

TACRAO NEWS

FALL 2026

**Meet Your New
Executive
Committee
Officers**

Summer Meeting Recap

**TACRAO Membership
Reminders**

**Conference Countdown
& Sneak Peeks**

**Regional
News**



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Lori's Launchpad

Lori Zerr
President

University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston



Greetings, TACRAO!

It's hard to believe we're already into the fall semester—and that the TACRAO Annual Conference is just around the corner! I hope the start of the academic year has gone well for you and that, despite the usual Fall craziness, you've found a little time to catch your breath.

Before we look ahead to Houston, I want to take a moment to recognize the success of our TACRAO Summer Meeting. More than 225 TACRAO members attended! A huge thank you to Summer Meeting Committee Chair Ashley Fleeks and her committee for all of the time and effort they put into planning such a successful meeting. Representatives from THECB, College Board, National Student Clearinghouse, ACT, and AACRAO, presented a variety of informative sessions. I also want to thank the TACRAO Residency Committee for the two fantastic, engaging sessions that they presented. Visit the [Summer Meeting website](#) to find the slide decks.

I'm especially excited that this year's conference is coming to Houston! From November 8-11, we'll gather at the Westin Galleria for our 2026 Annual Conference, "Energizing the Higher Ed Community." I think that theme is especially fitting for TACRAO. Our work can be challenging, our institutions are constantly changing, and there is always another deadline around the corner. What keeps us energized is the opportunity to learn from one another, share ideas, and connect with colleagues who understand the work we do.

A tremendous amount of time and effort has gone into planning this year's conference. I want to thank our Executive Committee, Session Planning Committees, Standing Committees, and our Houston Local Arrangements Committee for all they've done to make this conference possible.

One of the things I've come to appreciate most about TACRAO is that some of the most valuable moments happen between the sessions – in the hallway, over a meal, at a reception, or simply catching up with someone you haven't seen in a while. Those connections are a big part of what makes this organization more than just a professional association!

I can't wait to welcome you to Houston in November and celebrate everything that makes this Association so strong. Until then, thank you for the time, energy, and commitment you continue to give to TACRAO and to the students and institutions we serve.

See you in Houston!

Lori Zerr
TACRAO President

Reed's Ramblings



Chris Reed
Past President
Texas A&M University

Howdy friends.

It is with some sense of sadness...and in truth also a sense of relief, that I come to you with what will be my final article. These past few years with the TEC have been some of the most challenging and rewarding of my career. I jokingly suggested after my election that a recount might be in order. I'm thankful now that such action was not taken.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished and overcome but I'm also excited to watch the next folks address all the things that remain to be done. You've had a phenomenal President this last year in Lori and have two absolute rockstars taking over in the coming years in Scott and Dara. May their focus and professionalism bring some balance to the chaos that my "roll with it" approach may have caused.

I cannot wait to see you in Houston. It is going to be an absolutely epic return to the area and you are not going to want to miss it. Thank you all for tolerating me this last few years and know that I'm eternally grateful for the experience!

Chris Reed

TACRAO Past President

Kate's Currency

Greetings from North Texas!

The summer flew by and I hope your fall semester is off to a great start! The 2026 LAC is hard at work finalizing details for our upcoming annual conference in Houston, so make sure you're making plans to attend!

When you register, you'll have the option to pay online during the registration process or log into your TACRAO account later to complete payment. If you prefer to mail a check, please be sure to use our current mailing address, as mail sent to our previous address will get returned:

TACRAO

**4400 State Hwy 121 Suite 300 #1225
Lewisville, TX 75056**

Behind the scenes, I've been busy organizing and preparing materials for the upcoming annual audit. I'm happy to share that TACRAO remains financially sound, as we continue to be thoughtful stewards of the resources entrusted to us by our members. The annual audit is an important part of maintaining transparency, accountability, and strong financial practices for our organization. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

I'm also excited that conference time is almost here! If you've already registered and want to add one of our GREAT pre-conference workshops, let me know, and I can add it to your registration.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Houston and catching up with many of you throughout the conference. It's always one of my favorite times of the year – connecting with colleagues, seeing old friends, meeting new ones, and enjoying some TACRAO fun together.

See y'all in Houston!

Kate Richardson
Treasurer



Kate Richardson
Treasurer
North Central Texas Col-

Tiffany Takes Note

Hello TACRAO Members,

As we begin another fall semester, I want to take a moment to wish everyone a successful start to the year. This season brings new opportunities to connect with students, support one another, and continue the important work we do across our institutions.

As we move into a new membership cycle, this is a great time to ensure your connection to TACRAO remains active and up to date. TACRAO membership renewal is now open, and we encourage all institutions to complete their renewals promptly. Maintaining an active membership ensures continued access to professional development opportunities, networking, college fair and conference participation.

Key contacts play an important role in keeping institutional memberships accurate. Please take a few moments to review and update your institution's roster. This helps ensure that all colleagues who should be connected to TACRAO are included and receive important communications.

As a reminder, all individuals must have an active TACRAO profile in order to register for the annual conference. If you or your colleagues have not yet created a profile, we encourage you to do so soon to avoid delays with conference registration. Keeping your membership current and your information accurate helps TACRAO better serve our community.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support—we look forward to another great year together! I hope to see you in Houston for another great conference!

Tiffany Lipscomb
Secretary



Tiffany Lipscomb
Secretary
University of North Texas



We're Almost There!

Register for TACRAO 2026

The 2026 TACRAO Annual Conference is right around the corner! Join colleagues from across the state November 8–11 in Houston for four days of professional development, collaboration, networking and plenty of TACRAO fun at The Westin Galleria and Westin Oaks in Houston.

