.
Andy Gibson is the program manager for the Explore Program in Transition Academic Programs (TAP). He graduated from Texas A&M with a bachelor’s in communication in 1995. His broad work experience in wholesale business, mutual funds, and the camping and retreats industry built a solid foundation of experience and skills for working with students who are in between majors at Texas A&M. Gibson has 15 years of service at A&M in the TAP office guiding students through deciding or changing their major. He said his goal is to help students understand how their talents and skills connect to majors that help them meet their career goals. He would like to acknowledge some of the people that contributed to his success: his gracious wife, Amanda; his caring daughter, Emily; the supportive directors in the TAP office; and the outstanding TAP advising team.
BETHANY GOODLETT
Research Associate

Department of Medical Physiology
School of Medicine

Bethany Goodlett is a research associate in the Department of Medical Physiology and has worked at Texas A&M for four years. She received her bachelor’s in biomedical sciences at A&M in 2018. She is known for being quick to lend a hand to others, whether they’re on her team or in another area, maintaining a light, cheerful energy and boosting morale in the workplace. She said she takes great pride in being an Aggie and shows it through her commitment to the Core Values.
Noeline Gunasekara is a human resource generalist in the Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness and has worked at the university for five years. She received her bachelor’s in human resource management and finance, and a master of business administration in the UK. She is pursuing her doctoral degree in Educational Human Resource Development at Texas A&M with an anticipated graduation date of August 2024. She is known to take initiative to assess the needs of the faculty, staff, and students she supports and provides necessary solutions with a positive attitude. Colleagues say she is always willing to help other areas and teams within the school whenever needed.
Dr. Sarah Jaks is an associate director for the Full-Time MBA Program at Mays Business School and has worked at the university for 14 years. She received her master’s in student affairs administration in higher education in 2011 and her Ph.D. in agricultural leadership, education, and communications in 2020, both from Texas A&M. Jaks is known to be dedicated to student growth and development both inside and outside the classroom, and she works to instill life-long learning in the MBA students she advises. She regularly meets with individual students and their teams to discuss leadership, conflict management, strengths, and other personal development topics, and proficiently navigates the balance between challenge and support for her students through her knowledge of both student affairs and academic affairs.
SHERRI JERZYK
Certified Veterinary Rehabilitation Technician

Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital
School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Sherri Jerzyk is a veterinary technician certified in rehabilitation. She has worked at the university for five years. She always reaches out to her coworkers to check on them, encourage them and make them smile through words or fun activities and treats. Her clients love her, and her patients are always excited to see her.
Bradley Matthews is an Associate Director in the Career Center and has worked at the university for 10 years. Bradley received a Master of Science in Educational Administration in 2019 and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management in 2014, both from Texas A&M University. He is quick to identify ways to improve delivery of career services, often taking independent action to propel the organization forward. Bradley fully engages across campus and facilitates communication for his primary constituents: students, employers, and university personnel, with an infectious laugh and a positive attitude.
Kristi Mejias is an assistant athletic director for academic services in the Texas A&M athletics department. She has worked at the university for 12 years in roles spanning from tutor coordinator to scholastic supervisor, assistant director for student-athlete engagement and now her current position. Kristi received both her bachelor’s in political science (2008) and her master’s in public administration (2010) from the University of Georgia. During her time at Texas A&M, Mejias has been recognized as a Fish Camp Namesake (2021), ACE Women’s Progress Award Winner (2018) and Ed Guthrie Advising Award Winner (2017). She serves on various committees within A&M Athletics and recently served as the non-faculty chaperone/staff member on a study abroad to Qatar in December 2022. She says the best part about her job is building relationships and seeing student-athletes meet both their academic and athletic goals.
HEATHER MILLER
Graduate Programs Coordinator

Graduate Programs
School of Law

Heather Miller is a graduate program coordinator for the Texas A&M School of Law, where she has worked for the last two years. She has a master’s degree in human resource development from the University of Texas at Tyler. Heather has fifteen years of experience working in higher education, and she is the outgoing president of the Texas Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals.
PAMELA MONCAYO-MORALES

Program Coordinator II

Undergraduate Strategic Partnerships
Division of Academic & Strategic Collaborations

Pamela Moncayo-Morales is the program coordinator II for Undergraduate Strategic Partnerships. She has worked at the university for over five years. Pamela received her bachelor’s in psychology from Texas A&M in 2017. She will graduate with her master’s in higher education administration and certification in academic advising in May 2023. She is the type of person that will always try to help her team in any way possible.
Rudder Theater Complex
University Center & Special Events

Jason Muchow has been working at Rudder Theatre Complex for 23 years, starting as a student and working his way through several positions until taking on the leadership role in 2012. In that time, Rudder Theatre Complex has continued to grow its impact across the university and community. Jason and his team are known for bringing event concepts and ideas to life, always having a can-do attitude and providing excellent customer service.
President’s Meritorious Service Award: Individual

Michael Outland
Assistant Director

Enrollment Services
Aggie One Stop

Michael Outland is an assistant director with Aggie One Stop. He has worked at the university for 10 years. Michael has positively contributed to the growth of Aggie One Stop by training new hires on Student Business Services, fielding complex billing questions, developing equitable methods to improve business practices, supervising staff, implementing improved programs and much more. Michael regularly puts in extra work hours, is readily available to assist others, displays superb composure and professionalism, and always makes an effort to praise the successes of the staff at Aggie One Stop.
MELANIE MCKOIN OWENS
Assistant Director

Student Life
Division of Student Affairs

Melanie McKoin Owens is an assistant director for Student Life in the Division of Student Affairs. She has worked at Texas A&M since 2014. Melanie earned a master’s in educational administration with an emphasis in student affairs administration in 2016. Melanie strives daily to support students, staff, faculty, family members and other stakeholders throughout her work in Student Life. Melanie operates with high regard for others. She is a joy to be around and has a kind heart that radiates throughout her work with others.
Immigration Affairs
Faculty Affairs

Erin Pope is the assistant director of Texas A&M’s Immigration Affairs office. She has worked with this office for 26 years. Erin earned a bachelor’s degree in human resource management from Texas A&M. She enjoys working with units across campus and the Texas A&M University System to provide immigration solutions for their international faculty, researchers and staff.
Dr. Jing Wu serves as the technical laboratory supervisor for the Clinical Microbiology and Immunology Laboratory (CMIL) of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at Texas A&M’s School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Jing joined the CMIL in 2013. Throughout her years of service, she has always gone the extra mile to provide quality patient care by ensuring that the CMIL provides rapid and accurate diagnostic information for the veterinarians that the laboratory serves. Jing has a passion for teaching and research. She helps train graduate and veterinary students and directly participates in the ongoing research endeavors in the laboratory.
Leslie Kallus

Forensic Nurse

Leslie Kallus is the full-time forensic nurse for the Texas Teleforensic Remote Assistance Center (Tex-TRAC). She has worked with the university for one year and Tex-TRAC for two years. Leslie received her bachelor’s in nursing from Western Governors University in 2018. Leslie assists in connecting rural and high needs areas to expert forensic nurses when performing sexual assault exams by assisting with community training and providing educational opportunities for clinicians and expert nurses.

Bobbi Naylor

Administrative Coordinator I

Bobbi Naylor is an administrative coordinator for the Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing. She has worked at Texas A&M for three years. Bobbi is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in business administration at Arizona State University. Bobbi is always happy to help her team in any way that she can.
President’s Meritorious Service Award: Team

KAYCE WARD
Forensic Nurse Manager

Kayce Ward is the forensic nurse manager in the Texas A&M Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing’s Texas Teleforensic Remote Assistance Center (Tex-TRAC). She has worked in this role for more than two years. She received her master’s in nursing science in 2015 and is a certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. Tex-TRAC currently provides services at 10 hospital locations, and Kayce is actively involved in training the expert Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (TeleSANEs) and clinical RNs at the hospital sites. She also works closely with the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault to coordinate community education opportunities regarding all aspects of caring for the sexual assault patient and investigating the crime of sexual assault.

