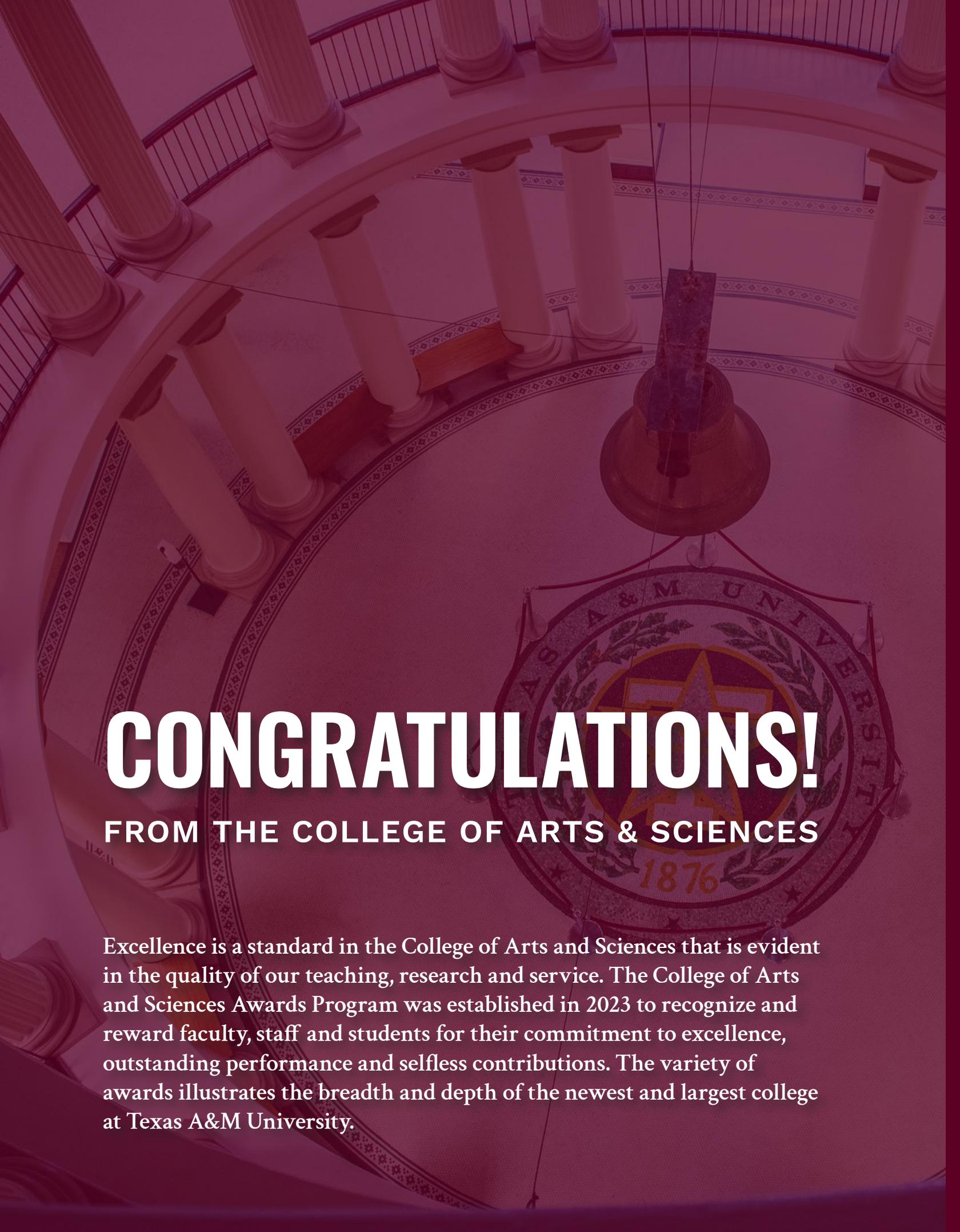




COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Awards Ceremony

Tuesday, April 29, 2025
The Ford Hall of Champions
at Kyle Field
4 p.m. - 7 p.m.



CONGRATULATIONS!

FROM THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Excellence is a standard in the College of Arts and Sciences that is evident in the quality of our teaching, research and service. The College of Arts and Sciences Awards Program was established in 2023 to recognize and reward faculty, staff and students for their commitment to excellence, outstanding performance and selfless contributions. The variety of awards illustrates the breadth and depth of the newest and largest college at Texas A&M University.

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Staff Awards

Staff Excellence

This award recognizes staff members who have excelled in their position and demonstrate a strong commitment to the performance of their unit. Successful nominees produce high-quality work, show ingenuity, innovation, initiative, and independence in their position. They also communicate and collaborate well with others and contribute to a positive and thriving work environment.



Chelsi Bass

Executive Assistant II

Economics

As Executive Assistant to the Department Head, Chelsi Bass is the linchpin of faculty affairs, events, and strategic initiatives in the Department of Economics. She expertly manages hiring, promotion, and high-profile visits—most notably those of Nobel Laureate Eric Maskin—and has led major conferences, including the innovative virtual Pre-Doctoral Pipeline series. Known for her initiative and institutional knowledge, Chelsi has also fostered alumni-student connections, created welcoming student spaces, and elevated the department’s presence through campus partnerships and advising roles.



