

**TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE**

**FACULTY
HANDBOOK**

Updated June 2002

Foreword

This handbook is designed as a brief and easily accessible summary of the Texas A&M University-Commerce policies, procedures, programs, and practices that affect the lives of faculty members. We hope it provides both basic information of use to new faculty members and a handy reference summary for current faculty.

The handbook is *not* a contract between the university and members of its faculty. Nor is it a statement of university policy and procedures. Faculty members wishing to see the formal statements may consult the official Texas A&M University System Policies, A&M-Commerce Rules or A&M-Commerce Procedures by going to the following website: <http://www7.tamu-commerce.edu/administration/policies/>

This handbook summarizes many of those policies, and each summary includes a citation to the official policy on which it is based. Thus the handbook provides an easy index. Because procedures are continually updated, faculty members are encouraged to examine the full, current policies that concern them.

It is hoped that the faculty members of Texas A&M University-Commerce find this handbook to be both easy to use and helpful. All questions and comments concerning any information in this document should be directed to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Henry H. Ross
Faculty Handbook Editor

A Special Note

This handbook is meant to be a guide for all faculty members alike: full-time and part-time, tenured and non-tenured, permanent, adjunct, and ad interim, no matter what the rank.

Most of the topics discussed here, whether they deal with rights and/or responsibilities, apply to all faculty equally. In the cases of exceptions (specifically the tenure, promotion, and merit evaluation policies), the exceptions have been spelled out at the relevant points in the text.

Hopefully, you will find this document useful during your employment at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

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Section I

History, Mission, Vision and Administrative Organization

A. History

Texas A&M University-Commerce began as East Texas Normal College in 1889 when founder William Leonidas Mayo opened the doors to a one-building campus in Cooper. His creed, which continues today, was “Ceaseless Industry, Fearless Investigation, Unfettered Thought, and Unselfish Service to Others.” The institution’s history of dynamic change began in 1894 when “Mayo’s College” moved to Commerce. The State of Texas took over the campus in 1917 and the name was changed to East Texas State Normal College. In 1923, the school was renamed East Texas State Teachers College. The graduate program was added in 1935, and in 1957 the Legislature, recognizing that the purpose of the institution had broadened from teacher education, changed the name to East Texas State College. Following the inauguration of the first doctoral program in 1962, the name was changed to East Texas State University. In 1996, the institution entered the Texas A&M University System and became Texas A&M University-Commerce. Today, on the Commerce campus, the Metroplex Center, the Universities Center at Dallas, Navarro College Partnership, and through state-of-the-art distance learning, the University meets the undergraduate, graduate and professional needs of the citizens of Northeast Texas and beyond. Its mission is achieved through teaching, scholarship, and service activities on its campuses, and in the community and region.

B. Mission

Texas A&M University-Commerce nurtures and educates for success through access to academic, research, and service programs of high quality.

C. Vision

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

D. Administrative Structure

1. Texas A&M University-Commerce
2. Provost & Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
3. Provost & Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (Academic)
4. Vice President for Business and Administration
5. Vice President for Marketing and Resource Development

Organizational charts for the university administrative structure can be located at http://www7.tamu-commerce.edu/administration/organization_charts/

E. University Councils

Athletic Council: The Council advises the president on matters pertaining to intercollegiate athletic policy and advises the athletic director on procedure implementation. The Council is primarily concerned with intercollegiate athletics as part of the overall mission of the university.

Business and Administration Advisory Council: The mission of this council is to provide the best possible environment for the “Student” and the “Teacher” to come together and have a positive learning experience.

College Executive Councils -- Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business and Technology and Education and Human Services: Each council recommends academic procedures governing undergraduate academic and professional programs; studies and recommends curriculum matters and encourages high academic standards

for all undergraduate and graduate work within the college; and makes recommendations to enhance the ability of the college and the university to meet student needs and to enhance the quality of their educational experience. Membership of each council includes the department heads and others appointed by the dean of each college who also serves as the chair.

Council on Educator Preparation: The Council makes recommendations pertaining to educator programs. In addition to faculty, student membership includes the president of the Student Education Association, one graduate student to be recommended from Phi Delta Kappa, one student in the College of Education (as recommended by the Student Education Association) and representatives from the public school NET CPDT partners.

Deans Council: The Council meets regularly to advise the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs on day-to-day operations and functions of the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. Membership includes the associate vice-president for academic affairs, associate vice-president for student affairs & enrollment management, deans of the academic colleges and the graduate school, dean of student affairs, and dean of enrollment management.

Graduate Council: The Council formulates and recommends policies and procedures related to graduate education to the President of the University.

Marketing and Resource Development Directors' Council: The Council meets regularly to advise the Vice President for Marketing and Resource Development on day-to-day operations and functions of the Division of Marketing and Resource Development.

President's Advisory Council: The Council serves as an advisory and policy making body to the President and Chief Executive Officer with broad responsibilities for strategic planning and budgeting. The membership includes the President and all division vice presidents.

Provost Council: The Council meets with the Provost on matters concerning academic and student affairs. Its primary role is to advise and communicate relative to issues impacting both academic and student affairs. Membership is selected by the Provost.

F. Administrative Committees

Academic Affairs Undergraduate Student Appeals Committee: The purpose of this committee, composed of faculty and student members appointed by the president, is to hear appeals of undergraduate students who have been placed on academic suspension. [A&M-Commerce Procedures A11.22](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A11.23](#)

Academic and Student Affairs Technology Committee: The Committee acts as a resource to the administration and faculty on matters that pertain to the acquisition, allocation, management and disposition of technology resources.

Academic Support Committee for Students with Learning or Physical Disabilities: The purpose of this committee is to review applications from those students who claim a disability and are seeking assignment to address the specific disability. Membership includes faculty and staff representing Academic Advising, Mach III, Student Counseling and Special Education or Psychology.

Advisory Committee: The Committee reviews cases involving: (1) non-reappointment of a probationary faculty member when violation of academic freedom is alleged; (2) non-reappointment of a probationary faculty member on alleged grounds of discrimination involving race, sex, age, religion, national origin, or any other category protected by federal regulation and (3) all other grievances not previously identified. This Committee is composed of six full-time tenured faculty who devote one-half or more of their time to teaching and/or research. Faculty members may not hold simultaneous membership on the Hearing Committee. [System Policy 12.01](#) and [System Policy 12.02](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedures A12.01](#)

Alcohol and Drug Education Task Force: The Committee develops the necessary information and implements programs that will bring and keep our institution in compliance with state and federal mandates in the area of alcohol and drug education. Membership represents a cross-section of the university community.

Commencement Committee: The Committee makes arrangements to conduct all commencement exercises and studies and recommends procedures governing commencement exercises. Membership on this committee includes faculty, administrators, librarians, staff and students.

Committee on Admission and Retention in Teacher Education (CARTE): The Committee determines admission and retention requirements and serves as the appellate body for educator preparation programs. Membership includes faculty and professional personnel from the Colleges of Education and Human Services, Arts and Sciences, and Business and Technology who are involved in educator preparation.

Courtesy Committee: The Committee collects courtesy funds from members of faculty and staff and supervises expenditures of the fund for appropriate occasions on behalf of the University. Membership on this committee includes the Dean of Students (chair), faculty and staff.

Discipline Committee: The Committee serves as the chief appellate body of the institution to whom students may appeal decisions rendered by student judicial agencies or by the Dean of Students and hears cases of original jurisdiction when such cases are referred to it by the Dean of Students, the academic deans, faculty members, staff or students.

Distinguished Alumnus Award Committee: The Committee administers the policy statement for the Citation of Distinguished Alumnus (Procedure P01.03). Membership includes faculty, alumni association members, executive director of the Alumni Association and student representation.

Energy Management Task Force: This group serves to advise the President on matters that impact the university's use of energy, including power, gas and water. The committee seeks ways for the university to conserve energy and to reduce energy cost. The members consist of representatives from physical plant operations, auxiliary services, administration, and faculty.

Faculty Development Committee: The role of this committee is to plan and execute a variety of activities to aid faculty members in the continuing development of teaching and research skills. The range of activities extends from informal social functions and topical luncheons to book discussion groups, retreats, teleconferences, teaching workshops, visiting lectures, new faculty orientation and international student experiences. Its most important function is to encourage interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary discussions as well as approaches to instruction. The committee includes representatives from a cross-section of the University faculty, with representation from all three colleges.

Hearing Committee: The Committee reviews cases involving: (1) dismissal of a tenured faculty member; (2) dismissal of a probationary faculty member with an unexpired appointment extending beyond the date of dismissal; and (3) referrals from the Advisory Committee concerning non-reappointment of probationary faculty members as described in Procedure A12.01. Membership includes fifteen full-time tenured faculty who devote one-half or more of their time to teaching and/or research. Faculty may not hold simultaneous membership on the Advisory Committee. [System Policy 12.01](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#)

Homecoming Committee: The Committee plans and oversees the activities of the annual homecoming celebration. Committee membership includes a cross-section of the university community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Honorary Degree Committee: The Committee accepts recommendations for honorary degrees from the faculty, the administration or members of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents and forwards the recommendation(s) to the President. The recommendation(s) shall have the approval of the President and committee. The President then forwards the recommendation(s) to the Chancellor and the System Board of Regents for approval. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A11.08](#)

Honors Committee: The Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the director of the Honors program, determines what organizations will be recognized as honor societies and works with appropriate organizations in planning and conducting Honors Day.

Institutional Effectiveness Committee: Chaired by President. Committee consists of President, Vice Presidents, Assistant to the President for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, President of Faculty Senate, President of Student Government, and the tenured faculty member who is appointed by the President to co-chair the Strategic Planning Committee. Committee annually reviews and updates the mission-related goals and objectives for University-wide planning.

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects: The Committee reviews proposed research which involves any form of participation of human subjects, whether the research is being conducted by faculty, staff, or students, unless such research has been determined by a departmental committee to fall under one of the exemptions listed in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A15.02](#).

Insurance Committee: The Committee evaluates and communicates to the System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) issues and concerns about employee benefits of university faculty and staff.

Committee membership includes a cross-section of the university community, including administrators, faculty, staff and students.

International Education Fee Scholarship Awards Committee: The Committee reviews the guidelines and procedures used to select students for funding to participate in A&M-Commerce's exchange, faculty-led and affiliate, study abroad programs.

International Student Advisory Committee: The Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the International Students Advisor. Membership includes the Advisor of International Students, faculty members (one from each college), one representative from Academic Advising, the Graduate Dean's Office, Admissions Office, Records Office and international students.

Library Committee: The Committee makes recommendations to the Director on matters of procedure concerning the use and development of the Library and reviews distribution of library funds to the academic departments. Committee membership includes a cross-section of the university community, including administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Orientation, Advising, Registration & Retention (OARR): The Committee is responsible for addressing issues, procedures and policies in the areas of orientation, advising, registration and retention and recommending appropriate actions to the University administration and faculty for consideration. Committee membership includes a wide cross-section of the university community, including administration, faculty, staff and students.

Personnel Classification Committee: This Committee is charged to collectively re-evaluate classification/reclassification determinations made by the Compensation Coordinator within the Human Resources Department and make a ruling to concur with Human Resource's decision or reject Human Resource's decision and make their own ruling.

Provisional Student Appeals Committee: The Committee hears appeals of provisional students who fail to complete the requirements of their admissions status during the first semester of enrollment due to extenuating circumstances and are suspended from the University. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A11.24](#)

Recycling Committee: The primary purpose of this committee is to encourage partnership in caring for the environment through promoting the University's Recycling Program. The committee uses revenue collected to further support the program and enhance campus wide knowledge of methods to save natural resources, landfill space, and waste disposal costs.

Research Committee: The Committee has responsibility to evaluate and recommend for funding research proposals submitted by qualified faculty and professional staff.