KIM ZEMANEK
Associate Program Director

Dr. Kim Zemanek is the associate program director for the Center of Excellence in Forensic Nursing within Texas A&M Health's School of Nursing. She has worked for Texas A&M University and Texas A&M Health for a combined seventeen years. Kim received her Ph.D. in agricultural leadership, education and communications from Texas A&M University in 2016. As a positive and motivational leader, Kim is known for connecting all levels of diverse groups to understand and communicate better with each other. Her favorite word for her team is “pivot” as they have learned to pivot on a dime and implement new processes immediately.
JAKE CLOUGH
Academic Advisor IV

The Undergraduate Advising and Operations Team
College of Arts & Sciences

Jake Clough is an academic advisor IV in the Undergraduate Education Office for the College of Arts and Sciences. He received a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in bioethics in 2015. Jake won the President’s Award for Academic Advising in 2021. He is currently a Ph.D. student in higher education administration and loves helping students find solutions to their circumstances.
Terri Ferguson is an administrative associate IV in the College of Arts and Sciences. She has worked for Texas A&M for 16 years through roles in the College of Science and College of Arts and Sciences. She is a compassionate supporter of faculty, staff and students, and is always willing to lend a helping hand. Terri is known for being an advocate, a smiling face to all and a welcoming presence in the Academic Operations office.
Christine Farris is an assistant director in the College of Arts and Sciences. She has been with Texas A&M since 1986, where she started as a student worker in the Registrar’s Office while still in high school. Christine earned her bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics and her master’s in higher education administration. After serving as director for undergraduate programs in biology for 20 years, Christine moved to the dean’s advising staff in the new College of Arts and Sciences in September, overseeing the advising units in biomedical science and the legacy College of Science majors. She has worked to help these areas with the new college structure while ensuring students receive top-notch advising services.
President’s Meritorious Service Award: Team

AMBER GREER
Administrative Coordinator I

The Undergraduate Advising and Operations Team
College of Arts & Sciences

Amber Greer is an administrative coordinator I in the Undergraduate Education Office for the College of Arts and Sciences. She has worked at the university for over a decade. Amber received her Associate of Arts degree in 1995. Amber is quick to serve the needs of students and staff across the college and has greatly assisted with the unification of the three legacy colleges and looks forward to the years to come.
President’s Meritorious Service Award: Team

JULIA JAKAB
Assistant Director

The Undergraduate Advising and Operations Team
College of Arts & Sciences

Julia Jakab is an assistant director of advising for the College of Arts and Sciences. She has been with A&M for 9 years. Julia received her Bachelor of Arts in history in 2002 from the University of North Texas and her master’s in theological studies in 2012 from the University of Dallas. Julia has dedicated herself to be a support for academic advisors; as some have said, “the advisor’s advisor.” Her goal as an assistant director for advising has been to model how to advise well and provide accurate, timely care and information for students. While she may not have graduated from Texas A&M, she looks great in maroon.
ANTONIO KNOX
Academic Advisor

The Undergraduate Advising and Operations Team
College of Arts & Sciences

Antonio Knox helped support the Path Forward efforts of combining three colleges into one to create the College of Arts and Sciences. He collaborated with his supervisor and team to create an integrated college-wide classroom scheduling process. Antonio and his team have deep respect for students and university rules, procedures and processes. They set aside concerns about the merger of three colleges and focused on elevating best practices to reach all Arts and Sciences students.
President’s Meritorious Service Award: Team

ALLISON RIVERA
Director of Advising

The Undergraduate Advising and Operations Team
College of Arts & Sciences

Allison Rivera is the director of advising for the College of Arts and Sciences. She has worked at the university for 10 years in various academic advising roles. Allison received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The Ohio State University in literature and theater history and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in higher education administration at Texas A&M. Prior to her service at the university, Allison worked in arts and community education in San Diego. She is passionate about student and staff development, retention and lifelong learning.
Roxanna Russell earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Texas A&M in 1989. She began her advising career in 2003 with the Department of Biology. In 2006, she moved to the College of Geosciences as the academic advisor IV and was then promoted to director of advising in the dean’s office. She has worked for the university for 21 years. During her time as director, she centralized the advising team and assumed the supervisory role for the advisors. This created a more cohesive team and ensured that all team members were working in conjunction with the goals of the college. She coordinated moving the paper files in the dean’s advising office to laserfiche in an effort to have better access to documents should the advising staff need to confirm information on or for students. She is a team player, tries to find more efficient ways to work and enjoys working so closely with students, staff and faculty.
Kaileigh Carter has been with the College of Arts and Sciences since 2021 as an academic advisor IV in the Undergraduate Education Programs Office. She has been with Texas A&M for more than 10 years. She also serves as an Aggie Ally facilitator, the instructor for the LGBTQ+ Pride Hullabaloo U sessions and staff advisor for Freshmen Leading in Acceptance, Kindness, and Equality (FLAKE). She received a double bachelor’s degree in philosophy and psychology with a minor in women’s studies from Texas State University in 2008. She then earned her master’s degree in educational administration, focusing on higher education leadership, from Tarleton State University. She is currently a doctoral student in health education at the Texas A&M School of Public Health with certificates in women’s and gender studies, advanced research methods, and maternal and child health.
SARA THIGPIN

Director of Academic Operations

The Undergraduate Advising and Operations Team
College of Arts & Sciences

Sara Thigpin is the director of academic operations for the College of Arts and Sciences. She has worked for the university for 19 years. Sara received her bachelor’s in health in 2008. She is part of the team that worked to combine colleges to form the College of Arts and Sciences.
UNIVERSITY PROFESSORSHIPS FOR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING EXCELLENCE