McKensie Le Fevre

Associate Director

Biology

McKensie Le Fevre plays a central role in the Department of Biology, where she leads academic operations, communication, and instructional support. She has overseen complex lab relocations, restructured staffing models amid rising enrollment, and championed the department’s marketing efforts. Known for her resourcefulness and relational leadership, McKensie supports students in times of crisis, drives course innovation, and builds community across faculty and staff—making her indispensable to the department’s success and culture.



Miranda Wickesser

Program Coordinator

Chemistry

Miranda Wickesser is a driving force behind the success of the Department of Chemistry's undergraduate programs and summer research initiatives. She manages complex scheduling, streamlines enrollment logistics, and supports students, faculty, and staff with unmatched responsiveness and care. Miranda has enhanced community-building events, implemented new administrative systems, and played a key role in REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) program coordination and outreach. Her initiative, problem-solving, and warmth contribute daily to a well-organized, welcoming, and student-focused department culture.



Paula Verdegaal

Assistant Program Director

Economics

Paula Verdegaal has transformed student engagement and career development in the Department of Economics through innovative programming and personalized support. She expanded the department's career fair employer participation fivefold, tripled student attendance, and secured ongoing sponsorships. Her one-on-one work with masters students has contributed to a 95% placement rate and rising starting salaries. Paula also leads career workshops, wellness events, and recruitment initiatives that reflect her deep commitment to student success and a thriving departmental culture..

Staff Outstanding Leadership

This award celebrates staff in leadership positions who lead with integrity, support their teams, and contribute positively to the broader workplace community. Successful nominees show exceptional commitment and dedication that contributes to efficient and effective operations within their units. They exhibit strong leadership skills that inspire others to grow and excel.



Ron Carter

Assistant Department Head

Chemistry

Ron Carter exemplifies outstanding leadership through his decades of visionary planning, cross-campus service, and steadfast support of faculty, staff, and students. As Assistant Department Head, he has led complex renovations and infrastructure improvements that impact every corner of the Department of Chemistry. His influence extends university-wide through decades of committee service, including as Chair of the Classroom Renovation Project and advisor on the Instructional Laboratory and Innovative Learning Building construction. Renowned for his expertise, humility, and transformational leadership, Ron inspires those around him to excel while advancing Texas A&M's mission at every level.



Faculty Awards

Early Career Teaching

This award recognizes early career faculty members who have a strong record of effective and excellent classroom instruction. Successful nominees will exhibit a strong dedication to student learning and engagement, a proven track record of effective teaching methods, and a continuous commitment to refining their instructional practices.



Nicole Hagstrom-Schmidt

Lecturer

English

Dr. Hagstrom-Schmidt teaches core writing and literature courses, including Shakespeare and early English drama. Since joining the faculty in 2019, she has taught over 1,300 students and is recognized for her accessible, student-focused teaching. She incorporates customized examples, flexible participation options, and universal design strategies to support different learning styles. She mentors Honors students with one-on-one coaching and contributes to department-wide initiatives to reduce textbook costs through open educational resources. Her efforts have saved students more than \$1.7 million and advanced more sustainable learning practices in multi-section writing courses.



Constantine Karathanasis

Assistant Professor

Global Languages and Cultures

Dr. Karathanasis joined the Department of Global Languages and Cultures in 2022 and teaches courses ranging from large lectures like Classical Mythology to advanced seminars in Latin and Greek. His classes blend inquiry-based and dialogic methods to encourage critical engagement with the Classical tradition and its relevance today. He has inspired growing student interest in Classics at Texas A&M, including the creation of a student-led Classics Club. He also participates in the Texas Classical Association to expand access to Classical education and build relationships with K-12 educators across the state.



Erik Nielsen

Instructional Assistant Professor

Atmospheric Sciences

Dr. Nielsen has taught a broad range of courses using real-time weather data, forecasting simulations, and active learning to deepen student understanding. He has helped develop field-based experiences like the Convective Storms Field Study and international programs in Barbados and Australia. He advises the Texas A&M Student Chapter of the American Meteorological Society (TAMSCAMS), which earned national recognition in 2024, and mentors dozens of undergraduate researchers annually. Known for his open-door approach and unwavering student support, he also leads initiatives such as the Student Operated Upper Air Program and weekly departmental weather briefings, enriching student learning beyond the classroom.



Andy Thomas
Assistant Professor
Chemistry

Dr. Thomas joined the Department of Chemistry in 2020 and teaches undergraduate organic chemistry and graduate courses in synthesis and spectroscopy, earning praise for his dynamic, hands-on approach. He creates custom instructional tools, like Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) wheels and molecular models, to make complex concepts approachable. He has mentored 15 undergraduates in his research lab, leading to multiple student publications and successful placements in top industry and PhD programs. He also launched a science outreach workshop for elementary students and co-organizes a statewide undergraduate research conference. His commitment to student engagement and educational access extends beyond the classroom into community-based science initiatives.

Undergraduate Mentoring

This award recognizes faculty who demonstrate exceptional dedication and effectiveness in mentoring undergraduate students outside of the classroom, including high-impact learning experiences. Successful nominees are faculty whose professional relationships with students are particularly helpful and inspiring, and who ensure that students strive to meet their potential.