Sam Rayburn Symposium Committee: The Committee prepares and conducts annual University programming on public affairs in honor of distinguished alumnus Sam Rayburn, former Speaker of the House. It is responsible for programming, budgeting and all arrangements for the annual conference. Membership includes representatives from the entire university community.

Scholarship Committee: The Committee monitors all out-of-state tuition waivers, reviews out-of-state tuition waiver denial appeals and chooses recipients for certain competitive scholarships.

State Employee Incentive Program: The Committee is responsible for evaluating suggestions of university employees who submit their suggestions under the State Employee Incentive Program. The State Employee Incentive Program is an effort to involve employees by evaluating and implementing their good suggestions to reduce state expenditures, increase state revenues and/or improve service quality. Membership includes six representatives from faculty, staff and administrators.

Strategic Planning Committee: The Committee reviews and analyzes available national and regional higher education trends, institutional reports of program outcomes assessment, reported progress toward goal and objective achievement and other related data and factors that are likely to affect the institution's goals and their achievements. The University's planning cycle will be based upon two biennia in order to coincide with the State legislative and budget cycle. Plans will be developed for a four-year period, with provisions for major adjustments at each two-year midpoint, and outcome assessment driven adjustments every year. Membership includes the President and co-chaired by the Assistant to the President for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and a tenured faculty member appointed by the President.

Student Financial Aid Committee: The Committee advises the Director of Student Financial Aid on matters of policy and hears appeals from denial of aid by the Director of Student Financial Aid. Membership includes

faculty; one representative from each of the following: Housing Office, Fiscal Office, Dean of Students Office and students.

Student Information System Project Implementation Team (PIT): The Committee oversees the ongoing implementation of various projects and modules of the SCT/SIS (Student Information System). The team troubleshoots issues and procedures resulting from internal system adjustments and outside reporting requirements. Committee membership includes a wide cross-section of the university community, including administration, faculty, staff and students.

Student Services Fee Advisory Committee (SSFAC): Serving an advisory role, the SSFAC makes recommendations to the President of the University regarding the allocations of student service fees. Membership includes students, administrators, faculty and staff.

Traditions Committee: This committee seeks to enhance, promote, monitor, investigate, and create traditions that celebrate the heritage and mission of the university.

Traffic Committee: The Committee studies traffic and parking problems and recommends immediate, intermediate and long-range plans that will lead to an orderly solution of problems and to the proper development of campus space and traffic facilities in the future. It coordinates student appeals. Membership includes faculty and students (as recommended by Student Government).

University Facilities Committee: This committee will review and make recommendations when requests are made for moves or relocations; and initiate “big picture” recommendations on moves and relocations that are felt to be in the best interest of the university.

University Studies Committee: The Committee has oversight responsibility for the core curriculum including approval of new courses and monitoring the degree to which current courses and the overall program are meeting the University Studies goals. The committee includes faculty representatives from all three colleges and is chaired by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee. (See Appendix A)

Web Services Committee: This committee is charged with monitoring, and when necessary, modifying the official A&M-Commerce Home Page and web presence for effectiveness, appropriateness, usefulness and customer ease of navigation in acquiring information about A&M-Commerce and the customer’s ability to communicate with university officials.

Section II

Faculty Responsibilities and Organizations

A. Faculty Responsibilities

1. All faculty have responsibilities appropriate to teaching; research, scholarship and creative activities; and service with respect to their assignment; academic discipline; and achievement of tenure and promotion and individual annual plan of performance, where applicable.
2. Curriculum Development:
 - a. The primary responsibility for the quality of the educational program resides with the faculty. In developing program and curriculum, the faculty will follow standards of good practice and guidelines established by the Texas A&M System (<http://sago.tamu.edu/aapr/SOP.htm>), The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/CBRules>) and the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (<http://www.sacscoc.org/criteria.asp>).
 - b. Faculty Senate review is required on all curriculum and program changes and may be expedited in a number of ways. Details of the curriculum change approval process are in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A03.01](#) and assistance is offered by the Coordinator of Program Development, Provost Office, 886-5020.
 - c. Faculty members are responsible for the development of course proposals for the core curriculum and for processing proposals through normal curriculum change channels. The philosophy of the core curriculum at A&M-Commerce is explained in Appendix A.
3. Instructional Techniques and Methods:
 - a. Faculty must select instructional techniques in accord with the purpose of the institution and appropriate to the specific goals of an individual course. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#)
 - b. Faculty members are responsible for selecting instructional methods and delivery systems that provide students with the opportunity to achieve the stated objectives of each course. They must assure that the methods of instruction are appropriate to the goals of the course, capabilities of the students, and at the specified level of study; i.e., baccalaureate, master's or doctoral. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#)
4. Content and Distribution of Syllabi:
 - a. Faculty members must provide the following written information to students:
 - The goals and requirements of each course,
 - The nature of the course content (course description), and
 - The methods of evaluation to be employed.
 - b. Except in extenuating circumstances, faculty must provide a copy of the syllabus specific to the respective course section to the Department Head prior to the first class meeting. Such written information should be made available to the students on the first day of instruction.
 - c. The specific course section syllabus must be in line with the common course syllabus on file in the department office.
 - d. Course syllabi are designed to support program plans supportive of the University mission: *Texas A&M University-Commerce nurtures and educates for success through access to academic, research, and service programs of high quality.* [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#)
 - e. Suggested format for course syllabi may be found in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#).
 - f. Faculty are encouraged to include in their course syllabi the following statement: *Requests from students with disabilities for reasonable accommodations must go through the Academic Support Committee.* For more information, please contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services, Halladay Student Services Building, Room 303D, (903) 886-5835.
 - g. Faculty are required to include in their course syllabi the following statement: *All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.*" (Student's Guidebook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)
5. Evaluation of Instruction:
 - a. Faculty must evaluate their instruction regularly and use the results to insure quality instruction. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#)
 - b. Faculty experimentation with methods to improve instruction must be adequately supported and critically evaluated. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#)
6. Office Hours:
 - a. Faculty must inform students of their accessibility for out-of-class advisement and professional consultation relative to course performance and academic achievement. (SACS Criteria)
 - b. Office hours, a minimum of which are required for each full-time and part-time faculty, should be maintained pursuant to [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.25](#).

7. Teaching Load:
- a. Each full-time person employed for instructional purposes is expected to teach classes and to assume a reasonable workload of related activities that constitute a full-time instructional load. Persons employed on a part-time basis from instructional funds are expected to assume a workload proportional to the percentage of employment on these funds. [System Policy 12.03](#)
 - b. The normal long term teaching assignment for a faculty member is twelve (12) semester credit hours for a faculty member teaching any combination of master's/undergraduate courses and nine (9) semester credit hours for a faculty member teaching ONLY graduate courses. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.02](#), and [System Policy 12.03](#)
 - c. Faculty members are expected to engage in those commonly accepted duties, which will enhance the teaching/learning process and the quality of the institution's programs. Recognized duties include:
 - Classroom teaching
 - Scholarly study
 - Basic and applied research
 - Professional development
 - Student advising and counseling
 - Course and curriculum development
 - Continuing education
 - Public service
 - Assistance in the administration of the academic program
 - And similar academic activities

These duties are inherent in the life and work of a faculty member and are taken into account in consideration for promotion, tenure, and salary. [System Policy 12.03](#)
8. Records:
- a. Faculty will maintain a student record of excused and unexcused absences for reference since certain financial assistance and other programs may require attendance records. (Undergraduate Catalog)
 - b. Faculty should maintain records such as grade books, student attendance reports, class handouts and course syllabi for a reasonable time.
9. Duty:
- a. Faculty are expected to abide by applicable State and Federal laws, as well as policies and regulations of The Texas A&M University System and rules and procedures of the University. (Letter of Appointment)
 - b. Faculty are expected to be on duty per dates on the letter of appointment. (Letter of Appointment)
 - c. University procedure provides guidelines, definitions and limitations relating to outside activities of faculty in professional consultation, contract research and private business activities. More information is provided in the Employment Procedures section of this document. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A31.01](#)
 - d. No regular external teaching responsibilities may be accepted by faculty without prior written approval from the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and/or the President. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A31.01](#)
10. Professional Development:
- a. Individual faculty members are to take the initiative in promoting their own growth as teachers, scholars and, especially in professional and occupational fields, practitioners. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.20](#)
 - b. Faculty Development Leave is described in the Employment Procedures section of this document. [System Policy 12.99.01](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.99.01](#)
11. Faculty Awards:
- a. Faculty recognition is provided through several awards including the Regents Professor Service Award, William L. May Professorship Award, Paul W. Barrus Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching, H.M. Lafferty Distinguished Faculty Award for Scholarship and Creative Activity, Neill Humfeld Distinguished Faculty Award for Service, Professional Achievement Awards, and the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation Nominee. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.26](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.27](#)
12. Helpful Publications:
- a. Faculty should be familiar with University publications such as the Catalog, Schedule of Classes, Student Guidebook, Strategic Plan and other published guidelines.
 - b. Section VI of this Handbook presents expectations regarding the faculty-student relationship including a faculty guide to services available for students.
 - c. A Faculty Advising Handbook (Advisement Services) and Mentor Program Resource Guide (Orientation Office) are also available to faculty to help as they nurture and educate students.

13. Early Intervention:
 - a. Early intervention for freshmen is designed to communicate the University's interest in their success and a willingness to participate fully to help students accomplish their academic objectives. The University through Advisement Services, faculty advisors and mentors will assist students who may be experiencing difficulty to focus on improvement and course completion. The procedure will allow students to be knowledgeable about their academic progress early in the semester and will provide faculty and staff with useful data for assisting students and enhancing retention.
 - b. Faculty who teach freshmen will include in their course syllabi a statement explaining the Early Intervention Procedure and will schedule assignments or exams before the fifth week of classes so that grades may be reported. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A11.28](#)
 - c. The Freshman Mentor Program web site address is <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/synergy/mentor/>

B. Faculty Organizations

1. Faculty Senate (See [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.03.](#))
 - a. Description:

The primary university-wide faculty organizational unit is the Faculty Senate. It may address any topic that it deems appropriate but is primarily concerned with providing study, discussion, and communication on fairly broad matters of university concern. The Senate is the voice of the faculty and makes recommendations on policy matters to the President. The Faculty Senate is composed of one member elected by each academic department of the university and one professional librarian. The Constitution of the Faculty Senate is contained in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.03.](#)
 - b. Standing Committees:
 - Academic Life
 - Academic Practice
 - Admission and Retention of Students
 - Curriculum
 - Faculty Awards
 - Faculty Leave Committee
 - Organization of the Senate
 - University Facilities and Scheduling
2. Graduate Council (See [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.06.](#))
 - a. Description:

The Graduate Council is composed of graduate faculty from all the colleges, plus student representatives. It makes recommendations to the administration on policies and procedures or any matter related to graduate programs, faculty and students.
 - b. Standing Committees:
 - Administration
 - Agenda
 - Curriculum
 - Graduate Faculty Research and Instruction

Section III

Faculty Employment Policies and Procedures

A. Types of Faculty Appointments

1. Tenure or Tenure-Track Appointments

a. Tenured Appointment

Describes faculty holding academic rank and upon whom tenure has been conferred in writing by the President.

b. Tenure-Track Appointment

Describes full-time faculty holding academic rank that has received a tenure-track appointment in writing from the President. These individuals are in the probationary period of service and have not received tenure, neither conferred nor implied.

c. Multiple-Year Appointment

Describes full-time faculty holding academic rank that has received a multiple-year contract in a tenure-track position. Under special circumstances, such as in the selection of department heads, the president may appoint individuals to a multiple-year contract in a tenure-track position. In cases of satisfactory performance, the contracted years may be credited toward tenure.