The University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence awards are conferred upon the most exemplary undergraduate faculty at Texas A&M University for their innovative teaching methods and continuous pursuit of inspiring and facilitating learning. Faculty members selected to receive this award exhibit excellence and devotion to undergraduate education.
Dr. Arun R. Srinivasa earned his Ph.D. in 1991 from the University of California-Berkeley. He holds the Holdrege/Paul Professorship for distinction in teaching and pedagogy in the J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering. Srinivasa has been a faculty member at Texas A&M for 26 years. He is dedicated to the undergraduate teaching mission of the department and served as associate department head for undergraduate programs twice (2013-2017 and 2021-2022). He teaches a wide range of courses in the mechanics and design area. His educational interests include the incorporation of technology into education in a way that is inclusive and accessible to students from diverse backgrounds, as well as the development of quantitative design and decision-making activities as the foundation of engineering education. He is currently also Co-PI and director for the National Science Foundation RED (Revolutionizing Engineering Departments) Grant for the Department of Mechanical Engineering to create a community of practice focused on continuous innovation in teaching. He has authored and co-authored over 150 journal publications and co-authored three books on plasticity, damage, fracture and fatigue of materials.
Dr. James D. Herman, a clinical professor in the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology, has been employed at Texas A&M University since 1990. Since that time, he has served as the chair of the Biomedical Sciences Curriculum Committee, as well as the chair and vice chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. He continues to serve his department as a member of the Executive Committee and as the education coordinator. Herman is committed to helping VMBS early career faculty advance in their careers in the teaching arena. As part of the Path Forward, he serves as the vice chair of Biomedical Sciences Undergraduate Instruction Committee (BIMS UIC) in the College of Arts and Sciences as well as a host for the BIMS Program Re_Design Committee through the Center for Teaching Excellence. He has served the CTE as a frequent member of the Faculty and Student Advisory Board and has attended numerous workshops. An endowed professorship is being established in Herman’s name with a goal of providing scholarships for BIMS undergraduate students.
Dr. James D. Pennington’s primary responsibility and professional passion is teaching sophomore organic chemistry for non-chemistry majors. He believes that being able to interact with and influence these future doctors, dentists, veterinarians and engineers at a critical time in their intellectual development is a blessing and an incredibly rewarding responsibility. For the past 15 years, he has been the coordinator and chief presenter for the Texas A&M Chemistry Road Show, one of the premier education outreach programs of the Texas A&M Department of Chemistry and the College of Arts and Sciences. The Chemistry Road Show is presented approximately 80 times per year for schools, libraries, and other organizations across Texas. It brings fun and educational science demonstrations to over 15,000 attendees annually. As the Chemistry Road Show coordinator, Pennington has the opportunity to work closely with and mentor a dozen or so Aggies per year as assistant demonstrators. This opportunity gets those students involved in service learning and outreach. In 2006, Pennington was honored as a Fish Camp Namesake.
Dr. Emily Cantrell is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture (TLAC), where she teaches undergraduate courses in literacy as well as multiculturalism. She serves as co-chair of the Advanced Literacy Studies Program, director of the Reading Specialist Program and director of the Lohman Learning Community. Cantrell received her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction and has been employed at Texas A&M University for 12 years. She has been influential in the development and growth of the many highly successful Science of Teaching Reading initiatives for undergraduate education majors. She is recognized within and outside of Texas A&M for her work in effective preservice teacher preparation in evidence-based literacy instruction. Further, Cantrell implements extraordinary learning experiences for her students in her classes through multiple service-learning projects, museum field trips, local school partnerships, guest speakers and other extracurricular opportunities. Cantrell works tirelessly to increase the quality of preparation and support undergraduate education majors receive to meet the diverse needs of their students, as evidenced in her teaching, research and service.
Dr. Kati I. Stoddard received her Ph.D. in environmental science from the University of North Texas in 2012. She joined the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at Texas A&M University as an Instructional Assistant Professor in 2015. She was promoted to instructional associate professor in Fall 2020. She has served as the associate department head for undergraduate programs since Fall 2021. Stoddard teaches undergraduate courses in bioenvironmental sciences (BESC), including introduction to BESC (BESC 201) and sampling and environmental monitoring (BESC 403). She developed both a 15-week online version of BESC 201 and a five-week summer version of the course. She makes continual improvements to her courses, incorporating things such as case studies, scenarios, debates, in-class polling, and universal design. Stoddard has presented at the Transformational Teaching and Learning Conference three times and its precursor conference, Wakonse South, once. Stoddard was part of the first Innovative Pedagogy Grant Project cohort in 2017, for which she earned $10,000 for the work she did to redesign BESC 201. Stoddard also mentors graduate students through the Academy for Future Faculty.
The Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence is awarded to the most distinguished teachers at Texas A&M University. Recipients exhibit outstanding excellence and devotion to student education. The designation of Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence remains with the recipient throughout their career at Texas A&M, signified by a commemorative medallion.
Dr. Catharina Laporte received her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology in 2013 and joined Texas A&M’s Department of Anthropology in 2014 as a lecturer. She is currently an instructional associate professor and was anthropology director of undergraduate studies from 2019 to 2021. Using insights from her previous management career in multinational corporations, in combination with her education, Laporte designs and teaches high-impact, multi section, active, hybrid and flipped courses specifically designed to combine an anthropological mindset with an appreciation for cultural diversity; these courses illuminate different perspectives and solutions to real-world phenomena and projects. She often facilitates workshops and conversations on campus to inspire and create community with other faculty, staff and students. Laporte mentors ten diverse merit-based Posse scholars (2019-2023), and serves as an informal and formal mentor to numerous faculty and future faculty both within her department and across the university. She has served on one of the president’s Path Forward committees, as well as the First Year Experience, Transformational Teaching Learning Conference, entrepreneurship and distance education committees. Laporte is a faculty fellow of the Center for Teaching Excellence.
Bala Shetty
Professor

Department of Information and Operations Management
Mays Business School

Dr. Bala Shetty holds the Cullen Trust for Higher Education Chair in Business. He received his master’s and doctoral degrees from the School of Engineering at Southern Methodist University (SMU). In addition to serving on the faculty of Texas A&M University since 1985, he has served in faculty positions at Cox School of Business (SMU) and Madrid Business School (Spain). He held a courtesy appointment as professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering with the Dwight Look College of Engineering at Texas A&M University from 2017 - 2022. He also served as a research fellow at Princeton University while on development leave from Texas A&M. Dr. Shetty held several senior leadership roles at Mays Business School, including department head and associate dean of graduate programs. He has taught with distinction at multiple levels in multiple programs, with research interests in supply chain management, optimization and finance. He has published extensively in premier scholarly journals in business and served as associate editor for Operations Research, Decision Sciences, and Naval Research Logistics. Dr. Shetty currently serves as senior editor for the Production and Operations Journal.
CHANCELLOR’S ACADEMY OF TEACHER EDUCATORS AWARD

The Texas A&M University System Academic Affairs Office in partnership with the Chancellor’s Century Council created this award to recognize individuals or university teams who are making noteworthy and exemplary contributions to quality, innovation, and continuous improvement in teacher preparation.
Dr. Sharon Matthews is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture (TLAC) in the School of Education and Human Development. Her areas of teaching and research include language, literacy and culture. She teaches the courses in reading, literature, advanced literacy, and the methods courses that prepare undergraduate students pursuing degrees in K-12 education. In addition to being an effective undergraduate and graduate level instructor, Dr. Matthews has contributed to the mission of teacher education through various administrative appointments. She has been the program coordinator for the TLAC undergraduate peer mentors and program coordinator for the TLAC Online Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. She currently serves as the associate head for undergraduate studies, overseeing all aspects of undergraduate education pertaining to teacher education. Her teaching expertise has been recognized with some of the most prestigious teaching awards at Texas A&M, including: University Level Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching; Provost Academic Professional Track Faculty Teaching Excellence Award; Faculty Excellence Award; and Texas A&M University Professorship for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence.
The Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System awards this honor to individuals at the rank of professor or equivalent whose performance in teaching, research, and service has been exemplary. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the A&M System on faculty members.
Dr. Bradford P. Wilcox is a professor of ecology and conservation biology, teaching both graduate and undergraduate students while actively advising undergraduate researchers. His research and teaching focuses on ecohydrology, an emerging discipline at the interface of ecology and hydrology. His interests include understanding how climate affects landscape change and how invasive plants and land degradation may be altering the water cycle. Much of his work has been in semi-arid rangelands of the United States, but he also works in coastal areas of Texas and in the high elevation grasslands of the Andes. Dr. Wilcox and his students study how woody plants and their management on rangelands may affect stream flows and groundwater recharge. The team also investigates how invasive shrubs in riparian areas are altering river flows and the hydrological functioning of coastal wetlands.
J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering
College of Engineering