Sarah Gatson
Associate Professor
Sociology

Dr. Gatson is known for her exceptional commitment to experiential learning, creating opportunities for undergraduates to engage in rigorous, community-embedded research. Since joining the Department of Sociology in 1999, she has developed high-impact projects like *Everybody Eats*, a collaborative ethnographic initiative centered on food security. Her research-intensive courses integrate peer review, service-learning, and long-term engagement with community partners. Through programs like the Aggie Research Scholars and the Glasscock Summer Scholars, Dr. Gatson mentors students in meaningful, applied sociological research. Her teaching model transforms classrooms into collaborative spaces that promote critical thinking, personal agency, and real-world problem-solving.



Dylan McCreedy
Assistant Professor
Biology

Dr. McCreedy mentors undergraduate researchers across biology and biomedical engineering, creating immersive experiences in experimental design, data analysis, and scientific communication. Over 30 undergraduates have trained in his lab, with seven earning co-authorship on peer-reviewed publications—including in *PNAS*. He actively supports student advancement through programs like BioFirst and the Aggie Research Program and helps secure paid research positions to broaden access to research. Many of his mentees have received competitive fellowships and admission to top-tier graduate, medical, and research programs. His sustained mentorship prepares students for long-term success in STEM careers.



Dwayne Raymond

Instructional Associate Professor

Philosophy

Dr. Raymond has built a robust infrastructure for undergraduate mentoring that includes internships, research experiences, teaching capstones, and leadership development since becoming a faculty member in the Department of Philosophy in 2011. He created a progressive internship model for the Society, Ethics, and Law major, connecting students with NGOs and law firms while guiding them through increasingly responsible roles. In philosophy, he mentors student-led initiatives like Alethia, the undergraduate journal, and co-organizes international research forums. He also provides pedagogical training for future teachers through the LAUNCH Teaching Capstone. His mentoring empowers students to recognize and articulate their skills, preparing them for graduate study, law school, and civic engagement.



Katherine Unterman

Associate Professor

History

Dr. Unterman has transformed undergraduate mentorship through her leadership in legal history. She created the Legal History Certificate, which prepares students for law school through archival research, legal writing, and oral argument. Her students have launched the *Texas A&M Undergraduate Journal of Law and Society*, with Dr. Unterman as faculty advisor. She has mentored nine honors theses, many of which have earned university-wide recognition, and her students have gone on to careers in the Department of Justice, district attorney offices, and top law schools. Through collaborative events and one-on-one guidance, she helps students see themselves as legal scholars and change-makers.

Graduate Mentoring

This award recognizes faculty members who have a strong record of excellence in graduate mentoring and demonstrated a commitment to supporting both the academic and professional development of graduate students.



Andrew Barr

Associate Professor

Economics

Dr. Barr has made a transformative impact on graduate mentoring in the Department of Economics since joining Texas A&M in 2015. He has chaired six Ph.D. committees, mentored students to tenure-track positions and prestigious fellowships, and is known for his deep engagement and accessibility. He founded a peer-led graduate student seminar and initiated a visiting scholar program that brings national experts to campus for short courses and mentoring. His efforts to redesign the department's mini-conference into a high-impact research forum have significantly enhanced the scholarly community. Through his leadership and innovation, Dr. Barr has built supportive infrastructure that benefits students from all backgrounds.



Richard Curry

Associate Professor

Global Languages and Cultures

Dr. Curry has mentored over 120 graduate students during his nearly four decades at Texas A&M. As Director of Graduate Studies, he coordinates academic programming and professional development through workshops and “charlas” that guide students through publishing, job applications, and scholarly communication. He has directed 19 dissertations and chaired 44 master’s committees. His former mentees are teaching across the U.S. and abroad. He has also provided pedagogical training to every cohort of Spanish graduate teaching assistants, with many earning campus-wide teaching awards. Through seminar courses, conference preparation, and decades of individualized support, Dr. Curry helps graduate students grow as scholars, educators, and professionals.

Service

This award recognizes faculty members who demonstrate excellence in service, leadership, and/or outreach. Successful nominees exemplify the Aggie Core Value of selfless service and exhibit exceptional engagement and significant impact in service to the department, college, university, the profession, and/or society.



James Howell

Instructional Assistant Professor

Global Languages and Cultures

Dr. Howell has demonstrated exceptional leadership and service since joining Texas A&M in 2019. As Director of Undergraduate Studies in Global Languages & Cultures, he oversees more than 20 academic programs, chairs multiple departmental committees, and plays a central role in shaping curricular policy and academic assessment. At the college level, he serves on the Undergraduate Instruction Committee and is incoming chair-elect. His university service includes leadership roles in the Faculty Senate, where he co-chairs the Core Curriculum Council. Beyond campus, Dr. Howell serves as President of the South Texas Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German advancing outreach and engagement in the Brazos Valley.



Anne Raymond

Professor

Geology

Dr. Raymond has contributed over four decades of impactful service across departmental, university, and international scientific communities. As President of the Paleontological Society (2022–24), she oversaw major philanthropic initiatives, ethics policy, and student research funding programs that now distribute over \$230,000 annually. She has revitalized interdisciplinary degree pathways in geology, expanded undergraduate scholarship opportunities, and is a consistent leader in curriculum and faculty mentoring initiatives. Through community events like Aggiland Saturday and her hands-on approach to student outreach, Dr. Raymond strengthens connections between science, education, and the public. Her service continues to shape both the department and the global field of paleontology.