2. Non-Tenure Track Appointments

a. Non-Tenure Track Appointment

Describes full or part-time teaching appointments. This appointment may require the faculty member to perform teaching, research, scholarship and creative activities; and/or service. Individuals in these appointments are hired through a formal search process and may be rehired, in accord with the needs of the university.

b. Ad Interim (Exceptional Hire) Appointment

Describes a temporary appointment of full-time faculty holding academic rank. An ad interim (exceptional hire) appointment may not exceed one academic year. This appointment, although temporary, carries the duties and responsibilities of full-time faculty employment, unless otherwise specified. Ad interim appointees may teach more than the normal class load in lieu of research, scholarly and creative activities, or service. An individual with this type appointment may not be rehired into the same position without a search.

c. Part-Time Appointment

Describes faculty who are employed less than full-time, but in all other respects have duties and responsibilities (proportional to their appointment) of full-time faculty. Part-time faculty has academic rank. Qualifications for part-time faculty must be consistent with those of full-time faculty. For example, they should hold a minimum of a master's degree and should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the subject field to be taught. They must meet the same requirements for professional experiential and scholarly preparation as their full-time counterparts teaching in the same discipline. For additional information on responsibilities and expectations of part-time faculty see [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.12](#).

d. Adjunct Appointment

Describes an appointment to teach only on a per-course basis, usually for one semester. Adjunct faculty do not hold academic rank and are not budgeted by name. Appointments are less than half time teaching only. Adjunct faculty are not required to do the research, scholarly and creative activities, or service required of full-time faculty. Qualifications for adjunct faculty must be consistent with those of full-time faculty. For example, they should hold a minimum of a master's degree and should have completed a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the subject field to be taught. They must meet the same requirements for professional experiential and scholarly preparation as their full-time counterparts teaching in the same discipline. For additional information on responsibilities and expectations of adjunct faculty see [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.12](#).

B. Rank and Titles

1. Tenure or Tenure-Track: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor.
2. Non-Tenure Track: lecturer, clinical instructor, visiting professor, visiting instructor, visiting artist and other non-standard titles may be used in addition to those listed above. These titles are used to describe full or part-time appointment of individuals whose employment, credentials, or duties are special and not necessarily the same as regular faculty, i.e., teaching, scholarship and service. These appointments may be renewable on a semester or year-to-year basis or for a specified period. Conditions of employment and length of the appointment should be specified in writing.

C. Termination Procedures

The following is a brief summary of selected major portions of the University Procedures on Tenure, Grievance and Due Process. It is not meant to replace that procedure. This procedure applies only to tenure track faculty, not to those appointed on an adjunct or ad interim basis. (Grievance procedures and due process for non-tenure track faculty are stated in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#).)

The Texas A&M [System Policy 12.01](#), [System Policy 12.02](#), and [System Policy 12.06](#), along with [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#), govern academic freedom, tenure, faculty grievance procedures and due process. Tenure under this policy is defined as written assurance that an experienced faculty member will not be dismissed unless adequate cause for dismissal is demonstrated in a fair hearing, following established procedure of due process. The decision for awarding tenure rests with the A&M System Board of Regents upon recommendation of the President of the University. Each candidate for tenure will receive written notification from the President of the University of the action of the A&M System Board of Regents. While the probationary period specified in the procedure is seven years, credit for prior service may be awarded by written order of the President.

During the probationary period, an advisory opinion is rendered by the tenured departmental colleagues concerning retention of the probationary member, subsequent recommendations are made by the department head, dean and Provost and Academic Vice President. The individual is notified annually by the President of his/her status. Notice of non-reappointment is normally given probationary faculty at the following times: (1) not later than March 1 of the first academic year of probationary service, if the appointment expires at the end of that year; or, if a one-year appointment terminates during an academic year, at least three months in advance of its termination; (2) not later than December 15 of the second year of probationary service, if the appointment expires at the end of that year; or, if an initial two-year appointment terminates during an academic year, at least six months in advance of its termination; and (3) at least twelve months before the expiration of a probationary appointment after two or more years at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

When matters of faculty grievance cannot be resolved by reasoned discussion within normal administrative channels, a faculty member may elect to have the matter reviewed by an elected committee of peers. Such grievances might include dismissal, non-reappointment, violation of academic freedom, discrimination, violation of Constitutional rights, or matters pertaining to employment, such as working conditions.

Two standing committees, elected by the faculty, function as reviewing bodies. Normally the Hearing Committee (fifteen members) will review cases involving termination of a tenured faculty member, dismissal during the contract term of a probationary faculty member and referrals from the Advisory Committee concerning non-reappointment of probationary faculty. The Advisory Committee (six members) will normally review cases of probationary non-reappointment involving allegation of violation of academic freedom and discrimination, as well as grievances other than non-reappointment or dismissal.

D. Academic Freedom

Institutions of higher education exist for the common good. The common good depends upon an uninhibited search for truth and its open expression. Hence, it is essential that each faculty member be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction, and to voice and publish individual conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that the faculty member considers relevant. Each faculty member must be free from the corrosive fear that others, inside or outside the university community, because their vision may differ, may threaten the faculty member's professional career or the material benefits accruing from it.

Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subject, which he or she teaches but is expected not to introduce controversial matters, which have no relations to the classroom subject. Each faculty member is also a citizen of the nation, state and community; and when speaking, writing or acting as such, must be free from institutional censorship or discipline, subject to academic responsibility. In such instances, the faculty member should make it clear that he or she is not speaking for the university.

The fundamental responsibilities of faculty members as teachers and scholars include maintenance of competence in their field of specialization and the exhibition of professional competence in the classroom, studio or laboratory and in the public arena through activities such as discussions, lectures, consulting, publications and participation in professional organizations and meetings.

The exercise of professional integrity by faculty members includes recognition that the public will judge their profession and institution by their statements. Therefore, faculty members should strive to be accurate, to

exercise appropriate restraint, to be willing to listen to and show respect to others expressing different opinions, and to avoid creating the impression that they speak or act for their college or university when speaking or acting as a private person.

Faculty members should be judicious in the use of controversial material in the classroom and should introduce such material only as it has clear relationship to their subject field.

The concept of academic freedom for faculty must be accompanied by an equally demanding concept of academic responsibility. Faculty members have a responsibility to the institution, their profession, their students, and society at large. The rights and privileges of faculty members extended by society and protected by governing boards and administrators through written policies and procedures on academic freedom and tenure, and as further protected by the courts, require reciprocally the assumption of certain responsibilities by faculty members. A&M [System Policy 12.01](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#)

E. Post Tenure Review and Dismissal Procedures [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.22](#)

The faculty of Texas A&M University-Commerce measures its performance against a high standard of excellence in teaching, research or other scholarly and creative activities (RSCA) and service. This standard is maintained by hiring highly qualified professionals and by conducting annual reviews of performance. Departments hire professionals whose credentials and achievements clearly indicate their ability and potential to make professional contributions in a changing environment. Tenure is granted to each faculty member by carefully assessing, over a period of time, contributions to teaching, RSCA and service. Faculty members continue to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure their continued effectiveness and development.

Post tenure review at A&M-Commerce applies to tenured faculty members and begins with an annual review of performance based on The Texas A&M University System and A&M-Commerce criteria (refer to the A&M [System Policy 12.01](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#) Academic Freedom, Tenure and Responsibility). In cases where there is evidence of minimal or unsatisfactory performance, the creation of professional development plans and the subsequent review of performance are required.

A professional review will be initiated when a tenured faculty member has received confirmation from the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of a second consecutive overall performance rating of 4 or greater. The department head will inform the faculty member of the required review and the procedures to be followed. A faculty member can be exempt from review upon recommendation of the department head and approval of the college dean when substantive mitigating circumstances exist, including, but not limited to, serious illness.

The professional development plan is an agreement indicating how specific deficiencies in a faculty member's performance (as indicated by the review committee) will be remedied. The plan, to be approved by the dean, will be developed by the faculty member in collaboration with the department head and the faculty review committee.

If after two years of the plan's implementation (no later than May 15), the faculty member has not shown improvement in the identified deficiency areas and has not achieved an overall rating of 3 or better, dismissal procedures may be initiated in accord with the A&M [System Policy 12.01](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#). An extension of no more than one year may be granted by the dean upon the recommendation of the department head. The university administration shall bear the burden of proof for establishing the cause for dismissal of faculty.

If a faculty member believes that the provisions of this procedure are unfairly applied, a grievance can be filed under the provisions of the A&M [System Policy 12.01](#) and [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.01](#).

F. Faculty Promotion Procedures

The following is a brief summary of selected major portions of the University Procedure on Faculty Promotion. It is not intended as a substitute for that procedure. This procedure does not apply to ad interim or adjunct faculty. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A33.02](#)

All tenure-track faculty members hold one of the following academic ranks: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. Appointment to the rank of assistant professor generally requires an earned doctorate in the field of the appointment. Normally, appointment to the rank of associate professor requires at least the earned doctorate plus a minimum of five years of teaching experience in higher education. Appointment to the rank of full professor usually requires the earned doctorate, a minimum of ten years teaching experience in higher education, as well as outstanding scholarship in the field.

A faculty member desiring to be promoted shall prepare two copies of the Faculty Service Report (see form in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A33.02](#)), detailing relevant activities and achievements since the last promotion or appointment. One copy is submitted to the department head and one to the chair of the College Promotion Review Advisory Committee. When a Faculty Service Report is submitted to a department head by the specified date during the spring semester, a departmental promotion committee is appointed consisting of all faculty members within the applicant's department who hold equivalent or higher rank, with the exception of the applicant, the department head, certain non-reappointed faculty and other faculty members who are applying for promotion to the same rank. Special provisions are made for supplementing this committee membership in the case of a small department to insure that at least three people serve on the committee.

The committee meets, selects its own chair, and examines the Faculty Service Report and votes by secret ballot. It attaches its recommendation for or against promotion with appropriate rationale to the front of the

Faculty Service Report and submits the data to the department head. In addition the committee prepares an anonymous summary of explicit comments and committee recommendations regarding the applicant and makes it available to the candidate at the same time it is sent to the department head.

The department head reviews the committee recommendation and summary of comments and the Faculty Service Report and prepares a recommendation for or against promotion with appropriate rationale. The Faculty Service Report with both the committee and department head's recommendations attached then go to the college dean. At the same time a copy of the department head's recommendation is given to the candidate.

The College Promotion Review Advisory Committee shall review all available data and prepare a recommendation for or against promotion with appropriate rationale. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Recommendations shall be forwarded to the college dean. A copy of the committee recommendation will also be provided to the candidate for promotion.

The dean reviews all materials submitted, prepares a recommendation for or against promotion with appropriate rationale, attaches it and submits all the data to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. A copy of the dean's recommendation is made available at the same time to both the department head and the candidate.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, after reviewing all data submitted and with the advice of the Deans Council, prepares a recommendation on promotion with rationale and forwards it to the President for action. A copy of the Provost and Vice President's recommendation is made available to the dean, department head and faculty member simultaneously.

The faculty member may choose to withdraw the application for promotion at any point in the process. All applications for promotion, together with recommendations and rationales from appropriate administrators, go to the President for review unless previously withdrawn by the candidate.

The President shall prepare and submit positive recommendations to the Chancellor and The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents for final action.

G. Annual Evaluation of Faculty

The following is a brief summary of selected major portions of the University Procedure on Faculty Evaluation. This procedure applies to tenured, tenure-track and ad-interim faculty, but not to adjunct faculty. Adjuncts are evaluated on a semester basis by the relevant department head. (For the full text, see [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.20](#))

The annual faculty evaluation process at the university has two major goals: to provide (1) a system to facilitate the development of teaching, research or other scholarly and creative activities (RSCA) and service to the university profession/community and (2) an annual evaluation (review of performance) of teaching, RSCA and service for the purpose of making decisions regarding the terms and conditions of the employment relationship between the faculty and the university, including merit pay, promotion, tenure and post tenure review.