Dr. Reza Langari is head of the Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution, the J. R. Thompson Chair, a professor of mechanical engineering and he holds courtesy appointments in the departments of Aerospace Engineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering. He was the founding program chair for mechanical engineering at Texas A&M University at Qatar and also served there as interim associate dean for academic affairs. Dr. Langari was assistant director and chief engineer of the Aerospace Vehicle Systems Institute (AVSI) and chair of the Council of Principal Investigators. He has also held research positions at Rockwell International Science Center, United Technologies Research Center, Boeing, NASA and the Air Force Research Laboratory.
Dr. R. Malatesha Joshi is a professor of literacy education and educational psychology. His research has contributed to our understanding of the causes and consequences of literacy development in children - including African American, Hispanic and inner-city children - and the important role university schools of education can play in solving the reading puzzle. He serves as editor of Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal and has received national and international awards, including the Erasmus Mundus Fellowship from Germany and the Samuel and June Orton Award from the International Dyslexia Association. Dr. Joshi is a fellow of the American Educational Research Association and was recently elected to the Reading Hall of Fame.
Dr. Irene Calboli’s is a law professor whose research focuses on the impact of intellectual property (IP) on international trade and socio-economic development. Among her numerous projects, she helps communities in developing countries protect their traditional products. In the past decade, she co-founded three large IP law research networks in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization. A widely cited scholar and highly respected educator, Dr. Calboli is regularly invited to deliver lectures across the globe and advise international, regional and national organizations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she assisted government officials on issues related to medicine and vaccine access.
Dr. Samba Reddy is a professor of neuroscience & experimental therapeutics. He pioneered the field of neurosteroids by researching epilepsy neurotherapeutics. His seminal contributions include discovering a neurocode for treating epilepsy and a novel neurosteroid-replacement therapy to treat epilepsy, women’s health and brain disorders. Dr. Reddy’s contributions led to the development of two new medicines: ganaxolone (Ztalmy), the first neurosteroid for epilepsy, and brexanolone (Zulresso), the first FDA-approved drug for postpartum depression. He has received awards from top scientific organizations in the United States, India and Europe and is an elected fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) and the American Epilepsy Society. Dr. Reddy received the AAPS Global Leader Award in 2020.
Dr. Jay Maddock is a professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health in the School of Public Health. He served as the school’s dean from 2015-2019 and is an internationally recognized expert on socioecological approaches to improving health. Dr. Maddock has served in a variety of national and international leadership roles throughout his career, including chair of the Hawaii Board of Health, president of the American Academy of Health Behavior and secretary of the Asia-Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health. From 2000-2015, he led the research and evaluation arm of the Healthy Hawaii Initiative, a multicomponent, statewide effort to increase physical activity, improve nutrition and reduce smoking among the people of Hawaii. Currently, Dr. Maddock serves as the director of the Center for Health & Nature, a collaborative effort between Texas A&M, Houston Methodist and Texan by Nature.
The SEC Faculty Achievement Award honors those with outstanding records in both teaching and research, and who serve as role models for junior faculty and students.
Distinguished Professor Dr. Donald J. Darensbourg is an inorganic/organometallic chemist whose early contributions dealt with spectroscopic and mechanistic studies of metal carbonyl derivatives. His most recent studies focus on investigating the chemistry of carbon dioxide with various metals substrates, ultimately defining catalytic copolymerization reactions of CO2 and epoxides or oxetanes. Dr. Darensbourg was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and received his undergraduate and doctoral degrees from California State University at Los Angeles and the University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign, respectively. Following his work at the Texaco Research Center in Beacon, New York, he served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Buffalo and Tulane University. Dr. Darensbourg has been a professor at Texas A&M University since 1982. He is a fellow of the American Chemical Society and a member of both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences.
University Distinguished Professor Bruce McCarl is an agricultural economist, a Regents Professor, Presidential Impact Fellow and a Senior AgriLife Research Fellow. He has served on the faculty of Texas A&M University since 1985. Dr. McCarl’s research focuses on national-level agricultural sector appraisal of the economic consequences of environmental outcomes and policy actions. His program has focused on climate change effects, adaptation and mitigation. He has long been a part of the United Nations sponsored International Panel on Climate Change and was a member of the group receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. He has authored more than 300 journal articles along, 9 books, 69 book chapters and he has been invited to deliver more than 375 presentations. Dr. McCarl’s work is highly cited in scientific circles, with more than 37,000 citations, ranking in the top 10 of agricultural economists and mathematical programmers. He has been involved in more than $90 million of funded research projects. His students have gone on to become fellows of professional societies, ministers of agriculture, deans, department heads, university professors and government/industry analysts.
COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

The inaugural Community Impact Award is presented by the Student Government Association in collaboration with the Department of Economic Development and Community Impact. This award recognizes individual students, faculty and staff for outstanding selfless service through volunteerism and improving local and university communities as part of our land-grant mission.
MASON HOLMES ’23
Animal Science Major

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Mason Holmes is a senior at Texas A&M University majoring in animal science. He is president of the Brotherhood of Christian Aggies and has spent time serving at Save Our Streets Ministries, leading the same group of kids for the past four years. Mason’s passion is to lead and serve selflessly through his actions and words.
Dr. Catherine Cole began her professional career as a social worker with a passion for social justice and making a positive impact on communities. After earning her MBA, she served with Catholic Relief Services working in developing countries overseas. She went on to lead local programs such as: Women, Infants, and Children; Head Start and Meals on Wheels. She earned her doctoral degree from the School of Education & Human Development. As a practitioner-scholar, Dr. Cole supervised a 2018 - 2019 Bush School Capstone working with OnRamp, a local startup. She later joined OnRamp as the first non-family board member. During her time as adjunct faculty in the department of educational administration and human resource development, Dr. Cole provided about 50 students with volunteer opportunities at OnRamp. She currently serves as assistant director for Asia/Eurasia at the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and Development. In this capacity, she has shepherded Afghan refugees (current Borlaug employees) through OnRamp to receive driving lessons and their licenses.
Deanna Kennedy
Assistant Director

Kinesiology & Sport Management
School of Education & Human Development

Dr. Deanna Kennedy is an assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology & Sport Management and director of the Student-Fighter Project with the Robert Conte Foundation for Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders. Dr. Kennedy teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in motor neuroscience. She developed a community-based intervention program in which her students teach motor skills to community members with Parkinson’s disease (PD). This high-impact collaboration serves community members with PD by providing them an opportunity for human connection and an outlet to maintain or improve their fitness. The impact of this program is bidirectional, as it has also significantly impacted Texas A&M students by providing them opportunities for community service and professional growth. Dr. Kennedy’s research addresses theoretical questions related to the neural control of human movement as well as more applied questions that have important implications for rehabilitation. She has published more than 30 peer-reviewed journal articles, two book chapters and is credited with 70 abstracts and/or conference presentations.
The R.A. “Murray” Faskin ’38 Partner in Philanthropy Award was established by the Texas A&M Foundation Board of Trustees. It acknowledges an individual faculty member’s effort to build long-term productive relationships between the university, former students and other private partners in philanthropy.
LUZ E. HERRERA
Associate Dean for Experiential Learning

School of Law

Luz E. Herrera is a law professor and serves as associate dean for experiential education at Texas A&M School of Law. The experiential learning program offers every graduating student an actual client or legal workplace experience. She also teaches at the Community Development and Entrepreneurship Law Clinic. Before entering academia, Professor Herrera ran her own practice and founded Community Lawyers, Inc., a non-profit organization that encourages access to affordable legal services and develops innovative opportunities for legal professionals in underserved communities. These experiences have influenced her scholarship that promotes legal “low bono” service delivery models and post-graduate support programs for lawyers starting their own firms. She previously served as assistant dean for clinical education, experiential learning and public service at UCLA School of Law. She is a special advisor for the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services and a member of the Executive Committee of the Texas Commission on Access to Justice. She is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and a member of the American Law Institute. Professor Herrera is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Law School.
The Distinguished Graduate Student Award represents one of Texas A&M’s highest honors for outstanding achievements by graduate students in research or teaching.
The Association of Former Students
Distinguished Graduate Student Award

Excellence in Research

Akanksha Baranwal
Department of Aerospace Engineering

College of Engineering
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Diego Donzis