Public Engagement and Outreach

This award recognizes a faculty member who exhibits excellence in public engagement and outreach that connects the college with broader communities in a significant and sustained way. Successful nominees engage in scholarly activities that involve community-based research, foster reciprocal community partnerships, and/or enhance higher education's contributions to the public good.



James Pennington

Instructional Associate Professor

Chemistry

Dr. Pennington has led the Texas A&M Chemistry Road Show since 2008, transforming it into a statewide science outreach program that reaches over 15,000 people annually. With more than 1,100 shows delivered in over 200 cities across Texas—and virtual reach extending to 19 U.S. states, Canada, and Ghana—he uses dynamic chemical demonstrations to spark interest in science among K–12 students and community members. Dr. Pennington has cultivated long-term partnerships with school districts, libraries, and the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, and secured corporate and donor support to keep the program free and accessible. He also mentors undergraduate and graduate volunteers, incorporating service-learning and developing skill-building opportunities through digital badges. His outreach reflects a sustained, innovative, and deeply impactful connection between higher education and the broader public.

Administration

This award recognizes a faculty member with outstanding administrative leadership and a strong record of service to Texas A&M and the College of Arts and Sciences.



Wayne Versaw

Professor

Biology

Dr. Versaw has made far-reaching contributions to academic administration at Texas A&M through over a decade of strategic leadership in the Department of Biology and the College of Arts and Sciences. As Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives, he leads efforts in academic operations, interdisciplinary program management, enrollment planning, curricular assessment, and student support services. He previously served as Associate Head of Biology, where he restructured introductory biology courses, led the adoption of open educational resources, and reduced DFQ rates by more than 50%. During his leadership of the Biomedical Sciences program, he secured over \$3 million in support and established curricular structures and internship networks that served more than 600 students. Widely recognized for fostering collaboration, transparency, and student-centered innovation, Dr. Versaw exemplifies excellence in university-level administration.

Research Impact

This award recognizes faculty who have outstanding records of research that is transforming their discipline (and/or society). Successful nominees will be recognized as leaders who are advancing the field in new directions.



Ege Selin Islekel

Assistant Professor

Philosophy

Dr. Islekel is internationally recognized for her groundbreaking work in political philosophy, continental thought, and decolonial theory. Her scholarship explores the political force of mourning, trauma, and resistance in postcolonial and state-violence contexts. Since earning her Ph.D. in 2018, she has authored a single-authored book, eight peer-reviewed articles, and five book chapters, with work published by top-tier venues including *Foucault Studies* and *Hypatia*. Her influence is evident in invitations to contribute to major encyclopedias and speak at institutions across Europe and the U.S. She is co-founder of the Critical Thought of the Global South Consortium, through which she is reshaping the intellectual profile of the department and university.



Yina Liu

Assistant Professor

Oceanography

Dr. Liu is a rising leader in marine and environmental biogeochemistry, using high-resolution mass spectrometry and big-data analytics to uncover the fate of organic and halogenated carbon compounds in aquatic systems. Since joining Texas A&M in 2020, she has published over 38 papers, received the prestigious NSF CAREER Award, and secured more than \$2 million in research funding. Her discoveries on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances contamination and ozone-depleting substances are influencing both science and public policy. Dr. Liu's contributions span basic research, environmental applications, and national leadership through editorial boards and invited talks at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Sea Grant, and international research symposia.



Angela Mitchell

Assistant Professor

Biology

Dr. Mitchell's research is advancing our understanding of antibiotic resistance by uncovering how the outer membranes of Gram-negative bacteria act as impermeable barriers. Her work has demonstrated how disrupting specific pathways can re-sensitize bacteria to antibiotics—offering new hope in the fight against superbugs. Since starting her independent lab in 2019, she has published 22 articles (including PNAS and mBio), received multiple NIH grants, and earned national recognition for scientific contributions and peer review service. Her lab's findings on the synthesis and function of the enterobacterial common antigen are reshaping the field of microbial physiology.



Wencai Liu

Associate Professor
Mathematics

Dr. Liu is an internationally acclaimed mathematical physicist whose work on quantum systems, spectral theory, and Schrödinger operators has solved long standing open problems and earned prestigious honors such as the Simons Fellowship and the IUPAP Early Career Scientist Prize. His research appears in the most elite mathematics journals, including *Annals of Mathematics* and *Communications in Pure and Applied Mathematics*. He has been a plenary speaker at the International Congress of Mathematical Physics and organizes global conferences that bridge communities across mathematics and physics. His work has led to fundamental advances in our understanding of quantum dynamics and spectral transitions.



Fernando Luco

Associate Professor
Economics

Dr. Luco is a leader in behavioral industrial organization whose innovative research blends empirical rigor with insights from psychology to better understand firm behavior and market efficiency. He has published in top-tier journals, including two articles in *American Economic Review*, and his work has been cited in U.S. and Australian antitrust policy documents. His research on vertical mergers and behavioral firm models has influenced both academic discourse and real-world regulation. Dr. Luco's interdisciplinary impact spans economics, cognitive science, and public policy, and his contributions have been recognized by multiple best paper awards and invited contributions to field-defining handbooks.