The calendar year will be utilized for annual evaluations. Annual goal setting will occur simultaneously with the evaluation process. From January 5 to January 20 faculty members will meet with their department heads to formulate their goals for the year and a supporting plan of action. A copy will be submitted by the department head to the dean of the college for review and approval by January 25. By December 1 of each year the faculty member will submit to the department head a report of achievement for the goals agreed upon for that year. The department head will write an assessment of the degree to which the goals were achieved and include a recommendation for the merit rating (with highest rating as 1 and the lowest 5) for the three areas of evaluation as well as an overall merit rating. The department head will then have a conference with the faculty member to discuss the assessment and furnish him or her with a copy of the recommendation.

The department head will forward a copy of faculty reports and merit recommendations to the dean of the college by January 25. The dean will review the materials and if the dean wishes to revise a faculty member's overall merit rating he/she will have a conference with the faculty member's department head. The faculty member will be informed of any change in the overall merit rating. The dean will forward the materials submitted along with his or her recommendations to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs by February 1.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the recommendations. Should the Provost and Vice President not concur with the dean's recommendations, the Provost and Vice President will consult with the dean. Any changes will be communicated to the department head and the faculty member. The Provost and Vice President will make merit recommendations to the President by March 1.

Each department will conduct student evaluation of instruction for the annual evaluation. A copy of the department's evaluation document, approved by the dean, shall be submitted to the Provost/VPAA for approval.

Appeals of adverse decisions will follow regular administrative channels beginning at the first level at which the adverse decision was made. Regular A&M System and university grievance policies and procedures are available for use by the faculty member.

H. Academic Administrator Evaluation

Academic administrators, including department heads, are evaluated annually by the immediate administrative superior. A comprehensive evaluation to include ratings by superiors, subordinates and peers

will be conducted quadrennially. The purpose of these evaluations is to improve and document performance levels and professional growth and to validate selection, retention and promotion processes. Generally, academic administrators are evaluated according to their relative success in working with people, programs, policies, procedures and finances. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.21](#)

I. New Faculty Selection and Hiring

While faculty and various administrators are frequently involved in the identification, screening and recommendation of new faculty, only the President or the Provost as his designee can employ or make an offer to employ and this is only done by written offer.

To ensure compliance with Equal Opportunity and nondiscrimination, University search procedures must be followed.

J. Nepotism/Employment of Relatives

Employment of relatives of faculty is permitted so long as a faculty member does not participate in the initial employment, retention, promotion, salary, or any other direct benefit to that relative. [System Policy 33.03](#)

K. Employment by Texas A&M-Commerce of Its Own Graduates

The excellence of the faculty is the single most important factor in determining the quality of a university. The University believes that diversity in geographical and educational background is a characteristic of high quality university faculty. Therefore, Texas A&M University-Commerce requires restraints of departments and offices that wish to hire an A&M-Commerce graduate.

If a department head thinks it is justifiable to nominate an A&M-Commerce graduate for a faculty appointment, he or she may submit the nomination to the dean of the appropriate college, accompanied by a statement of justification and evidence of truly superior qualifications of the candidate. The dean of the college may confer with the Deans Council in deciding marginal cases. The existence of A&M-Commerce graduates on the present staff of a department may be sufficient justification for denying a proposed appointment. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A33.03](#)

L. Graduate Faculty Membership

Membership in the Graduate Faculty will be limited to tenured or tenure-track faculty who have the terminal degree or its equivalent. There are two types of membership:

1. Associate Graduate Faculty who are eligible to teach graduate courses, direct master's theses and serve on doctoral committees; and
2. Senior Graduate Faculty who are eligible to teach graduate courses and direct master's theses and doctoral dissertations.

Qualifications for membership and the process for becoming a member of the Graduate Faculty are contained in [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.05](#).

M. Doctoral Degree, Salary Upon Completion

Full-time faculty, after completion of an earned doctoral degree, may be eligible for a salary increase, upon recommendation and approval. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A01.02](#)

N. Early Retirement with Modified Service (ER/MS)

Full-time regular employees of the system may request participation in ER/MS at the age of fifty-five or any time thereafter: (1) if they have credit for five or more years with TRS, or five or more years of participation in ORP, or five or more years of participation with a combination of TRS and ORP; (2) if, under current contract policy, they would otherwise be eligible for continued employment; and (3) have the written agreement of the Chief Executive Officer. Contact the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs Office for current information about the provisions. [System Policy 31.07.01R1](#) and/or [A&M-Commerce Procedure A31.02](#)

Employment Procedures

A. Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Equal employment opportunity is afforded to all employees and applicants for employment regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. This procedure applies to advertising, recruitment, employment, compensation, promotion, transfer, termination, selection for training, and all other privileges and conditions of employment.

B. Americans with Disabilities Act

Texas A&M University-Commerce does not discriminate in job application procedures, hiring, benefits, advancement or discharge practices, compensation, job training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment against any qualified individual with a disability.

Texas A&M University-Commerce invites individuals with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations when interviewing for positions. Contact the Director of University Compliance with any questions.

C. Faculty Workload

The normal teaching load of a faculty member is twelve semester hours or the equivalent. Alterations in the standard twelve-hour load may be made under certain conditions with approval. The primary duty of faculty members is teaching. The performance of research, scholarly, or professional activities, service and developmental duties is an expected and indispensable part of the workload of all faculty members. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.02](#)

D. Faculty Office Hours

To insure that students may know when they can seek help from faculty members, all teaching faculty are expected to post and maintain a minimum of five office hours per week; departments may require additional hours as determined by the department head. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.25](#)

E. Faculty Responsibility for Content and Distribution of Syllabi:

To insure that students have knowledge of each faculty's instructional method and delivery system with guidelines for goals and to give students the opportunity to achieve stated objectives of each course, a syllabi is required to be in compliance with standards of sound academic practice and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools *Criteria for Accreditation*. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.08](#)

F. Absence From Duty

Absence from duty requires authorization by the department head and other appropriate offices. Absences from duty not approved in this manner will be considered unauthorized.

Authorized absence from duty may include the following reasons:

1. Attendance at professional meetings;
2. Field trips for University-sponsored functions;
3. Administrative travel;
4. Approved University or personal business.

In circumstances of personal emergency, such as death or illness in the employee's immediate family, the person's supervisor may grant approval for absence from duty.

The department head and dean involved with an individual's absence from duty will assure that the person's teaching responsibilities will be handled in an appropriate manner. Requests for absence from duty should be submitted on the University form "Travel Application."

G. Faculty Development Leave

Faculty Development Leave for research and writing is a method used to enhance university instruction and research. In 1967, the Texas legislature recognized the importance of faculty development leave, adopted legislation, and set forth guidelines for the awarding of development leaves. The Texas legislature suggests these programs be designed to assist teaching and other academic professionals to develop and pursue worthy academic research that requires significant time and the absence of distractions. Faculty Development Leaves are subject to the laws of the State of Texas and to TAMU System policies and regulations. [System Policy 12.99.01](#) or [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.99.01](#)

H. Employee Leave Procedure

1. Leave of Absence Without Pay

Faculty leave of absence without pay may be taken subject to approval, through administrative channels, by the President. Leaves will be granted with the assurance of reinstatement to the same or similar employment with the University, unless circumstances make such reinstatement clearly impractical. Approved leaves shall not exceed one calendar year, but may be extended upon request and approval.

Faculty on leave without pay may continue to participate in certain benefits that were in effect at the time the leave became effective. While institutional participation in payment of premiums will not continue during the period of absence, faculty may continue in the Group Insurance Program provided that arrangements are made to pay the full premium. Prior to beginning a leave of absence, faculty should contact the Insurance Coordinator at 886-5049 to arrange for insurance premium payment during the period of leave.

While on leave of absence, a faculty member's retirement programs will revert to inactive status and paid retirement funds cannot be withdrawn. Faculty on approved leave are considered to remain in the employ of the University and retirement funds may be withdrawn only at the time of retirement or resignation.

2. Leave of Absence With Pay

Faculty are entitled to leave with pay in the following circumstances:

- a. death of a family member (this includes spouse, children, parent, brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild);
- b. unsafe work or travel conditions (check with supervisor);
- c. attendance at staffing meetings held by the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or school district admission, review and dismissal meeting regarding a child under your foster care;
- d. volunteer fire fighting to fight a fire or attend training;
- e. emergency evacuation order;
- f. seeing Eye Dog training for up to 10 days if employee is blind;
- g. participation in disaster relief for up to five days if employee is a certified disaster service volunteer of the American Red Cross;
- h. jury duty (employee does not have to account for any compensation received while participating in jury service).

3. Family and Medical Leave

- a. to care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- b. to care for the employee's spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition;
- c. for a serious personal health condition that makes the employee unable to perform their job.
As part of a family or medical leave, employees must first use any paid leave, including the sick leave pool, for which they are eligible. Employees may then take unpaid leave for the rest of the 12 weeks. To be eligible for this leave, employees must have worked for the state for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours for the state in the preceding 12 months.
If employees take a family or medical leave, the state contribution toward their insurance premiums will continue. Employees must pay any remaining premiums if they wish to keep insurance coverage or drop additional coverage while off on FMLA. Upon returning from leave, employees may re-enroll in any benefit plan dropped without providing evidence of good health or having pre-existing condition limitations.

4. Sick Leaves

Employees can earn sick leave at the rate of eight hours per month or, if working less than full-time, on a percentage basis for the time worked. Sick leave with pay may be used when sickness, injury or pregnancy and confinement prevent the employee's performance of duty, when they are needed to care for and assist a member of their immediate family who is ill, or when they must visit a doctor or accompany an immediate family member on a doctor visit. An immediate family member must live in the employee's household or be totally dependent on the employee for their care. Sick leave is limited to time required for care only. The employee may also use sick leave each calendar year to attend up to eight hours of parent-teacher conferences for children in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The employee is required to give reasonable advance notice for this leave. Sick leave will be earned throughout an employee's career with the State of Texas and will transfer to or from another state agency. However, employees will not receive payment for unused sick leave should they terminate employment. If an employee leaves state employment for at least thirty days and is rehired by the state within one year, their sick leave balance may be reinstated.

If an employee's sick leave exceeds three continuous working days, they must provide a physician's statement indicating the cause or nature of the medical condition and expected date of return to work. This should be provided after the third day of absence or when the employee returns to work. If the expected date of recovery changes, the employee must provide an additional statement from their doctor documenting the new date of return. When taking sick leave, the employee should inform his or her supervisor as soon as possible.

Sick Leave Pool: The sick leave pool is available to employees who have exhausted their sick leave, vacation leave and comp time and need additional sick leave for a catastrophic illness. Employees may donate an unlimited number of hours of sick leave to the pool each year. Employees may request up to 720 hours of leave (per fiscal year) from the pool for catastrophic illnesses or injuries. Employees may withdraw the amount of time they contributed to the pool during the fiscal year if they need it for any illness or injury. To donate or request time, call the Personnel Technician at ext. 5118.

5. Military Leave

Leaves of absence are granted for military training and active duty. Military leave is generally unpaid; however, vacation time may be used. However, if the employee is a member of the National Guard or Reserves, he or she will be granted paid leave for up to 15 days each federal fiscal year (Oct. 1 through September 30) for military training or duty. Employees will also be entitled to emergency leave with pay if they are a member of the National Guard called to emergency active duty by the governor. Employees must notify their supervisor in advance of the need for military leave.

I. Salary Upon Relinquishing Administrative Positions

Upon relinquishing administrative duties and returning to full-time teaching, academic department heads and administrative officers will receive a salary adjustment to a level no greater than the upper range of the academic teaching rank they hold or to which they are assigned.