Akanksha Baranwal is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Aerospace Engineering, advised by Dr. Diego Donzis. Baranwal earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras. Her dissertation examines wall-bounded turbulent flows at high speeds using high-performance, direct-numerical simulations to improve turbulence modeling and thermal management and support the development more energy-efficient, higher-speed air and space systems. She has published research in the Journal of Fluid Mechanics and presented at American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) conferences. Her work has been recognized with several honors including the Zonta International Amelia Earhart Fellowship, the AIAA Orville and Wilbur Wright Graduate Award, and the Aero Graduate Excellence Fellowship by the Texas A&M Department of Aerospace Engineering. She was named a Rising Star in Aerospace (2022) by a cohort of leading universities and is member of the AIAA Thermophysics Technical Committee.
Bryton Praslicka earned his doctoral degree from the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering under the advisement of Dr. Hamid Toliyat. Prior to graduate study, he earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Texas A&M University. His graduate research at Texas A&M University focused on the exploration, design, optimization and physical realization of novel electric machine and magnetic gear relationships to unlock new, fully-electric vehicle propulsion and robotic actuation capabilities – especially for aerospace applications. Praslicka was a College of Engineering Merit Excellence Fellow and a Thomas W. Powell ’62 & Powell Industries Inc. Fellow. He has published 11 papers in academic journals, filed six pending patents and launched a startup company, FluxWorks, to commercialize his research. His entrepreneurial excellence and leadership have been recognized with several awards and distinctions including the Texas Business Hall of Fame Future Texas Business Legend Award. Throughout his graduate program, he mentored fourteen undergraduate engineering students, several of whom have published their work and have moved on to pursue graduate school or careers in industry. After graduation, Praslicka will continue as FluxWorks’ full-time chief executive officer.
Kunyu Wang is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Chemistry under the supervision of Dr. Hong-Cai Zhou. Prior to studying at Texas A&M University, Wang graduated with honors from Nankai University with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry. His dissertation focuses on hierarchically-structured porous materials with potential applications in chemical separation and sensing. He has published over 40 research articles in top journals, including 11 first-authored papers. His research has been recognized with multiple awards, including the Foresight Fellowship in Molecular Machines (2022), the American Chemical Society (ACS) Younger Chemist Leadership Development Award (2022), the Manuel P. Soriaga Graduate Fellowship (2022), the JEMS Scholarship for Collaborative Research (2022), the Phi Lambda Upsilon Sharon Dabney Award for Excellence in Research and Service (2022), and the Dow Chemical Company/Charlene Black Miller ’79 Endowed Memorial Fellowship (2021). Wang served as an Early Career Network representative for the U.S. Department of Energy and as secretary of the ACS Polymer Chemistry and Polymeric Materials Science and Engineering Student Chapter at Texas A&M. Wang currently works as a Vagelos Institute Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania.
Matthew W. Vaughan is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering under the advisement of Dr. Ibrahim Karaman. Prior to his doctoral studies, Vaughan completed a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and a master's in materials science and engineering, both at Texas A&M. His doctoral research focuses on developing novel processes for enhancing the performance limits of advanced high-strength steels. By using a technique known as severe plastic deformation, he was able to enhance strength and toughness in steels, while also developing a process optimization framework for additive manufacturing technologies to systematically eliminate porosity for a powder-fed printing process. Vaughan currently works as a graduate intern at Sandia National Laboratories, where he studies 3D materials science microstructural analysis techniques.
Michelle Jonika is a doctoral candidate in the interdisciplinary program in genetics and genomics under the advisement of biology professor Dr. Heath Blackmon. Prior to her graduate work, she earned a bachelor’s degree from Texas A&M studying forensic genetics under the guidance of Dr. Aaron Tarone. Her graduate research focuses on the evolution of genome structure and sex chromosomes using computational and machine learning methods. While at Texas A&M, Jonika completed an internship at Bayer Crop Science where she developed a statistical framework to identify interactions between loci in crops of interest, and completed a computational biology internship at PetDx, a biotech startup, where she applied machine learning approaches to high-complexity clinical data sets to predict canine cancer types. Jonika is the recipient of the Interdisciplinary Program in Genetics and Genomics Research Excellence Award (2022), Texas A&M’s Data Science Ambassador Fellowship (2022-2023) and numerous research presentation awards. She has published four first-author papers, seven collaborative papers and six popular science articles. Jonika has mentored seven undergraduate biology and genetics students, several of whom published their work and have pursued graduate school or careers in industry.
The Association of Former Students

Distinguished Graduate Student Award

Excellence in Research

Peter Renner

Department of Mechanical Engineering

College of Engineering
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Hong Liang

Dr. Peter Renner earned a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, under the guidance of Dr. Hong Liang. His dissertation research focused on the design and development of novel technologies for additive thermal coating applications in high-performance composite materials. Renner’s designs enable cost-efficient, on-site thermal coating and extend component life in extreme environments. Prior to his graduate studies, Renner earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Alaska-Anchorage where he was an undergraduate research assistant in plasma physics and co-founder of the university’s Robotics Club. He has published 20 peer-reviewed articles, given seven oral presentations at technical conferences and is also a 2022 Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Riser. Renner is the recipient of the J. Mike Walker ’66 Impact Award (2021), the Byron Anderson ‘54 Fellowship (2021), the Independent Lubricant Manufacturer’s Association Bob Jackson Award (2019) and the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (2018), among several other awards. Renner is now a postdoctoral appointee in the Materials Reliability Group at Sandia National Laboratories, where his research focuses on the characterization of corrosion and surface modification of manufactured alloys.
Seoin Yoon is a doctoral candidate in management from Mays Business School, under the advisement of Dr. Joel Koopman. Prior to studying at Texas A&M, she earned a master’s in management from Seoul National University and a bachelor’s in business administration from Sogang University in South Korea. Her research focuses on workplace mistreatment, work-life issues and daily work experiences. During her time at Texas A&M, Yoon published three manuscripts in the Journal of Applied Psychology and one in the Journal of Business and Psychology. Additionally, she has developed a pipeline of research currently under advanced review at top-tier journals. In recognition of her academic achievement, she received the inaugural Dr. Michael Hitt Scholarship in Management (2022) and the Dean’s Award for Outstanding Research by a Doctoral Student (2021). Yoon will join Arizona State University as an assistant professor beginning in fall 2023.
Audrey Earnhardt-San will earn a Ph.D. in physiology of reproduction in the Department of Animal Science this spring. Earnhardt-San earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science from North Carolina State University studying swine functional genetics. Under the co-advisement of Dr. Thomas Welsh and Ronald Randel, her doctoral research focused on how prenatal transportation stress affects the methylome and transcriptome of stress axis tissues in Brahman cattle. At Texas A&M, Earnhardt-San served as president and treasurer of the Animal Science Graduate Student Association and graduate director for the southern section of the American Society of Animal Science. In addition to her research and studies, Earnhardt-San served as a teaching assistant for 14 laboratory sections in seven different courses. She also worked with undergraduates as a coordinator for a portion of the local Animal Science Academic Quadrathlon and as a judge for the regional Southern Academic Quadrathlon. She is a recipient of the American Physiological Society Preparing Effective Physiology Educators Fellowship (2022), Joseph P. Fontenot Travel Scholarship (2020) and the Texas A&M University College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Excellence Fellowship (2019-2020).
Hadear Hassan is a doctoral candidate in the J. Mike Walker ’66 Department of Mechanical Engineering, under the guidance of Drs. Astrid Layton and Marwan Khraisheh. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Hassan earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M. Hassan's research interests are focused on advancing the fields of smart and sustainable manufacturing. In addition to research, Hassan is also deeply invested in engineering education. Throughout her graduate program, she has served as a graduate teaching assistant and instructor for Principles of Thermodynamics and Mechanical Engineering Intermediate Design courses, respectively. She is currently engaged in a project aimed at enhancing the education of bio-inspired design for undergraduate engineering students. Hassan's commitment to mentoring students also extends beyond the classroom. She mentored six of her undergraduate students through the research process to publish their senior capstone project in the International Journal of Student Project Reporting. Hassan has been awarded the J. George H. Thompson Fellowship and has recently been invited to join the Texas A&M University Delta Chapter of Tau Beta Pi.
Janet Eunjin Cho is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English. Cho earned a bachelor’s degree in English language & literature from Inha University and a master’s in English literature from Sogang University in South Korea. Under the advisement of Dr. Shawna Ross, Cho’s dissertation project investigates how the formalistic and stylistic representations of diasporic foodways in contemporary Asian American women’s literature attest to and critique the histories of violence and dispossession inflicted by the colonial, patriarchal and racial ideologies of the twentieth century, while recovering the forgotten materiality of Asian diasporic bodies. She is a recipient of several awards and fellowships, including the Diversity Fellowship, Elizabeth Qualls ’89 Endowed Graduate Fellowship and the Staley Creswell Award for Excellence in Teaching. She has published research on teaching in the 2021 special issue of Open Words, where she discusses the effectiveness of implementing creative writing assignments in undergraduate classrooms to foster students’ critical engagement with issues of social justice and shared responsibility. Cho is currently a Graduate Residential Fellow at the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research.
Excellence in Teaching - Doctoral

Jeffrey Cragin
Department of Chemistry

College of Arts & Sciences
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Daniel Singleton