Daniel Paredes-Sabja

Associate Professor
Biology

Dr. Paredes-Sabja is an internationally recognized expert in microbial pathogenesis whose research has fundamentally advanced understanding of *Clostridioides difficile* and *Clostridium perfringens*. His lab's discovery that *C. difficile* spores can enter host cells has reshaped how scientists understand infection and recurrence. With over 110 peer-reviewed publications and an NIH R01 grant, he is pioneering new vaccine strategies and diagnostic tools. His high citation count (h-index 46) and leadership in global research conferences affirm his position as a top-tier scientist redefining approaches to infectious disease.



Sharon Gursky

Professor
Anthropology

Dr. Gursky is a world leader in the study of nocturnal primates, particularly tarsiers of Southeast Asia. Her research has redefined understanding of primate social behavior, communication, and conservation, with over 70 peer-reviewed articles, two books, and five edited volumes. She has pioneered new field methods for studying elusive nocturnal species and has led the rediscovery of the pygmy tarsier, once thought extinct. Her work has influenced primate conservation policy globally and contributed to training a generation of researchers in Indonesia and beyond. In recognition of her impact, the species *Tarsius spectrumgurskyae* was named in her honor.



Xiaohong Liu

Professor

Atmospheric Sciences

Dr. Liu is a globally recognized atmospheric scientist whose research on aerosol-cloud interactions and climate modeling has reshaped the field of earth system science. He has authored more than 250 peer-reviewed publications, with over 27,000 citations and inclusion in multiple IPCC reports. At Texas A&M, he has secured more than \$5 million in federal funding and developed aerosol models used by major national and international research agencies. His leadership in climate science has been recognized with fellowships in the AAAS, AGU, and AMS, and his mentorship has placed students in leading faculty and national lab positions worldwide.



Alberto Moreiras

Professor

Global Languages and Cultures

Dr. Moreiras is one of the most influential scholars in Latin American cultural and political theory. He has authored 19 single-author books, with three more forthcoming, and is the founder of the influential field of “infrapolitical” deconstruction. His early works such as *The Exhaustion of Difference* and *Tercer Espacio* continue to shape debates in postcolonial and critical theory. He is a sought-after speaker, frequent contributor to international scholarly journals, and co-editor of major reference works in his field. His work combines rigorous philosophy with deep engagement in global political thought, positioning him as a central voice in the humanities.

Faculty Excellence

This award recognizes faculty whose careers reflect significant contributions across multiple areas of expertise. For the tenured/tenure-track faculty category, this award recognizes faculty who excel in all three major pillars of academic life: research, teaching, and service/leadership. For the academic professional track faculty category, this award recognizes faculty who are excellent in their assigned areas of responsibility (i.e., teaching and service for instructional track, teaching for lecturer track).



Mohamed Aburweis

Instructional Associate Professor

Statistics

Dr. Aburweis has made a lasting impact as a teacher, mentor, and innovator in statistics education. He teaches a wide array of undergraduate and graduate courses and introduced an honors section of STAT 302, offering deeper content and personalized mentoring. He coordinates Week In Review sessions that serve over 1,000 students each semester and developed open-access course materials that promote access to statistical knowledge. He has secured over \$90,000 in grants to support the creation of an OER statistics textbook and digital learning tools. His service includes leadership on outreach initiatives like a summer camp that boosted interest in statistics and supported enrollment growth. His mentorship, service, and curriculum development efforts reflect his dedication to student success and relational education.



Rich Cooper

Instructional Associate Professor

English

Dr. Cooper is a leader in teaching innovation, curriculum development, and student-centered learning. He incorporates game-based learning and AI pedagogy into his science fiction and fantasy courses, and created an interdisciplinary minor in Science Fiction and Fantasy Studies. He has served as editor and author for multiple open educational resource textbooks that have saved students over \$130,000 and expanded course offerings across disciplines. A Faculty Fellow with the Center for Teaching Excellence, he published with an undergraduate co-author and supports student research through theses and creative writing mentorship. His contributions extend to departmental leadership, curriculum development, and public engagement, exemplifying the values of service and educational innovation.



Heather Klein

Instructional Professor

Mathematics

Dr. Klein has significantly enhanced mathematics education and advising at Texas A&M. She revitalized the Actuarial Program, aligning curricula with changing credentialing standards and more than doubling both student participation and employer engagement. As Assistant Head for Undergraduate Programs, she oversees advising, course offerings, and curriculum coordination for one of the university's largest departments. Her leadership extends to college- and university-wide governance, including Faculty Senate and strategic hiring and advising initiatives. Recognized for her teaching and student engagement with numerous awards, she exemplifies a multifaceted commitment to educational excellence, curriculum innovation, and academic service.



Justin Spilker

Assistant Professor

Physics and Astronomy

Dr. Spilker is a rising leader in astrophysics whose work on galaxy evolution and cosmic feedback has led to major discoveries using NASA's Webb and Hubble Space Telescopes and Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array. Since joining Texas A&M in 2022, he has published more than 30 peer-reviewed papers, including an internationally recognized *Nature* article. He has attracted over \$850,000 in funding, led competitive telescope proposals, and serves in leadership roles for major observational collaborations. He mentors postdocs and graduate students and plays a central role in shaping future space missions. His early-career achievements demonstrate excellence in research, mentoring, and scientific leadership.