Upon relinquishing administrative duties and returning to full-time teaching, individuals holding acting (temporary) administrative positions will receive a salary commensurate with their academic rank and experience. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A01.01](#)

J. Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance is a form of insurance that provides unemployment benefits to qualified jobless workers. Texas A&M University-Commerce employees, at no personal cost, are covered by unemployment insurance; however, eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits is not automatic. For example, benefits may be denied to individuals for voluntarily quitting work without good cause, for misconduct and for failure to apply for and accept suitable work. Jobless individuals whose previous employer was A&M-Commerce should check with any one of the offices of the Texas Employment Commission located throughout the state to determine the proper procedure for applying for unemployment benefits.

K. Worker's Compensation Insurance

All employees are covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance. If an employee sustains an accidental injury or occupational disease while working, Worker's Compensation pays for medical expenses and, in some cases, for lost wages.

Employees must report any injuries sustained on the job to their supervisor immediately even if the injury does not appear serious. All accidents must be reported within 30 days of occurrence.

L. Retirement

Retirement from Texas A&M University-Commerce by any employee shall be voluntary and not mandatory at any particular age, unless age qualifications are an essential and legally justifiable part of the employee's job description.

M. Outside Employment and Consulting Activities of Faculty

University policy provides guidelines, definitions and limitations relating to outside activities of faculty in professional consultation, contract research and private business activities.

1. External Professional Activities of Faculty. Faculty are permitted and even encouraged to engage in consultation and research within their area of professional expertise when there is no interference with the proper performance of regular duties. Such consultation and research are also permitted with minimal interference with normal duties, as determined by department head and dean, as long as the activities conform to the University procedure on Absence from Duty. In all cases, there should be no conflict of interest or unfavorable reflection on either Texas A&M University-Commerce or the State of Texas. Contract research involving faculty salary, reduced workload, or use of University resources must be approved in advance by the President. Agreement must be reached on reimbursable University resources prior to approval.
2. External Business Activities of Faculty. External business activities, as used here, differ from professional activities in that they are engaged in primarily as a source of income for a faculty member and may or may not involve an individual's academic expertise. As with any other free-time pursuit, external business activities shall neither interfere with the faculty member's duties and working hours, nor conflict with nor unfavorably reflect upon the University and must clearly reflect the action of a private citizen, not that of an agent of Texas A&M University-Commerce.

No regular external teaching responsibilities may be accepted without prior written approval from the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or the President. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A31.01](#)

N. Elective, Non-Elective Offices and Political Activities

University procedure provides, with certain restrictions, for faculty as citizens to hold elective and non-elective offices. The restrictions apply to conflict of interest, interference with the duties of the employee and others and the manner in which the employee's activities reflect on the University.

The University recognizes the right of faculty to participate in political activities, so long as such participation does not interfere with the discharge of duties and responsibilities to the University or involve the University in partisan politics. It is, of course, the right and duty of every person to function as a citizen within the community, state and nation. Therefore, the following guidelines are reiterated for information:

1. As a state-supported institution, the University does not endorse any candidate for any political office.
2. Since the public may judge the University by the statements of its employees, it is important that employees involved in political activity make it clearly known that their statements are made as private citizens and not as University employees.
3. Under no circumstances are state supplies or equipment to be used in connection with any political campaign.
4. This University does not consider the classroom an appropriate forum for any type of partisan political activity. [System Policy 07.01](#)

O. Faculty English Language Proficiency

As of Fall 1990, pursuant to a bill passed by the Texas Legislature, all faculty members are required to identify their primary language. Those faculty members who do not have English as their primary language must take a test to show their oral language competence in English. Faculty members who do not score at a high enough level must take appropriate remedial work and repeat the test. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A12.04](#)

P. Faculty/Staff Course Enrollment and Employee Scholarship Program

Faculty/Staff are allowed to take courses at Texas A&M University-Commerce under provisions of normal enrollment and admissions policies in effect. Any enrollment by full-time faculty and staff must be requested and must not interfere with assigned duties or office hours. University employees wishing to satisfy the residency requirement for the doctoral degree must resign their positions and, in the case of faculty, secure an approved leave of absence in order to resume rank and tenure.

Faculty are discouraged from pursuing additional graduate degrees at Texas A&M University-Commerce. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A31.04](#)

The University will provide an Institutional Scholarship to all budgeted employees for up to 6 credit hours each semester for 100% of the cost of tuition. All fees will be paid by the employee. You may obtain an application form from the Payroll Office or it is available online at http://www7.tamu-commerce.edu/hreeo/form/esp_app.pdf.

Q. Ethics

All Texas A&M University-Commerce employees are expected to comply with all state and federal laws as well as with the provisions of the System ethics policy. [System Policy 07.01](#)

R. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of students and employees at Texas A&M University-Commerce is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other physical conduct or expressive behavior (verbal or nonverbal) of a sexual nature where: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning employment or educational environment. Persons engaging in sexual harassment in violation of this University policy are subject to penalties that may range from a warning or a reprimand to dismissal as a student and/or termination as an employee. Incidents of alleged sexual harassment may be reported to the Office of Human Resources/Equal Opportunity. [System Policy 34.01](#)

S. Discriminatory Harassment

Discriminatory harassment is not tolerated in this University. One who by extreme and outrageous language or conduct concerning race, color, age, disability, national origin, or religion, intentionally causes severe emotional distress to another is guilty of discriminatory harassment, provided such language or conduct would cause severe emotional distress in the ordinary person of that race, color, national origin or religion. If an employee believes they are a victim of discriminatory harassment, they should immediately contact the Director of Human Resources and EEO.

T. Retaliation

Any person who brings a claim or complaint of discrimination or harassment, or who assists in the investigation of such claim or complaint, will not be adversely affected in the terms and conditions of employment, or discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint or assistance. Complaints of such retaliation will be promptly investigated by the Department of Human Resources/Equal Opportunity and, when warranted, the persons engaging in the retaliatory conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

U. Drug and Alcohol Use

To maintain a safe and healthy environment, Texas A&M University-Commerce prohibits the manufacture, distribution, possession or use of illicit drugs or alcohol in the workplace.

Possible consequences of alcohol or illegal drug use are: disciplinary action; referral to treatment or counseling; drug testing; termination of employment; and referral to law enforcement.

V. AIDS/HIV

The A&M System has procedures, policies and educational programs to help employees better understand the medical, legal, administrative and ethical issues surrounding AIDS/HIV. An HIV-infected employee will remain employed as long as he or she meets job performance standards and does not engage in activities on the job that current scientific information indicates may expose others to risk of transmission. This right is protected by law. Testing for HIV will not be done without the employee's consent unless required by law. HIV test results will be reported in compliance with all applicable statutory requirements. All medical documentation or information provided by an HIV-infected person will be kept confidential.

Current scientific and medical technology has determined that HIV is not transmitted through routine daily contact. Employees are not at risk of exposure to HIV through: casual contact (shaking hands, working side-by-side); use of equipment (tools, telephones, machinery, furniture, typewriters); use of restrooms, eating or cooking facilities or water fountains; the environment (air, water, insects); donating blood during blood drives.

Section IV

Fiscal Procedures

A. Use of System Property

Employees may not use any System property for personal benefit or pleasure, except books from libraries and recreational facilities. This includes items such as the fax machine, photocopier, office supplies and computer equipment. Personal long-distance calls should be charged to a personal credit card.

University owned motor vehicles may be used for official University business by: ALL TAMUS employees, student workers, etc. who may be required to drive a TAMUS vehicle should have a Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check and should be assigned a driver rating as required in (Article 6687b, section 37, V.A. C.S.). See Transportation web page for greater details. Persons using motor vehicles must complete daily use reports on forms provided. Policy and law prohibit misuse of University vehicles, including false reporting.

University property is an asset that must be accounted for and safeguarded. Certain items qualify to be inventoried. Each department has been assigned a property officer who is responsible for their area's assets. Property should not be moved from offices or rooms (including classrooms) without property authority. A state official or employee shall be pecuniary liable to the state for any loss sustained as the result of negligence or wrongful act where property is lost, damaged or destroyed.

The Texas A&M University System Equipment Management Manual sets forth policies and regulations governing property management for all system members. Specific procedures for each member are maintained by the respective A&M System Member. This manual contains property management rules that are intended to supplement the TAMUS Equipment Management Manual and are specific to Texas A&M University-Commerce. This manual prescribes additional requirements deemed necessary to establish a comprehensive property management program.

The procedures set forth herein are established to comply with the rules of property management and reporting as defined by the State Comptroller and the A&M System Equipment Management Manual. Links to both manuals can be found at: http://www7.tamu-commerce.edu/fiscal/Property_Management/

B. Use of Consultants

When department heads wish to bring some person to the campus to serve as guest lecturer/consultant in their field of specialization, the approval of the President, the Vice President for Business and Administration or the Director of Contract Administration must be secured prior to any commitment. The request for such services must be submitted using appropriate forms. An appropriation may not be expended to pay for consulting services in excess of \$10,000 until the Governor has made a finding of fact that a need exists for the services. A department or agency may not enter into a consultant contract with any individual who has been previously employed by the department or agency within the past twelve months.

C. Travel Expenses

Faculty traveling on official business approved in advance may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred. Travel expenses and payment are regulated by law, and reimbursement requires that specific forms be completed and procedures followed. For detailed information, contact Financial Services @ 886-5048, or the travel website <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/admin/travel>. Travel regulations are detailed in Article IX of the General Appropriations Act. The State Comptroller's State of Texas Travel Allowance Guide establishes rules and procedures for the effective and efficient administration of the travel regulations in that article. The following information is a brief summary of the university's travel policy.

Public Transportation: For trips requiring air travel, faculty may request commercial airline tickets to be purchased in advance. If the faculty member purchases the tickets, reimbursement will not exceed the lowest available airline fare (receipts required). For other public transportation, such as taxi or city bus, receipts will also be required. For official business requiring rental cars, actual expenses (not to exceed contracted rates) including gasoline will be reimbursed (receipts required).

Personally Owned Automobile: Reimbursement for in-state travel by personal auto is based on mileage, calculated on the shortest route as determined from the Official State Mileage Guide. The State Comptroller shall adjust this rate for travel commencing on September 1 based upon the IRS/E maximum fixed mileage allowance as of the previous August 1. Except for certain parking fees, no other automobile expense is allowed. When car-pooling, only one faculty member per vehicle may claim mileage. For out-of-state travel in

private autos (to points normally served by commercial airlines) the maximum reimbursement shall be the cost of the lowest available airline fare or actual mileage whichever is less.

Travel within the State of Texas: State employees who travel within the State of Texas shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging not to exceed \$80.00 per night and actual cost of meals not to exceed \$30.00 per day.

Travel outside the State of Texas but within the continental United States: Reimbursement to state employees who travel outside the State of Texas but within the continental United States shall be based on actual expenses not to exceed the locality-based rates specified in the Federal Travel Regulations.

Travel outside the continental United States: State employees may receive reimbursements of their actual expenses or the amount the Department has determined for meals and lodging when traveling outside the continental United States.

D. Conferences and Professional Meetings

Faculty may attend conferences and professional meetings as part of their regular duties with the approval of their department head. Approval will be granted when it is determined that attendance will bring prestige to the University and will contribute to the employee's professional development.

E. External Funding Requests

All faculty applications for funding from sources outside the university must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs and the President of the University. It is to be understood that all external grants are made to the University, not to the individual submitting the request and all proposals for external funding must make clear the nature of any University commitment. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A15.03](#). The complete process to apply for external funding can be found at <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/gradschool/research/newresearch/researchFiles/grant.htm>

F. Parking

Employees must purchase a parking permit if planning to park on campus. The cost is \$20.00 each fiscal year. This allows employees to park anywhere on the University campus except designated reserved and handicapped spaces. Employees parking in the lot without a valid parking permit are subject to a \$20 citation by Texas A&M University-Commerce Police.

G. ID Cards

All employees of the University are required to have a current Identification Card. ID cards are made at the Rayburn Memorial Student Center and must be presented when visiting the recreation center, checking out books from the library or cashing checks at the Bookstore.