Jeffrey Cragin is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Chemistry, under the advisement of Dr. Daniel Singleton, Davidson Chair in Science. Cragin graduated summa cum laude from the University of Delaware with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and a minor in biochemistry with honors. His research focused on the synthesis and kinetics of molecules used in bioorthogonal chemistry. Cragin’s academic achievements earned him national and local awards, including from the American Chemical Society, Texas A&M’s Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Honors College. As an incoming graduate student, he received the Department of Chemistry’s Lechner Scholarship. Cragin’s research uses computational and empirical tools to study the role of solvents in the mechanism of cationic rearrangements. He has served as a teaching assistant for various organic chemistry lab and lecture courses for four semesters with a teaching style characterized as dedicated, thoughtful and creative. Cragin works to ensure his students are well-prepared for their future courses and careers by emphasizing problem-solving, communication and critical thinking skills. His overarching goal is to create a positive and personalized learning environment for all students.
Meaghan Devlin is a third-year doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology under the advisement of Dr. Erinn Whiteside. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Devlin earned a bachelor’s degree in early childhood and elementary education from the University of Portland and a master’s in special education and applied behavior analysis from Texas A&M. Devlin has experience as a teacher abroad and in the U.S., in both general and special education positions. Her scholarly efforts include identifying evidence-based best practices in special education teacher preparation and in-service support to close the research-to-practice gap. Devlin’s dissertation will examine variables associated with effectively supporting special education teachers in their first year of teaching. She is in her third semester of teaching Classroom Management and Behavioral Interventions in the special education teacher preparation program and is providing field supervision and mentorship for the same group of future teachers. Earlier this year, she participated in the School of Education and Human Development Voices of Impact speaker series, where she discussed understanding inclusion and accessibility in schools and the broader community.
Miriam Morua Catalan is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology working with Drs. Georgianne Moore and Carol Loopstra. Prior to studying at Texas A&M, Catalan obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in biology with an emphasis in cellular biology and plant ecology from California State University - Fullerton. Catalan's research focuses on plant-based sensors for measuring water stress to inform irrigation management. During her time at Texas A&M, Catalan has been awarded the Graduate Diversity Excellence fellowship (2019-2022), the Lechner scholarship (2019) and the Watershed Management Doctoral Scholarship (2019-2020). Catalan has also been recognized as an outstanding Ph.D. student for the Texas A&M Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta (2022). Throughout her graduate student career, Catalan has taught several undergraduate lab courses in the subject of ecology. Recently, she served as a course curriculum assistant to develop new course material for an undergraduate lab with Dr. Fay Belshe. Catalan will receive the Academy for Future Faculty fellow certificate in the spring from the Center for Teaching Excellence.
NATHAN LANNING

Department of Oceanography

College of Arts & Sciences
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jessica Fitzsimmons

Nathan Lanning is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Oceanography, conducting research in the lab of Dr. Jessica Fitzsimmons. He earned a bachelor’s degree at the University of New Haven researching how green seaweed can naturally remove toxic copper from seawater. His current doctoral research, funded by a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (NSF GRFP), focuses on the distribution of iron and lead across the central Pacific Ocean. Lanning has excelled as an educator with his unique ability to engage students in both lecture and lab classes as well as one-on-one research mentoring. He has mentored four undergraduates conducting independent research, with one student having been awarded their own NSF GRFP this past year. His commitment to hands-on education was exemplified while co-leading a team of ten undergraduates aboard a four-day scientific research cruise in the Gulf of Mexico last summer. For his dedication to empowering the next generation of Earth Scientists, the Department of Oceanography awarded Lanning with the John Wormuth Award for Outstanding Achievement in Graduate Teaching (2023).
College of Arts & Sciences
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Naomi Nagaya

Shelby Blair is a fifth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences studying behavioral and cellular neuroscience under the advisement of Dr. Naomi Nagaya. Prior to studying at Texas A&M, Blair earned a bachelor’s in psychology and neuroscience at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Blair’s dissertation research focuses on examining hormone modulation of fear learning in an animal model of post-traumatic stress disorder. Her work aims to further elucidate the factors contributing to sex differences in the prevalence of stress- and trauma-related disorders. Through her graduate program, Shelby teaches multiple undergraduate psychology courses ranging from a 100-level Introduction to Psychology lecture to a 400-level Neuroscience Research Writing seminar.
This award honors Texas A&M University faculty and staff members in the areas of teaching, research, student relations, graduate mentoring, extension/outreach/continuing education/professional development, administration, and support staff.
LUZ E. HERRERA
Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Experiential Learning