Shawna Ross

Associate Professor

English

Dr. Ross is a prolific scholar and award-winning teacher whose research spans British literature, digital humanities, and environmental humanities. She has authored or co-authored four books, edited two volumes, and published numerous articles and book chapters, with global citations and a Korean translation of her digital pedagogy book. A former chair of the Modern Language Association's Committee on Information Technology, she is internationally recognized for integrating computational tools with literary criticism. Her teaching innovations include digital humanities projects, environmental studies curriculum, and mentoring of students and faculty across disciplines. Her leadership in curriculum development, research impact, and service make her a model academic citizen.



Darryl de Ruiter

Professor

Anthropology

Dr. de Ruiter is an internationally renowned paleoanthropologist whose discovery of two hominin species, *Australopithecus sediba* and *Homo naledi*, has reshaped understanding of human evolution. With over 90 publications—including articles in *Science*, *Nature*, and *PNAS*—he has an h-index of 50 and a global media and public outreach profile that includes documentaries and TEDx talks. As department head, he led major strategic initiatives, including curriculum redesign, hiring, and fundraising for endowments. He has taught and mentored graduate students through fieldwork in South Africa and created innovative courses like “The Anthropology of Beer.” His research, teaching, and service record exemplifies a career of excellence and transformative impact.

Outstanding Career

This award recognizes an eminent senior faculty member who has brought distinction to the College of Arts and Sciences through their research, teaching, service, and/or leadership. Successful nominees will demonstrate long-term, sustained contributions to the university and to their discipline through a variety of activities.



Catharina Laporte

Instructional Professor

Anthropology

Dr. Laporte is a visionary educator and university leader whose teaching, mentoring, and service have had a campus-wide impact. She redesigned one of the university’s largest core curriculum courses using open-access resources and high-impact practices that promote student choice and reduce cost and anxiety. Her pedagogical innovations are used at Yale, UC Berkeley, and across TAMU. A dedicated mentor to faculty and students, she has received the TAMU Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence Award and the Association of Former Students Distinguished Teaching Award. Dr. Laporte’s leadership includes extensive faculty governance, co-leading institutional strategic planning, and advancing university-wide teaching initiatives. She has served on major task forces, chaired governance committees, and mentored faculty across disciplines. Through her transformative teaching and selfless service, she has elevated the student experience and institutional culture at Texas A&M.



Deborah Bell-Pedersen

University Distinguished Professor

Biology

Dr. Bell-Pedersen is a world leader in chronobiology whose groundbreaking research on circadian rhythms has reshaped understanding of gene regulation and disease. Her pioneering discoveries on rhythmic protein translation and signaling in healthy and cancerous cells have influenced neurobiology, oncology, and pharmacology. She has published over 65 peer-reviewed papers with more than 10,000 citations, secured a prestigious MIRA grant from NIH, and directed TAMU's only NIH Program Project Grant in Biology. An exceptional educator, she developed and teaches a high-impact undergraduate-graduate course on biological clocks and a writing-intensive capstone. Her teaching innovations include pairing graduate and undergraduate students for peer mentoring and exposing students to Nobel Prize-winning scientists. As a mentor and leader, she co-led the department's transformation plan, founded the Center for Biological Clocks, raised over \$2.5 million in private gifts, and advocated for the new Biology Teaching and Research Building. Her career exemplifies sustained excellence in research, teaching, and service.



Eduardo Espina

Professor

Global Languages and Cultures

Dr. Espina is an internationally acclaimed poet, essayist, and scholar whose career has brought global distinction to Texas A&M. He has published more than 30 books of poetry, criticism, and essays, and his works have been translated into 11 languages and appear in over 40 international anthologies. Espina's poetry is studied worldwide and has been recognized by the Guggenheim Foundation, Fulbright Program, and numerous international prizes. A founding member of TAMU's Hispanic Studies Ph.D. program, he has directed numerous dissertations and designed the long-running "Aggies in the Andes" study abroad program. He co-founded student organizations supporting Hispanic and Latinx students and has mentored generations of scholars and artists. His immersive, life-changing teaching style and record of scholarly and creative achievement have made him a transformative figure in the humanities.



Student Awards

Outstanding Graduating Senior



Jackson Baker

History and Anthropology

Jackson Baker is a double major in History and Anthropology with experience in museum work and historical research. He has held several leadership roles, including Commanding Officer of Company I-1 in the Corps of Cadets, Co-Vice President of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, and a Delegate to the Student Conference on U.S. Affairs at West Point. Since 2022, his research with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has focused on identifying Texas A&M students missing in action from America's wars. His award-winning thesis, "The Duty Ours: A Preliminary Analysis for the Recovery of Aggies Missing in Action," earned him the 2024 University Outstanding Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis Award.



Ana Gou

Spanish and International Affairs

Ana Gou is a double major in Spanish and International Affairs with a strong background in public service, policy, and education. She has interned with Teach for America, as well as in Senator John Cornyn's office and through the Public Policy Internship Program. Her University Honors thesis, "Symptom or Source? Economic Development and Rising Dropout Rates in Chile," explores how economic shifts impact educational outcomes. Ana has also served as a peer notetaker for Texas A&M Disability Services, a teaching assistant in the Department of Communication, and Outreach Counselor for the FLAKE freshman organization, and led the university's inaugural LGBTQ+ Pride Walks.