H. Smoking is prohibited in all campus buildings.

Section V

Benefits Programs

A. Insurance

Group Hospitalization

A variety of insurance benefits are available to employees of the A&M System if employed at 50% or greater. Employees may add to or change their benefits package within 60 days of the date they were hired and during annual enrollment. Mid-year changes to benefits are allowed in some situations like an added family member, marriage, divorce, or spouse gaining or losing employment. Employees may enroll in coverages such as:

Health Insurance	Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance
Dental Insurance	Long-Term Disability Insurance
Life Insurance	Long-Term Care Coverage
Dependent Life Insurance	Tax Saver Accounts

A \$5,000 life insurance policy and a \$5,000 accidental death and dismemberment policy, automatically cover employees enrolled in a health plan. Please contact the Insurance Coordinator at 886-5049 for further information.

B. Retirement Plans

Texas A&M University-Commerce offers several retirement plans. Employees are eligible for the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) pension plan. Employees who are department heads, faculty, or in certain professional positions, may elect, instead, to participate in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP). Both plans are partially funded by the A&M System. Employees may also set up a Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA), which will allow them to save for retirement on a tax-deferred basis. Please contact the Retirement Services Coordinator at 886-5025 for further information.

C. Payroll Procedures

Employees of Texas A&M University-Commerce receive payments on the first state working day of the month for the completed previous month's work. Persons beginning work after the payroll is calculated will receive payment on the first bi-weekly payroll.

Employees appointed on a nine-month basis may elect to participate in the extended pay plan that deducts 12-1/2% or 25% of their net pay from each monthly check and is paid during the summer months. All deductions, including insurance payments for the summer months are taken during the nine months. Participants must sign the request form each year before September 10.

Employees may choose to have their check direct deposited. An authorization form is available in the Payroll Office and must be completed by the banking institution and the employee.

D. New Employee Payroll Procedures

Each new employee must complete all forms required by Human Resources and Payroll before a paycheck can be processed. To receive another copy of the forms or for information contact the Office of Human Resources.

A new employee must provide a signed authorization for selected benefits and authorized deductions as well as direct deposit selection forms.

E. Faculty Tuition Adjustment

Faculty employed at least half time on a regular monthly salary basis (not hourly employees) in a teaching position by any public institution of higher education, with an effective date of employment on the 12th class day of a regular semester or the 4th class day of a summer term, may pay the same tuition as a resident of Texas for themselves, their spouses, and their dependent children, regardless of the length of residence in the state. To be entitled to pay the resident tuition fees, such employees must submit, prior to the time of each registration, a statement certifying employment in a teaching position from the Director of Human Resources or a designated representative of the institution of higher education by which they are employed. (Reference: Vernon's Codes Annotated, Education Code, Section 54.059.)

F. Wellness Program

The Wellness Program was designed by the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research and motivated by the belief that prevention is the key to health. The program is tailored to your needs as an individual and aimed at helping you to achieve your optimal level of both physical and mental health. The program includes a blood profile

analysis, fitness assessment, lifestyle inventory, and exercise prescription. Contact the Student Recreation Center for further information.

G. Use of Campus Facilities

Faculty members are allowed the privilege of using campus facilities such as the library and recreational facilities including the university track, tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, etc. Use of University facilities depends upon availability and scheduling, with students receiving priority. Faculty can purchase a membership for the use of the Student Recreation Center and engage in the wellness programs by contacting the Student Recreation Center.

Faculty members shall be provided an I.D. card for use in the library and other identification purposes. I.D. cards for faculty members can be obtained by completing the necessary I.D. forms at the Rayburn Memorial Student Center.

H. Holidays

Regular employees are entitled to holiday pay, regardless of length of service. All state employees get the same number of holidays each year. An employee who works less than full-time will receive holiday pay proportionate to the percentage of full-time work.

Employees, who wish to take a religious holiday, may substitute it, within the same fiscal year with the approval of the department head, for another holiday on which some staff must work, or they may take vacation time.

Section VI

Faculty and Student Relations

A. Academic Honesty

1. Plagiarism

Texas A&M University-Commerce will not condone plagiarism in any form. The faculty, administration and students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards in this matter.

Plagiarism is handled initially by the instructor. If the instructor feels the problem warrants more attention, it should then be pursued through the department head. If the department head wishes, it should be brought to the attention of the dean of the college for study and review before meeting with the Standing University Discipline Committee. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will assist members of the faculty in such matters. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.04](#)

2. Standards of Student Conduct

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all local, state, and federal laws, in addition to the regulations of the University.

The Standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process as developed by institutions of higher education. These procedures are not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law.

The official statement relating to standards of student conduct is located in the Student Handbook. It specifies the officers and committees responsible for procedure and case dispositions. It also outlines student rights and obligations, gives illustrations of misconduct, describes disciplinary actions and procedures for the administration of such actions (including appeal procedures), University actions to be taken in instances of non-payment of debt, and the maintenance of student disciplinary records.

B. Attendance Policy

Students are responsible for learning about and complying with the attendance procedures stated in the catalog, *Student's Guidebook* and/or faculty syllabus. Faculty members will provide details on requirements and guidelines for attendance in their classes in their course syllabi. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.02](#)

Students are responsible for requesting makeup work when they are absent. They will be permitted to make up work for absences that are considered by the faculty member to be excusable. The method of making up work shall be determined by the faculty member.

The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. The faculty member then determines the validity of the reason(s) for the absence and whether the student is to be excused for the absence. Faculty members may consider the following reasons for absence as excusable: (a) participation in a required/authorized University activity; (b) verified illness; (c) death in a student's immediate family; (d) obligation of student at legal proceedings in fulfilling responsibility as a citizen; and (e) others determined by individual faculty to be excusable (e.g. elective University activities, etc.). Appeals can be made through normal administrative channels.

A record of excused and unexcused absences will be maintained by a faculty member for reference since certain financial assistance and other programs may require attendance records.

Students who have failed any part of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test are required by the State of Texas to attend remediation. The TASP required students who do not attend remediation courses or tutorial sessions will be withdrawn from the University.

When requested by the student, teachers will inform the student who has been absent whether makeup work is allowed and whether absences jeopardize the student's standing in a class.

It is the prerogative of the faculty to drop students from courses in which they have accrued excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus. In such cases, faculty recommends through the department head to the appropriate college dean that a student be dropped from a class. The faculty member will document absences and will make a reasonable effort to communicate with the student prior to recommending a drop. If approved, the college dean will forward the recommendation to the Registrar's office.

Students who wish to drop a course or withdraw from the university are responsible for initiating this action.

If a student believes the final grade is unfairly impacted by attendance requirements, an appeal can be made. This appeal process is explained in "Student's Appeal of Instructor's Evaluation". [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.06](#)

Attendance in Inclement Weather:

Due to the large number of students in residence, the University will remain open and classes will be held during severe weather conditions except for times when circumstances are beyond the control of the University such as energy curtailments.

There are occasions, however, when road conditions make it dangerous for commuting students to travel on the highways. Students are expected to exercise good judgment about commuting during inclement weather.

Whenever a decision is made to curtail University operations, that information will be made available to the local and Metroplex media, including KETR News line at 886-5333. [A&M-Commerce Procedure P01.01](#)

C. Class Size

Like all state colleges in Texas, Texas A&M University-Commerce is required to have a minimum number of students in each class in order to receive state funding. On-campus undergraduate classes must have at least ten students on the official twelfth-day class rolls for the fall and spring semesters or fourth-day rolls for summer sessions, and graduate classes must have at least five. Off-campus undergraduate classes must average fifteen and off-campus graduate classes must average ten. Special exceptions can be made on occasion to fulfill programmatic needs. Such exceptions require the approval of the dean of the college involved.

D. Grades and Reports

1. *Grades--Their Meaning and Value*

Grade Marks	Undergraduate Grade Meaning	Graduate Grade Meaning	Grade Points For Semester Hour
A	Excellent	Excellent	4
B	Good	Good	3
C	Average	Passing (Minimum)	2
D	Passing (Minimum)	Unsatisfactory	1
X	Incomplete	Incomplete	0
F	Failure	Failure	0
W	Withdrew	Withdrew	0
DP	Dropped Passing	Dropped Passing	0
DF	Dropped Failing	Dropped Failing	0
S	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0
U	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	0

The bachelor's degree will not be conferred upon any student whose total grade average is less than "C" (2.00). Transfer students must also have a "C" average on work completed on this campus to qualify for the bachelor's degree.

A grade of "D" is the minimum passing grade for credit in a course.

Students who officially withdraw from school prior to the date stated in the current Schedule of Classes will receive a mark of "W."

The grade "F" means failure.

Students, who because of circumstances beyond their control are unable to attend classes during finals week or the preceding three weeks will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of "X" (incomplete) in all courses in which they were maintaining passing grades.

When an "X" is given for a grade in a course, the credit hours are not included for one semester (exclusive of summer) in calculating the grade point averages. Grades of "X" earned during the spring or summer are to be completed by the end of the following fall semester. If the "X" is not removed by that time, the grade becomes an F, and the hours are included in the number of hours attempted.

Recording a grade of "X" requires the filing of a plan for completion. The plan will be submitted with the official grade record sent to the department head who will forward it to the Dean's office. The plan will include why the grade was given and steps necessary for the student to receive the final grade.

A grade of "IP" (In Progress) will be used for courses that are scheduled over more than one semester. The grade of IP will not be computed in the grade point average and will be removed when the final grade is filed by the instructor.

A grade of "I" will be given for courses in dissertation and thesis (including undergraduate honors thesis) for all registrations prior to the semester in which the final document is completed. The time limit imposed on the grade of "X" (one semester) does not apply for these courses.

2. *Computation of Grade Point Average*

All grade point averages will be computed by dividing grade points accumulated by the number of hours attempted, with grades of "X," "I," "IP" being excluded.

When a course is repeated, only the last enrollment for that course will be used in computing the grade point average. This second grade would be used to determine credit earned for the course. This procedure invalidates the first credit earned in that course. Courses taken before a degree is awarded (regardless of whether the course is applied to the degree) cannot be repeated and the grade point average recalculated once the degree is awarded. (See Procedure A13.07.)

Any student who enrolls in the same course a second time must notify the Registrar's Office during the semester in which the course is being repeated. When the semester is completed, the Registrar's Office will then update the student's grade average to reflect the duplication of the course.

Beginning Fall 2000, all new students who enter A&M-Commerce for the first time will have their cumulative grade point average calculated on courses taken at A&M-Commerce only. Courses taken at other institutions will no longer be considered in the calculation of the A&M-Commerce grade point average.

3. *Grade Change*

A faculty member may submit a petition to the department head requesting that a grade be changed for a student in a course that the faculty member has taught if the petition is submitted during the twelve-month period immediately following the term when the course was taken and the grade given. A statement of the conditions and reasons for the grade change must be included on the petition.

If approved by the department head, academic dean, and in the case of a graduate grade, the graduate dean, the petition will be forwarded to the registrar who will review the petition. After approval, the necessary change will be made on the student's permanent record. After the change is made on the student's record, the instructor will be notified by letter from the registrar, with a copy to the student.

In the event the faculty member awarding the grade is no longer with the University, the department head will make a reasonable effort to contact that person to initiate the grade change. Any grade change petition that does not have the recommendation of the instructor who gave the grade should go through channels to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.08](#)

4. *Student Class Schedule Adjustments*

Students are expected to make all necessary adjustments in their class schedules by the fourth class day of a regular semester and the second-class day of a summer semester. Eligible students may use WebTRAX (A&M-Commerce Web Applications for Students) to process drops and adds. Students may add classes until fourth-class day during the Fall and Spring semesters and second class day during the summer terms. Students may drop a class with a full refund (if remaining enrolled) until the twelfth class day during the Fall and Spring semesters and fourth class day during the summer terms.