School of Law

Luz E. Herrera is a Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Experiential Education at Texas A&M School of Law. She leads the Law School’s experiential learning program that offers every graduating student a client or legal workplace experience. She also teaches in the Community Development and Entrepreneurship Law Clinic. Before entering academia, Herrera ran her own practice and founded Community Lawyers, Inc., a non-profit that encourages access to affordable legal services and develops innovative opportunities for legal professionals in underserved communities. These experiences have influenced her scholarship that promotes legal “low bono” service delivery models, post-graduate support for lawyers starting their own firms and innovative service models to address legal needs. Herrera encourages entrepreneurship and promotes access to justice through experiential learning. She currently serves as a special advisor for the American Bar Association’s Commission Standing Committee in the Delivery of Legal Services and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Texas Commission on Access to Justice. She is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, member of the American Law Institute, and graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Law School.
Dr. Darby Roberts is in her 24th year at Texas A&M University, and serves as the as Director of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment and Research. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration as well as degrees in human resource management and business administration from Texas A&M. She has worked in several capacities within the Division of Student Affairs and currently leads the division’s assessment efforts which provide critical insights and data for their 14 departments, hundreds of student organizations and external partners and stakeholders. Roberts maintains a distinguished reputation within the field of student affairs with more than 20 publications, numerous national presentations and extensive involvement with professional organizations. Further, her professional reputation has garnered several honors including NASPA’s (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) Outstanding Contributions by a Scholar-Practitioner Award in, The Association of Former Students Randy Matson Professional Staff Award and being named a Fish Camp Namesake. Her service to Texas A&M, and her commitment as a scholar-practitioner, also extends into teaching and preparing graduate students in the educational administration program where she has taught courses for more than 16 years.
Dr. Robin Murphy is a Raytheon Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at Texas A&M University, a founding director of the Center for Robot-Assisted Search and Rescue, and an AAAS, ACM and IEEE Fellow. Murphy holds an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering, and her master’s and Ph.D. in computer science from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She helped create the fields of disaster robotics and human-robot interaction, deploying robots to 31 disasters in five countries, including the 9/11 World Trade Center, Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, and Michael, Fukushima Daiichi, the Syrian refugee crisis in Greece, the Kilauea volcanic eruption, the Surfside building collapse and numerous floods. Murphy's contributions to robotics have been recognized with the ACM Eugene L. Lawler Award for Humanitarian Contributions, a U.S. Air Force Exemplary Civilian Service Award medal, the AUVSI Foundation's Al Aube Award and the Motohiro Kisoi Award for Rescue Engineering Education. Murphy has more than 200 publications and has served on advisory committees for the Engineering and the CISE directorates at the National Science Foundation and Defense Science Board.
Dr. Mark Hoekstra is a professor in the Department of Economics and holds the Private Enterprise Research Center Rex B. Grey Professorship. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 2006 and joined Texas A&M as faculty in 2011. His primary areas of research are labor and education economics, where he focuses on questions that have direct relevance for public policy. Hoekstra holds appointments as a research associate at the National Bureau of Economics Research and as a research fellow at IZA, and was awarded the 2012 IZA Young Labor Economics Award. He has chaired or co-chaired 13 doctoral dissertations, and serves as a respected advisor, placing nearly all his students in assistant professor faculty positions. Hoekstra has consistently published well-cited papers in leading journals, and co-authors extensively with graduate students, helping them to publish in some of the most prestigious journals in the discipline. In addition to his personal mentoring successes, Hoekstra has transformed the mentoring culture of the Texas A&M Economics Department.
Dr. Bruce A. McCarl is University Distinguished Professor, Regents Professor, Presidential Impact Fellow, Texas AgriLife Research Senior Fellow and Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M. He has a Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University in Management Science and his areas of emphasis include climate change economics, water, agricultural policy and quantitative analysis. He served as the lead agricultural economic analyst on the 2001 U.S. National Climate Change Assessment, a participant in the 2010 National Academies America’s Climate Choices study, the lead author on the 2007 and 2014 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assessment reports and as the review editor on the 2019 IPCC report on Climate Change and Land. McCarl has chaired or co-chaired 97 doctoral dissertations and 24 master’s degrees for students, and placed graduates in academia, industry and government roles. He has authored 311 journal articles and 400 other papers and presentations where more than 150 of his articles are coauthored with graduate students. McCarl has been involved with more than $95 million in sponsored research with funding awarded by the USDA, NSF, USDOE, USEPA, NOAA, UNFCCC and UNDP, among others.
Rachel Ball currently serves as an assistant director at Texas A&M University at Galveston’s Center for Academic Learning and Support. She advises more than 600 undergraduate students in the Marine Biology and Marine and Coastal Environmental Science departments. Ball completed her master’s degree in higher education administration from Texas Tech University, and has won numerous awards including the Texas A&M Office for Student Success’ Advisor of the Month, Texas A&M Galveston Employee of the Quarter and was nominated by students to be a SALT Camp Namesake. Since 2019, Ball has taught a Hullaballoo U course for transfer and nontraditional students to learn about campus resources, overall wellbeing and academic success strategies. She encourages students to explore the world, and in 2021, she accepted the role of education abroad liaison for the Galveston campus. Ball was the leader in building the online course override form system to assist students with course registration obstacles and developed a tracking system to support advisors in addressing student registration issues. She is strongly invested in student development and serves as advisor for two student organizations.
Sherree Kessler has been an academic advisor for eighteen years. The past 11 years have been in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Texas A&M University, where she is an academic advisor IV. Kessler earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Arts in Educational Administration, with an emphasis in student affairs, from Texas A&M University. While in graduate school, she worked as a non-teaching graduate assistant in the Department of Gender Issues Education Services for two years. In 2016 she received the President’s Academic Advising Award. She received the President’s Meritorious Service Award in 2020, College of Science Core Values Award in 2021 and was a Fish Camp Namesake in 2022.
Dr. Bruce McCarl is a senior professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. He joined Texas A&M in 1985 and is a University Distinguished Professor, Regents Professor, Presidential Impact Fellow and AgriLife Research Senior Fellow in agricultural economics. His work addresses climate change economics, water, agricultural policy and optimization. He has been an invited member of several national climate change-related teams (2001 US National Assessment, 2010 National Academy America’s Climate Choices and 2019 EPA biogenic carbon) and four major international efforts (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change). McCarl’s numerous awards include a share of the Nobel Peace Prize and fellow-level (highest distinction) awards in three professional associations. He has published more than 310 refereed journal articles, 69 book chapters and 11 books. This includes more than 50 articles in the top journals in his fields and papers in Science, Nature, Nature Communications and Nature Climate Change. He has given more than 390 invited presentations to professional and governmental audiences. His work has been highly cited with over 34,500 Google Scholar cites and an h-index of 82.
Dr. R. Malatesha Joshi is a professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture. He has made sustained seminal contributions to theory, practice and research in all areas of literacy including reading, writing, special education and African American and Hispanic literacy. His groundbreaking theoretical models on reading relating to the Simple View of Reading and developing the Componential Model of Reading have been the subject of hundreds of research studies and cited thousands of times. His contribution to the field of literacy includes 22 books, 200 scientific papers and chapters, and more than 500 presentations worldwide. In 2021, Joshi was awarded the title of University Professor, one of Texas A&M’s highest honors. He was elected to the Reading Hall of Fame, named a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association and was awarded the Samuel Torrey and June Lyday Orton Award “which recognizes a person or persons who have made a vital contribution to our scientific understanding of dyslexia” by the International Dyslexia Association. Joshi has received grants in excess of $40 million from various national and international agencies.
Dr. Binayak Mohanty is a Regents Professor, AgriLife Research Senior Faculty Fellow and holds the COALS Chair in Hydrologic Engineering and Sciences. He is a professor in the Department of Biological and Agricultural and an international leader in using satellite remote sensing to study soil moisture, soil hydraulics and evapotranspiration at different scales. Impactful results of Mohanty’s research include implementing satellite platforms for hydrologic parameter exploration at multiple scales and discovering soil moisture scaling rules including the dominant geophysical controls under different hydrologic and climatic conditions. He has published 155 peer-reviewed papers and eight book chapters, presented more than 450 technical seminars and served the hydrologic science/engineering profession in numerous leadership roles. He is the Director of the Texas Water Observatory, a state-of-the-art instrumented river basin, for multi-scale water, carbon, and energy cycle studies. He has advised more than 54 postdoctoral, doctoral and master students and served on 60 additional graduate student committees, who now have successful careers in academia, national lab, or industry. Mohanty has garnered more than $56 million in external funding.
Dr. Cheryl J. Craig is a professor and the Houston Endowment Endowed Chair in Urban Education in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture. She conducts field-based research that is mutually beneficial to practitioners while making exemplary contributions to national and international teachers and teaching. She is the founding director of the Collaborative for Innovations in Teacher Education and currently serves as the chair of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT). She is the executive editor of Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, executive editor of Teaching and Teacher Education and associate editor of Frontiers of Teacher Education. She has authored four books, 11 research handbook chapters, and more than 160 SCOPUS-ranked journal articles and contributed to more than 20 Web of Science journals. She has won numerous awards including multiple Outstanding Article Awards, the prestigious Michael Huberman Award and Division B’s (Curriculum) Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Educational Research Association. She also received an Outstanding Article Award from ISATT. Craig’s mentorship and professionalism have been recognized at Texas A&M University through a 2018 Mentorship Award and a 2019 Outstanding New Employee Award.
Dr. Stephen Maren is a University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Psychology. As an internationally recognized scholar, he has made foundational contributions to our understanding of how the brain learns and remembers. He has been particularly focused on emotional memories, with an emphasis on fearful events. His work spans several levels of analysis from neurotransmitter receptors to brain circuits and behavior. This multilevel approach has driven new empirical and theoretical work in the field and seeded global efforts to develop therapeutic interventions for psychiatric disorders, including PTSD. He has authored more than 180 publications and is one of the most highly cited neuroscientists in the world (top 1%). Maren has been recognized with numerous professional awards including the Donald O. Hebb Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award by the American Psychological Association (APA) the Distinguished Investigator Award from the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation and the Distinguished Scientific Award for an Early Career Contribution to Psychology (Behavioral Neuroscience) from the APA. For the past 25 years, he has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and currently holds four active NIH grants.
Dr. Larry J. Suva, originally from Melbourne, Australia, is a professor and head of the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology. He is known as a leading expert on the skeletal consequences of disease, with interests in breast cancer bone metastasis and multiple myeloma, as well as fracture healing, bone regeneration, bone anabolism and the investigation of rare bone diseases and bone infections. His current research efforts include a focus on the development of large animal pre-clinical models of rare bone disease that have the potential to change the study of bone turnover, as well as bone physiology, and provide novel insight into future therapeutic directions that target regulatory pathways important for bone physiology. The most important contribution of his research has been the discovery of human parathyroid hormone_related protein (PTHrP) and the hormonal regulation of bone metastasis. Suva serves as the principal investigator (PI), Co_PI, or co_investigator for three active National Institutes of Health R01 level grants and has had a fully-funded research program for more than 30 years. He has received numerous awards throughout his career for teaching, mentorship and research.
Kurt Felpel joined Texas A&M in 2015 as a program manager in the Department of Economics and was promoted to assistant department head in 2018. Throughout his tenure, he has taken the lead role in several key initiatives that have generated significant benefits to undergraduate economics majors. One of his primary contributions was the Economics Career Fair. This semesterly event brings to campus recruiters from more than a dozen top-level employers to meet and interview economics majors. Contacts made at this event have led to scores of internships and post-graduation jobs for our students. He is the initiator, designer and director of this very successful event. Felpel is also the lead for the Undergraduate Research Assistant (URA) program, a high-impact undergraduate research experience for undergraduate economics majors. The URA program matches undergrads with second-year M.S. students for a semester-long research project. He retired from the U.S. Army as a lieutenant colonel and later in his career was a professor and department head of Army ROTC at the University of Georgia.
Student Affairs