Megan Hardy

Chemistry

Megan Hardy is a Chemistry major with a passion for research, mentorship, and service, working both with fellow students as well as children and others in the community. As an Undergraduate Research Assistant to Dr. Alison Weitzel, she contributes to ongoing studies in the field of chemistry. Megan also serves as a Peer-Led Team Learning Leader, where she leads tutoring and other help sessions for students in physical chemistry coursework. Her commitment to community is reflected in her volunteer work with organizations such as Hope Pregnancy Center, Pine Cove Summer Camp, and Kemp Carver Elementary School in Bryan.



Joochan Kim
Chemistry

Joochan Kim is a Chemistry major with research and leadership experience in a variety of areas. He has served as an Undergraduate Research Assistant in the Chemistry Department under Dr. Xin Yan, as well as in collaborative roles with scholars at UT Southwestern Medical School, UT Health Science School of Public Health, and McGovern Medical School at UT Health. Joochan is also a dedicated student leader, having served as External Vice President of Kappa Upsilon Chi, a Staff Counselor and Crew Member for IMPACT Ministries, and a member of the Memorial Student Center's Angel Tree Committee.



Katie Kopf
Psychology

Katie Kopf is a Psychology major with a strong focus on mentorship, research, and service both on campus and in the Bryan-College Station community. She has worked as a Research Assistant to Dr. Joshua Hicks and Dr. Stephanie Payne in the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences, and she has mentored fellow undergraduates in her department. Kaitlin is also an active campus leader, serving as a Senior Resident Advisor and participating in numerous service initiatives including Aggie School Volunteers with K-12 students, The Big Event, and Eco Reps, and Campus Cleanups.



Josiah Kwon
Communication

Josiah Kwon is a Communication major currently completing a Certificate in Strategic Communication. He has served as an Undergraduate Teaching Assistant in his department and as Executive Vice President of the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. Josiah is deeply committed to service and leadership, with involvement in initiatives such as the Brazos Valley Coalition on Suicide Prevention, The Big Event, and the Chicago Park District Clean Up Committee. Josiah is active in content creation, working in digital media, photography, cinematography, and editing.



Jayden Pellegrini
Communication

Jayden Pellegrini is a Communication major completing honors coursework and a Certificate in Communication Leadership and Conflict Management. Jayden has held key leadership roles, including Director of Engagement for Freshmen Leaders in Education and Development and Chairperson for Fish Camp. Her involvement reflects a strong commitment to student development, leadership, and community engagement.



Mariana Ruffo
Communication

Mariana Ruffo is earning both her B.A. and M.A. in Communication through the 3+2 program and is graduating with departmental honors. Deeply involved in leadership and mentorship, Mariana has served as a Fish Camp Counselor and Extended Orientation Co-Chair, Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, and Vice President of Lambda Pi Eta. Mariana also mentors younger students as a “Big” in both the Freshman and the Sophomore Leadership Organizations, reflecting her passion for guiding and empowering others.