The student desiring to add a course(s) after the fourth class day of a regular semester or second class day of a summer semester should pick up an add sheet at the Registrar's Office. The student should take the add sheet to the department(s) to obtain department/instructor approval and then to the appropriate dean for approval. The add sheet is then returned to the Registrar's Office. Students will not be allowed to add classes after the twelfth class day during Fall/Spring or the fourth class day during a summer semester. Students not eligible to use WebTRAX may register through academic advising.

A drop sheet for courses to be dropped may be obtained at the Registrar's Office. The student must obtain approval from the department/instructor. The drop/add sheet is returned to the Registrar's Office.

No course may be added to student schedules after the last day to change schedules as stated in the University calendar, except in very special cases and then only by approval of the instructor and appropriate dean.

A course dropped after census date in a term (see Schedule of Classes for specific dates) that is being passed may be dropped with a grade of "DP."

After the first twelve days of class work of any semester or after the first four days of class work of any summer term, the instructor may permit a student to officially drop a class in which the student is not passing. See Schedule of Classes for specific drop dates. A grade of "DF" will be reported at the end of the semester.

5. *Withdrawal*

A student leaving the University BEFORE THE END of a semester or summer term for which they are registered must clear their records by filing an application for voluntary withdrawal on a form which can be secured in the Office of the Assistant Dean of Students. This action must be taken by the date stated in the *Schedule of Classes* as the last day to drop a class or withdraw. Any student who withdraws from the University is subject to the conditions outlined in the section regarding Scholastic Probation and Dismissal. A student has one year from first day of semester to appeal a withdrawal refund.

6. *Student's Appeal of Instructor's Evaluation*

Whenever a student fails to understand an instructor's evaluation of his or her work or feels unfairly treated in any matter relating to academic studies, as part of due process, the student should first discuss the problem fully with the instructor concerned.

If the student still feels improperly treated, the matter should be discussed with the head of the appropriate department.

Then, if still dissatisfied, the student should consult the dean of the college to which that department reports.

When questions regarding a grade reach the dean's office, the dean hears the complaint of the student making sure that the student has consulted with the instructor and the head of the department involved. If the student has not conferred with the instructor and the head of the department, the student is asked to proceed through channels.

If the problem is not resolved by consulting with the instructor and head of the department, the dean then resolves the matter informally or appoints a committee of three tenured faculty members of that college. The student has the option of selecting two additional faculty members to be appointed by the dean to the committee. The student must provide a written statement of the cause of the appeal and provide copies of all pertinent material to which the instructor is expected to respond formally. The committee then makes a recommendation to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs notifies the student, committee, dean, department head and faculty of the final decision. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.06](#)

E. Examination Schedule

Final examination schedules are found within the printed schedule of classes being offered for that semester. All finals must be conducted at the periods scheduled. Faculty are not authorized to dismiss classes before the completion of the final examination periods or to alter the final examination schedule in any way. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.05](#)

F. Junior Level Essay

All undergraduate students must either take the JLE or be exempt from it based on the following exemptions. JLE exemptions:

1. A passing score (220 or higher) on the writing section of the TASP,
2. An ACT composite score of 23 or higher with English and Math scores of 19 or higher each,
3. A SAT composite score of 1070 or higher with Verbal and Math scores of 500 or higher each,
4. A TAAS score of 1770 or higher in Writing, 86 or higher in Math and 89 or higher in Reading.

Students may also take English 333 or 341 to meet the JLE requirement. Students who are exempt from the JLE must sign off in the Office of Student Assessment indicating their exemption after they reach junior standing.

The test is two hours long and examinees are asked to write an essay on an assigned topic. It is administered on two days in the Fall (October), Spring (February), and first Summer (June) semesters. A student may take the exam as many times as necessary to pass. The Office of Student Assessment and Evaluation administers the JLE.

Each essay is graded by at least two faculty raters drawn from all departments. A third faculty member rates the paper if the first two raters disagree.

G. Speaker Procedure

The goal of Texas A&M University-Commerce is to foster a spirit of free inquiry and to encourage timely discussion, so long as the views expressed are subject to critical evaluation and do not teach violation of State or Federal laws, or of University regulations. It should be understood that the appearance of a speaker or presentation of a program on the Texas A&M University-Commerce campus does not necessarily mean that the University endorses or supports the views expressed, nor that the sponsoring organization or faculty member necessarily endorses or supports those views.

All programs should be considered in terms of the total educational purpose of Texas A&M University-Commerce. They should be planned to satisfy various areas and degrees of interest within this community. The responsibility for initiating extra-classroom activities rests with the sponsoring organization, which should keep in mind the specific purpose of the particular organization and its place in the larger University community. Some programs may be of interest only to one group, and the proper audience should be kept in mind when planning any program.

So long as there is no violation of Federal and State laws, or of University regulations, no issue or topic is too controversial for intelligent discussion. Any recognized group, student or faculty, may invite any speaker the group would like to hear, subject to the procedures outlined in these guidelines and/or established by the University as to proper registration and arrangement for facilities.

For specific requirements, the reader should consult [A&M-Commerce Procedure P01.02](#). It deals with the rights and obligations of students, faculty and organizations inviting a speaker to campus; the procedures to be followed in doing so; the registration of the program or event 30 days in advance; publicity; and communication.

H. Faculty Guide to Services Available for Students

Faculty members should be aware of the wide variety of academic and non-academic services and programs available to students. Through their contact with students in class and outside of class, faculty members may refer students to these services or recommend that they avail themselves of these services. In instances of problem behaviors in the classroom the instructor should inform the Office of the Assistant Dean of Student Life.

Although the services listed below are available to students, several of them are also available to faculty members and their families (e.g., Community Counseling Center; Wellness Program).

1. Academic Advisement

A central advising office is responsible for advising all freshmen, all new transfer students, and all sophomores who have not filed official degree audits with an academic department. Other students who have not declared majors by filing a degree audit should begin the process of scheduling classes each semester with the advising office. Students who have not completed TASP and/or Basic Skills requirements in English and

Math must register through Advisement Services. Any student who has questions or problems affecting his or her academic progress should be encouraged to visit the advising office for help.

In addition to the central advising, faculty members are also expected to engage in student advising. Per System Policy 12.03, faculty responsibilities include commonly accepted duties, which will enhance the teaching/learning process and the quality of the institution's programs. Among these recognized duties is student advising.

2. *Career Services*

This office serves students, alumni, and employers as well as A&M-Commerce's academic departments, through programming and information dissemination, providing a bridge between academic preparation and professional careers. Regularly scheduled programs include Job Fairs, Teacher Career Days, Career Directions Workshops, and on-campus interviews with business and government recruiters. Information on current job-openings in business, higher education, and public schools is published twice-monthly; reference information on career choices, the job-search process, and on a variety of specific employers is provided; internship and co-op opportunity information is published and posted; and computer access to job-search resources on the Internet is also available (along with a brief guide and directory).

This office administers Veterans' Administration educational benefit programs for veterans and their dependents who may be eligible to receive benefits under any one of several programs. Applications and further information are available in the Veterans' Affairs office or by calling 903-886-5123.

3. *Communication Skills Center*

The Communications Skills Center, located on the first floor of the Hall of Languages, provides individual assistance in reading, writing, and study skills to all university students. The Center is designed to help students learn to organize written assignments such as essays, term papers, and reports, and to help with problems in spelling and punctuation, with vocabulary building, textbook reading, and other study skills such as note taking and test taking. Students may also receive help in preparing for the JLE and TASP tests. Hours are posted each semester. No appointments are necessary.

4. *Counseling Center*

The Counseling Center offers a wide range of programs and services to assist students in accomplishing their personal, academic, and career goals. The staff provides both individual and group counseling. Other services include relaxation training to help alleviate stress-related problems and career assistance facilitated by use of various computer-delivered career guidance systems. Legal advice is available by appointment with the student attorney. Numerous groups, programs, and workshops are presented each semester. Educational materials may be checked out from the Center's information library. All programs and services are free to University students, and the staff respects each student's right to confidentiality and privacy. Please call the Center for information about programs and services or to make an appointment.

5. *Credit by Examination and/or Advanced Placement*

Students may earn academic course credit for individual study or formal and informal educational experience through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), the Advanced Placement Program (AP), and departmental tests of competency in specific courses. Credit earned through such examinations is recorded on the student's transcript without a grade, and may be used to satisfy degree requirements. Further information is available at the Office of Student Assessment and Evaluation.

6. *Early Intervention*

Early intervention for freshmen is designed to communicate the University's interest in the success of freshman students and to show a willingness to participate fully to help students accomplish their academic objectives. The University through Advisement Services, faculty advisors and mentors will assist students who may be experiencing difficulty to focus on improvement and course completion. The process will allow students to be knowledgeable about their academic progress early in the semester and will provide faculty and staff with useful data for assisting students and enhancing retention. Faculty who teach freshmen will include in their course syllabi a statement explaining the Early Intervention Procedure and will schedule assignments or exams before the fifth week of classes so that grades may be reported. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A11.28](#) Each entering freshman student is assigned a mentor. The Freshman Mentor Program web site address is <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/synergy/mentor/>

7. *Freshman Mentoring Program*

The Freshman Mentor Program was designed as part of the Early Intervention Procedure. Mentors involve and encourage students during their days of study at A&M-Commerce. They assist students in finding and using resources helpful to their success. The Freshman Mentoring Program website is <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/synergy/mentor/>

8. *Freshman Success Seminar*

The Freshman Success Seminar program provides students assistance in the development of life skills and study skills, the utilization of resources, and the application of critical thinking. It is one of the courses included in the Mayo College clusters. Other students interested in utilizing these services should contact the director for additional information.

9. *Honors Program*

Two distinct Honors phases are available. University Studies Honors is designed primarily for promising freshman and sophomore students, who take courses designed for greater instructor contact, wider opportunities for critical analysis, and independent study.

University Honors is a formal program of independent studies beginning with the junior year for students achieving a grade point average of at least 3.25. The program culminates in the writing of an Honors thesis, and an Honors Comprehensive Oral Examination must be completed at the end of the student's work. [A&M-Commerce Procedure A13.23](#)

10. *International Student Office*

The International Student Office serves as a liaison with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. It issues the Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20) to students who have been officially admitted to the University, as well as assists students in reviewing their visas and in obtaining work permits and permission to transfer schools. The office assists international students in adapting to life at the University and in the local community. Students should contact the office with regard to other services provided by various University, civic, and religious organizations.

11. *International Studies Program: The Joe B. Hinton Office of International Studies*

The Office of International Studies provides information, assistance and scholarships for academically sound international studies programs that help students develop their understanding of international/multicultural issues in a changing world.

The primary purpose is to complement the University's academic mission by assisting students in their educational development.

The Office of International Studies will provide a variety of choices of international programs in different countries that are unique and academically challenging.

The Office of International Studies believes that educational experiences abroad provide an excellent opportunity for students to understand other cultures, reach a better understanding of American culture, develop a positive self-concept, and function effectively in an ever changing world.

12. *Lion Camp*

Lion Camp is Step Two of Freshman Orientation. This three day experience, just prior to the first week of the beginning of class. It is designed to equip students with the skills, knowledge and support that will help them be successful the first critical week of college. During Lion Camp, new students will learn to navigate campus with their new schedules, meet freshmen core faculty in a non-classroom setting, and have the opportunity to develop relationships with other members of their entering class.

Academic Credit is available (1 hour) via University Life 101 – Counseling 101. The course covers goal setting, time organization, relationships, study skills and strategies for success in college.

Faculty involvement opportunities during Lion Camp include:

- Participation in the Pride Walk – when new students are greeted and applauded while walking into the Freshman Convocation by Faculty
- Lunch with Faculty at Lion Camp – a great time to meet new students in small groups
- Evening social events and programs
- Working with the Lion Camp Counselors on the Freshman Road Trip to Lone Star, Texas, as students and faculty talk about traditions, social opportunities and engage in planned recreation.