Maria Ortega, associate director in the Department of Disability Resources, has worked at the university for 23 years. She began her Texas A&M career in Disability Resources as a testing center assistant and pursued her education while working full-time. After graduating from Texas A&M, she was recruited to stay in the department to work as an accommodations counselor. She had a caseload of students and proved to be very effective in her relationships with students, faculty and staff. After completing her master’s degree, she was promoted to assistant director and most recently to associate director. Ortega currently oversees the Disability Resources Testing Center, works with a caseload of students and serves as the liaison to the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. She serves on the Division of Student Affairs Risk Management Coordination Committee and previously served as chair for two years. In recognition of her work, she was awarded the Division of Student Affairs Award of Distinction and the Randy Matson ’67 Association of Former Students Award (the Division of Student Affairs’ highest honor).
Dr. Adrienne Brundage is an instructional assistant professor of entomology and forensics, the assistant director of the Texas A&M Forensics and Investigative Sciences (FIVS) program in the Department of Entomology and one of 21 board-certified forensic entomologists in the United States. Currently, she teaches an average of 600 students per semester in online and in-person courses, mentors 40 to 50 student-driven research projects per semester, provides continuing education opportunities for professional investigators and police officers, advises on-campus organizations, creates and maintains several open-access journals aimed at providing high-quality research to the public and engages in ongoing research in educational techniques, forensics, entomology, and any other area that might benefit her students. Brundage’s goal is to give all students, regardless of the situation, a memorable and relevant education while doing her part to make Texas and the world a slightly better place. She serves her department and the university through membership on departmental and college-level committees, outreach to future students and support of campus-wide programs.
Dr. Andy Herring holds the John K. Riggs ’41 beef cattle professorship in the Department of Animal Science and currently serves as interim department head. He teaches undergraduate and graduate-level classes in beef cattle production and management and conducts applied research regarding ruminant livestock production systems. His teaching passion is to inspire students to become lifelong learners and to consider whole systems thinking. He incorporates classical and current industry issues and research findings into his classes and utilizes a variety of teaching technologies and strategies. Herring authored a textbook that is used at 10 universities. He has written or co-written 72 refereed articles, 29 book chapters, 33 conference proceeding papers, 34 research/extension publications and 113 scientific abstracts. Herring has reviewed research articles for nine journals and served on the editorial review board of three journals. He has trained or co-trained 14 Ph.D. students, 31 M.S. students and 12 M.Ag. students. He has received numerous awards including the Outstanding Young Scientist Award for Education from the Southern Section of the American Society of Animal Science and the Association of Former Students College-Level Teaching Excellence Award.
Dr. Johanna Heseltine is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences. Her teaching focus is on urinary tract disorders. In clinical practice, her interests include a broad range of internal medicine disorders. Her research areas include studies to enhance the care of veterinary patients and methods to improve student instruction. Heseltine received her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 1998. She completed a rotating internship at the Atlantic Veterinary College and a Small Animal Internal Medicine Residency and master’s degree at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. She has been a Diplomate of the ACVIM since 2004. Prior to joining Texas A&M in 2014 as a clinical assistant professor, she held academic teaching positions and worked in private specialty practice. She received the Richard H. Davis Teaching Award twice (2016 and 2019) and the Juan Carlos Robles Emanuelli Teaching Award (2018).
Dr. Anton Hoffman, a clinical professor in the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences has been teaching both professional-level and undergraduate-level anatomy for 35 years. He has also taught surgery and neuroanatomy and clinical neurology in the professional-level curriculum. He has served as a graduate advisor and mentor for numerous graduate-level students in the graduate program. He has been published in more than 20 journals, textbooks, abstracts, and other publications. Hoffman has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the Zoetis Distinguished Veterinary Teaching Award, the National Pfizer Distinguished Veterinary Teaching Award, The Texas A&M University System’s Student-Led Awards for Teaching Excellence, the National Carl J. Norden Distinguished Achievement Award and The Association of Former Students College-level Distinguished Achievement in Teaching Award (nominated by DVM Students). In 2007 and 2015, he served as a qualifying examination question writer for the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.
Anne McGowan is an instructional professor in the Department of Construction Science, currently serving her 46th year at Texas A&M University. She has taught courses in construction safety and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance, corporate wellness and kinesiology, adapted physical education and health. She developed a wheelchair basketball team for her students-Texas A&M Rolling Thunders, a student organization called Aggie Partner of Special Olympics where students work with differently abled populations and she also created a safety display using life-size manikins, scaffolds, trench engulfment and bodily injuries to simulate real-world safety issues for use in teaching construction science safety. McGowan serves as the chair of the teaching section within the Construction Science Promotion and Tenure Committee and as a member of both the Physical Education Activity Program and the School of Education and Human Development promotion and tenure committees. She is also a federal OSHA trainer. Nominated for the Outstanding Teaching Award at Prairie View A&M, she was also recognized by Ben Masters, author of “Unbranded” for the knowledge a construction science student gained in her safety class that helped save a horse shoer’s life.
Dr. Sarah McNamara is an assistant professor of history and core faculty in the Latina/o/x & Mexican American Studies Program. Her research, writing and teaching examine the histories of Latinxs, women and gender, immigration and labor in the United States. She is widely published, and her first book, Ybor City: Crucible of the Latina South (UNC Press, April 2023), examines the history of three generations of Latinas who lived, labored and fought to survive in Florida from the 1880s through the 1960s. This history unveils the underexplored role of women's leadership within movements for social and economic justice as it illustrates how people, places and politics become who and what they are. Additionally, her work has appeared in the Journal of American Ethnic History, Labor: Studies in Working Class History, South Writ Large and 50 Events that Shaped Latino History with essays forthcoming in the Oxford Handbook and Southern Cultures. McNamara was named a Mellon Emerging Faculty Leader by the Institute for Citizens and Scholars at Princeton University, Emerging Diversity Scholar by Michigan University and a Faculty Fellow by the American Association of University Women.
Robin Rackley is a clinical professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture, where she implemented a five-year master’s program. She teaches and conducts research in the preparation of pre-service teachers and the development of teacher leaders. The extended preparation of these pre-service teachers through their participation in this program leads to the transferability of the skills studied but not yet applied as undergraduate students. By combining graduate coursework concurrently with undergraduate fieldwork, students experience a deeper understanding of all areas of teaching. She served as the field-based coordinator from 2008 to 2022 and developed professional development opportunities for pre-service teachers, coordinated student field placements and conducted teaching observations in the local public schools. Rackley has given more than 50 presentations (international and domestic) and has 17 publications documenting her work with pre-service educators. She received The Association of Former Students College-Level Award of Distinction for Teaching Excellence, a Departmental Award for Teaching Excellence from the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture, The Association of Former Students College-Level Teaching Distinguished Achievement Award, the Student Led Award for Teaching Excellence and the Provost-APT Faculty Teaching Excellence Award.
Dr. Scott Shafer is a professor and associate department head in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Science. His teaching, research and service have been oriented toward the design, planning and use of parks, trails and other public spaces. His teaching employs high-impact practices through opportunities that help students develop cultural competence through study abroad courses and an understanding of “real world” processes through community planning. Students apply theory and concepts in developing plans and designing solutions to enhance the quality of life. Shafer’s students have been involved in projects ranging from a grant-funded Environmental Protection Agency proposal on green infrastructure, which students presented in Washington DC, to the development of a Texas Recreational Trails grant that was successful in helping a community nonprofit in Hearne, Texas secure $145,000 for trail development. He has chaired the committees of more than 40 graduate students and served on another 60 graduate committees. His awards include the COALS’ Vice Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Teaching Award and the USDA’s Outstanding Teaching Award for North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture.
Aric Short has been a member of the faculty at the School of Law since 2013. He teaches classes in professional identity, torts, property and leadership. He is a national leader in the development and formation of law students’ professional identities. In Professional Identity, the innovative course he helped design, 1L students are introduced to core lawyering competencies and skills that are often overlooked in the traditional law school curriculum. That course, one of the first required 1L professional identity courses in the country, was recognized with the prestigious American Bar Association E. Smythe Gambrell Professionalism Award. Flowing from that course, and drawing on his deep commitment to his students’ well-being and success, Short also serves as director of 1L Mentoring, overseeing students’ preparation for their first summer jobs and their transition into their 2L year. The Law School Admission Council invited him to serve as one of seven instructors in its pioneering asynchronous Professional Identity Program that will be taught nationwide. He received the Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Service in Teaching Award and was voted 1L Professor of the Year by students eight times.
Dr. Kristi J. Shryock is an associate professor in the Department of Aerospace Engineering. She has been a faculty member at Texas A&M University for 26 years. During that time, she developed two new foundational aerospace courses essential for students at the sophomore level engaging them with innovative instructional methods and experiential learning in the classroom. She also developed an engineering fundamentals course for at-risk entering engineers that was taught college-wide and has led extensive course redesign for three undergraduate aerospace courses. Shryock was at the forefront in her department for teaching remote courses well before COVID accelerated the need for online learning. She has received numerous awards and honors including the Provost Academic Professional Track Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, The Association of Former Students College-Level Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching and she is a two-time recipient of the Instructional Faculty Teaching Award in the College of Engineering.