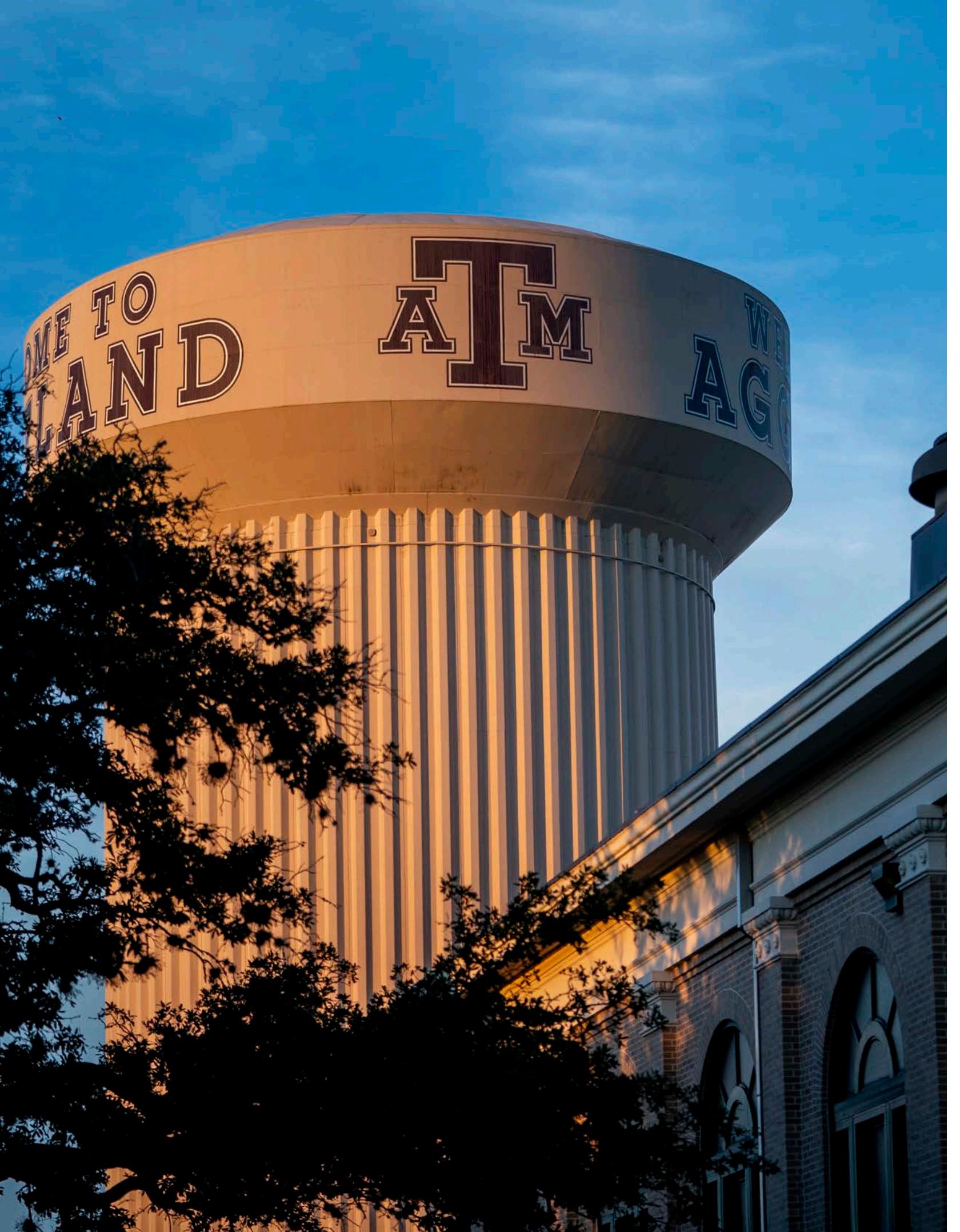
Diego Sepulveda-Allen
Philosophy

Diego Sepulveda-Allen is a Philosophy major pursuing certificates in both Pre-Law and in Legal History. His honors thesis, “What are you trying to do? Start Trouble?: The Use of Reverse-Racist Rhetoric against Mexican Americans in South Texas Politics, 1946–1968,” explores rhetoric, race, and power in mid-20th century Texas politics. Diego is the Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the TAMU Undergraduate Journal of Law & Society, and has held leadership roles as Director of Outreach and Project Manager for MOVE Texas, as well as a member of the TAMU Student Government Election Committee. Diego was also a participant in the Glasscock Undergraduate Scholars Program.



Madeline Sweany
Communication

Madeline Sweany is a Communication major currently completing a Certificate in Strategic Communication. She serves as the Executive Director of Service for the MSC Hospitality Committee, and she has been recognized by Texas A&M Student Affairs for her exceptional contributions by being awarded the Harold W. Gaines Excellent Service Award. Madeline is deeply committed to service and leadership within the university community. In Spring 2023, Madeline studied abroad in New Zealand’s northern island.



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2024-2025 Faculty Recipients

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Scott Crawford

Instructional Professor
Statistics

Sara DiCaglio

Assistant Professor
English

Samantha Fletcher

Instructional Associate Professor
Biology

Jessica Herzogenrath

Instructional Associate Professor
History

Larry May

Instructional Assistant Professor
Physics and Astronomy

Joanna San Pedro

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Professor
Psychological and Brain Sciences

Heather Thakar

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THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STUDENTS DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN THE CATEGORY OF GRADUATE MENTORING

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English

Soon-Mi Lim

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Chemistry

Linda Radzik

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Philosophy

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Biology

MONTAGUE CTE SCHOLAR

Yue Zhang

Assistant Professor
Atmospheric Sciences

**PRESIDENTIAL PROFESSOR FOR
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TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD**

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**UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED
PROFESSORS**

Ping Chang

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Oceanography

Alexey Zheltikov

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Physics and Astronomy

**UNIVERSITY PROFESSORSHIP
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TEACHING EXCELLENCE**

Asha Rao

Instructional Professor
Biology

University Awards

2024-2025 Staff Recipients

THE ED GUTHERIE ADVISING AWARD

Shari Chambers

Psychological and Brain Sciences

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR DEAN'S OFFICE ADVISING

Lisa Bowden

Psychological and Brain Sciences

Tara Hardin

Dean's Office Advising

Lindsay Stadter

Dean's Office Advising

PRESIDENT'S MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Carla Harris

Physics and Astronomy

Urania Wells

Biology

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Ajithamithra "AJ" Dharmasiri
Physics and Astronomy

Cade M. Dulaney
Mathematics

Alexandra Grossman
Biology

Hanna Oberoi
Biology

Isaac Ray
Statistics

Saptarshi Roy
Statistics

Jessica Steiner
Chemistry

Wyatt Stogsdill
Biology

DR. H. JOSEPH NEWTON GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICE AWARD

Andrew Buhrow
Biology

Nicklas Day
Mathematics

Vipin Jagrit
Biology

Marshall King
Mathematics

Rebecca Lee
Statistics

Jewelianna Moore
Chemistry

Zhen Ni
Chemistry

Valeriya Rogovchenko
Statistics

Dipankar Sen
Physics and Astronomy

Raenessa Walker
Physics and Astronomy

**JOHN B. BECKHAM AWARD IN
SCIENCE**

Alejandro Mejias
Chemistry

Hamzah Mir
Biology

**JOHN P. FACKLER, JR. ENDOWED
GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

Andrew Cothrell
Biology

Nicklas Day
Mathematics

Aparajitha Karthikeyan
Physics and Astronomy

Santiago Radi
Mathematics

Isaac Ray
Statistics

Aishanee Sur
Chemistry

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Physics and Astronomy

Jing Ye
Mathematics

Eshani Yeragi
Biology



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