13. *Mach III/Student Support Services*

A variety of services are available to students who qualify on the basis of any of the following reasons: economic disadvantage, first generation college students (parents did not attend college), and handicap, including those who are learning disabled.

The staff includes instructors, counselors, peer-counselors, tutors, and other student assistants. Services include the following:

- *Counseling:* Each student is assigned to a counselor who will help with personal problems.
- *Peer-Counseling:* Freshmen are assigned to a peer counselor who assists them in developing academic skills such as note-taking and learning how to study for tests.
- *Tutoring:* Tutorial assistance is available in a wide variety of subjects.
- *Cultural Experiences:* Mach III sponsors field trips, dances, multi-ethnic programs, guest speakers, and athletic events.

- *Services for the Handicapped:* Students with physical handicaps and learning disabilities are eligible for services provided by tutors, readers, interpreters, note takers, transcribers, and mobility assistants.
- *Referral:* Mach III also provides referral services for eligible students to other on-campus or off-campus services and facilities.

14. *Community Counseling Center*

This Center, operated by the Department of Counseling and Guidance in the College of Education, provides counseling services to students, faculty, and staff members including their families. A variety of premarital, marital, divorce mediation, post-marital, family counseling, and play therapy services are provided on a sliding scale fee. Other area residents also take advantage of this Center's confidential services.

15. *Mathematics Skills Center*

The Mathematics Skills Center provides assistance to students wishing to improve their skills in areas of mathematics extending from arithmetic through calculus. Tutorial services are available and are concentrated on students enrolled in freshman courses.

16. *Mayo College*

The Mayo College is a student-centered college within Texas A&M University-Commerce. It provides undergraduate students a comprehensive educational environment comparable to those found at small, private, Liberal Arts colleges at the affordable costs of a mid-size comprehensive state university. It features residential learning communities comprised of students taking specially designed clusters of classes comprised of Freshman Success Seminar (PSY 111: Critical Thinking) and one or two other classes that meet University Studies requirements for graduation regardless of the student's academic major (usually English, History, Mathematics, Speech, or Science).

17. *Office of Financial Aid*

The Office of Financial Aid is a source of information for students seeking national, state, and other grants and loans. The office also provides assistance with student work-study employment.

18. *Office of Student Assessment and Evaluation*

The Office of Student Assessment and Evaluation administers national, state, and local testing programs. Some of the national testing programs include the American College Test (ACT), the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT), the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), the Graduate School Foreign Language Test (GSFLT), and the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP). The College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES) examinations are also administered.

This Office is also responsible for administering the Math, and Diagnostic tests, and the Junior Level Essay.

19. *Psycho educational Clinic*

The Psycho educational Clinic is operated by the College of Education. The clinic is a training site for graduate students in applied programs in education and psychology, and provides diagnostic counseling services and referrals for clients and agencies in the University and surrounding areas. Fees are on a sliding scale based on the ability to pay.

20. *Student Health Services*

Medical services are available at the Student Health Center to those students who are currently attending classes at A&M-Commerce. Services include diagnosis and treatment of minor illnesses, minor injuries, minor surgery, x-ray and lab procedures. Students are seen only during regular clinic hours; all after hours illnesses or emergencies may be seen at the local hospital at the expense of the students.

I. Sponsorship of Student Organizations

Many student organizations are sponsored by faculty and staff. You are encouraged to work with the Office of Student Organizations. This is an important out-of-class experience.

Section VII

Support Facilities and Services

A. Library

The James G. Gee Library, named for Texas A&M University-Commerce's fifth president, is the academic center of campus. The online catalog, which is Internet accessible, provides access to the library's collection containing over 1.8 million monographs, periodicals, microforms and other processed materials including non-print media. This total includes collections of juvenile and young people's literature, archival materials, curriculum materials and maps. The University has been a depository for federal government publications since 1937 and for Texas state documents since 1963.

In support of undergraduate and graduate programs, the library provides free access to CARL UnCover, FirstSearch, PsychInfo, Medline, America: History and Life, ERIC, MLA Bibliography and numerous Wilson indexes; and fee-based access to other databases and services. Internet access to other library catalogs is also available. An interlibrary loan service delivers publications to Gee Library from libraries throughout the world. Viewing machines are available for microform items, and reader-printers enable students to obtain hard copy of microform materials. Photocopy machines are also available in the library. The library's extensive microform collections include ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) documents.

TAMU-Commerce Library is a member of the AMIGOS Bibliographic Council, Phoenix Group, and the Alliance for Higher Education. These alliances allow TAMU-C students access to all state-supported academic libraries plus many of the regional private universities as supplementary resources to the Gee Library collections.

The library computer laboratory, located on the second floor, is available to all students. The lab contains IBM-PC compatible and Macintosh computers, printers and software for word processing, spreadsheets and reports. The lab also provides access to the Internet.

B. Computing, Telecommunications and Information Services

Computing, Telecommunications and Information Services (CTIS) is the centralization of Automated Data Processing, academic computing, academic research and telecommunications support. It is responsible for the integrity, security, reliability and all administrative information that supports and enhances A&M-Commerce. CTIS, located on the first level of the Business Administration Building, Room 156, is staffed to provide system analysis, programming, data preparation and computer processing for all divisions. Telecommunications performs installations, troubleshooting and maintenance of University computers. CTIS manages the installation and maintenance of the copper and fiber-optic cable plant that provide voice, video and data service to the core campus and the dormitories. CTIS also maintains the Internet dial-up service. Applications for e-mail, web pages and Internet dial-up service are available for students, faculty and staff free of charge, at the CTIS front desk.

C. Center for Educational Media

The Media Center provides non-print educational materials for students and faculty. Carrels are provided in which faculty and students may preview, study and evaluate motion pictures, filmstrips, slides and audio and video tapes. Audiovisual equipment and media are available for checkout for classroom use. Graphic Services has facilities for the production of illustrative materials, reports and research. Professional assistance with production activities is available to students and faculty.

D. Instructional Technology

The Department of Instructional Technology provides a multitude of services to faculty. A multimedia specialist and graduate students are available to assist faculty in designing web pages, PowerPoint presentations, and in preparing courses for web-based delivery. Instructional design services are also available to faculty to assist them in determining the most appropriate media for delivery of content. A technology support coordinator is available to provide just-in-time training, as well as scheduled workshops for faculty and departments. Laptops are available for checkout from this department on a first-come, first-serve basis, and staff are available to answer questions regarding technology purchases. All videoconferences and distance education courses are scheduled through this department, as well as the scheduling of on-site facilitators to provide assistance on an as-needed basis. For additional information, please call 903-886-5511 or contact the Director of Instructional Technology.

E. KETR-FM 88.9

Texas A&M University-Commerce owns and operates its own radio station. In addition to serving as A&M-Commerce's own full-power, full-service radio station, KETR serves as a professional communications laboratory for students. KETR is an affiliate of American Public Radio, the Associated Press, the Texas Public Broadcasting

Association, the Southern Educational Communication and the Texas Association of Broadcasters. KETR is a noncommercial station broadcasting at 88.9 on the FM band. Its transmitting power of 100,000 watts provides coverage to a 70-mile plus radius from Commerce. KETR places strong emphasis on news, public affairs, information and cultural programming.

F. Performing Arts Center

The Performing Arts Center, which houses the university's Department of Communication and Theatre, has two theatres, a revolving stage in the main playhouse, a technical workroom, a scene shop, dressing and makeup rooms and studios for KETR-FM. As a cultural center on campus, the Performing Arts Center is an integral part of the university's outreach program.

G. Recreation Center

A new recreation facility is currently under construction. Until this project has been completed, Watson Cafeteria will serve as the temporary site. Recreational programs will continue to be offered and the University community will still have access to the Wellness Program, weightlifting, treadmills, step machines, and stationary bicycles. A model of the new/proposed recreation facility may be viewed in Watson Cafeteria. The \$12 million dollar state-of-the-art recreation facility, scheduled to open Fall 2003, will serve as the "heartbeat" of student life at A&M-Commerce. The Student Recreation Center will include: 45-foot climbing rock, 3-lane jogging track, 4 racquetball courts, 2 basketball courts, large fitness room with cardiovascular and weight equipment, aerobics room, classroom, snack area, and locker rooms. The outdoor area will include: heated leisure pool (beach-type entry, fountains, water tunnel, current channel, bubble jet benches, 3-lap lanes), 2-tier hot tub with water fall, 2 sand volleyball courts, 2 basketball courts, picnic tables, BBQ pits, and a sunbathing area.

Users of the Student Recreation Center are required to pay a Recreation Sports Fee. You can contact the Student Recreation Center for information about memberships or check their website at <http://sus.tamu-commerce.edu/sus/studentaffairs/zeppa/>

H. Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center

The center of student activity at Texas A&M University-Commerce is the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center. Built in 1962, the three-story structure was expanded in 1969.

Housed in the student center are the campus post office, a full-service professional salon, a cafeteria, the University Book Store, office of Student Organizations, Student Government offices, two ballrooms and meeting rooms, television rooms, lounges, candy corner, a video arcade, recreation room, an information service and the Commuters' Corner.

I. Traffic Safety and Security

The University Police Department is a University community service and enforcement agency offering police, traffic, parking, crime prevention, and safety services.

Traffic and parking regulations for faculty and staff are detailed in a booklet available at the security office in Henderson Hall.

Parking stickers are required for all cars parked on the campus. Faculty members may register as many cars as they wish on an annual fee-per-car basis. Registered faculty cars receive blue parking permits and may be parked in zones designated blue, red, brown, or green.

J. Scheduling and Reserving Rooms

Classroom space is scheduled through the Registrar's Office. Room use or changes should be cleared through that office.

Non-academic space is scheduled through the Coordinator of Scheduling located in the Memorial Student Center. Information concerning regulations and procedures for scheduling may be obtained from that office.

Section VIII

Appendixes

Appendix A

Criteria for University Studies Courses

The Philosophy of Texas A&M University-Commerce University Studies Program

General education is an essential element in the higher education process; it results in professional growth, professional success, and responsible citizenship. The University Studies (US) or Core Curriculum Program at Texas A&M University-Commerce is the body of general education courses common to all undergraduate programs of study, and is administered through the office of the Provost & Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. The US program promotes the attainment of goals set forth in the university mission statement and complies with requirements established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Through both formal and informal learning experiences, students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, learn reasoning and communication skills; develop an enduring commitment to learning and examine their goals, values and potential.

The US program consists of academic courses that correspond to the component areas listed below; which, collectively, provide students with the essential intellectual competencies of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. Communications (9 sch) | e. Humanities (3 sch) |
| b. Mathematics (3 sch) | f. Visual and Performing Arts (3 sch) |
| c. Natural Sciences (8 sch) | g. Physical Education/Health (2 sch)US |
| d. Social and Behavioral Sciences (15 sch) | h. Capstones (3 sch) |

Capstone courses provide a broader view than the normal focus of upper-division courses and acquaint students with disciplines outside their own, giving them a perspective that will transcend their major and minor fields. These courses provide students with a forum for the exercise of critical thinking in an interdisciplinary context and opportunities to integrate diverse undergraduate educational experiences. Capstones are restricted to junior and senior level students who have completed at least 60 semester hours prior to enrollment in the course.

Faculty members or departments are responsible for the development of course proposals for the US program. The originating department and respective college dean is responsible for assuring proposal compliance with THECB and SACS core curriculum guidelines. Proposals are submitted for review and recommendation to the US or Core Curriculum Council, which functions as an advisory committee to the Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and approved through normal curriculum change channels. A listing of currently approved courses appears in the *Undergraduate Catalog*.

The US or Core Curriculum Council is also responsible for establishing, promulgating and executing procedures for the periodic assessment and evaluation of program and course compliance with state and agency mandated standards and guidelines. Assessment results are reviewed and used formatively to update, improve, and revise the core curriculum.

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