If you haven't registered yet, now is the time! Regular registration is available through Friday, September 25. Late registration begins Saturday, September 26.

Whether this will be your first TACRAO conference or one of many, we can't wait to welcome you to Houston and bring our TACRAO community together for another great conference.

[Register today and make plans to join us in Houston!](#)

Start Your Conference with a Workshop

Arriving early on Sunday? Kick off your TACRAO 2026 experience with one of three pre-conference workshops on Sunday, November 8, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Each workshop offers an opportunity to take a deeper dive into topics that impact our work and bring practical ideas back to your institution.

Fred Russell Strategic Enrollment Management Workshop

Explore Strategic Enrollment Management and the strategies, challenges and opportunities shaping enrollment work across higher education.

National Student Clearinghouse Reporting Workshop

Take a closer look at National Student Clearinghouse reporting, strengthen your understanding of the reporting process and gain insights that can help support accurate and effective reporting at your institution.

NEW! Leadership Workshop: Inspiring Through Leadership

Led by Danny Canary, this highly interactive workshop focuses on what it takes to inspire others and bring out the best in the people around you—regardless of your title or role. Attendees will explore communication preferences, motivation, influence and how adapting your leadership approach can help your message truly connect. You'll leave with practical tools you can put to work with your team right away.

Strategic Enrollment Management Workshop

Led by Sylvia Ewell, Vice President and Executive Consultant at JM Partner Solutions, SEM in Action: Turning Enrollment Data into Strategy offers a practical, hands-on introduction to Strategic Enrollment Management for mid-level professionals. Using a fictional institution as a case study, attendees will connect enrollment goals and key performance indicators to data, identify opportunities and develop an actionable enrollment strategy. Sylvia brings nearly 30 years of experience to help participants explore how to move from planning to ongoing enrollment management. You'll leave with a framework you can adapt to your own institution.

Pre-conference workshops require session registration, so be sure to reserve your spot when making your conference plans! If you have already registered, please contact Madelyne.Tolliver@VictoriaCollege.edu.



This Year, We're Walking!

Our annual conference tradition is getting a Houston twist this year! Instead of the traditional TACRAO Fun Run, we're slowing the pace, while keeping all the fun with a Fun Walk through the Galleria!

Join your TACRAO friends on Tuesday, November 10, from 6:30–7:30 a.m. for a little movement, conversation and friendly TACRAO camaraderie before another full day of conference sessions begins.

No race pace. No personal records. No pressure. Just lace up your walking shoes and come enjoy the morning with us!

Tuesday, November 10 | 6:30–7:30 a.m.
The Galleria Mall

Whether you're usually leading the pack at the Fun Run or cheering from the sidelines, this year everyone can join the fun. Come walk with us in Houston!



Annual Conference Sneak Peek

Andi Scott and Kristin McDonald-Willey have been working diligently to confirm and schedule sessions for the upcoming annual conference in November. Here are a few highlighted sessions:

- THECB Updates: Dual Credit and Core Curriculum Changes
- How to Handle Fraudulent Documents
- Washington Watch: Navigating Policy Change in Higher Education
- David v Goliath: Transforming Student Support when Resources are Limited
- AI In Academia: Practical Uses of AI to Advance Student Success
- TACRAO College Fair Planning for Beginners

Congratulations

Newly elected Executive Committee Officers and Nominations & Elections Committee Members

TACRAO is proud to announce the election of our newest leaders who will guide the Association in the coming year. These individuals have demonstrated outstanding commitment to TACRAO and the higher education community in Texas. We're excited to welcome them into their new roles and look forward to the fresh perspectives and energy they will bring!



Dara Newton
President-Elect
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley



Laura Zeig
Vice President for Technology
Texas A&M University



Anne Delgado
Vice President for Records & Registration
University of Texas at San Antonio—Health Science Center



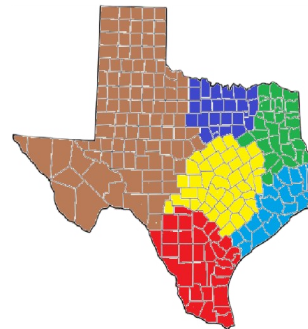
Danielle Thomas
Treasurer
Alvin College

We'd also like to announce the election of the Nominations Committee members for the 2026-2027 year:

- Chair: Cyndi Klausmeyer, Blinn College
- Chair-Elect: Jonathan McKissack, Prairie View A&M University
- Member: Jodie Rexroat, The University of Texas at Arlington
- Member: Nick Cioci, Texas Southern University
- Member: Ashley Deck, Galveston College
- Alternate A: Brenda Martinez, Texas Tech University
- Alternate B: Darrah Rippey, Southern Methodist University

Thank you to all TACRAO members who participated in this year's elections—your engagement truly makes a difference! .

REGIONAL NEWS



NORTH TEXAS

Texas Wesleyan University



- Texas Wesleyan University has broken its own record for the largest first-year cohort in university history for the second consecutive year. This milestone caps two years of sustained growth, with total enrollment up 15% over that period.
- We're also happy to announce a new Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and Artificial Intelligence, which brings together AI, business, and the humanities to equip students with the skills and perspective needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.
- Lastly, we received an invitation to pursue NCAA Division II membership.

SOUTHEAST TEXAS

Houston Christian University

New Hires AC's:

Micah Moore

Tyiahjeh Williams



Promotion:

Kaelyn Charles: Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions

Darchayla Lewis: Senior Admissions Counselor

Abena Pokua: Senior Admissions Counselor

Award:

Tiffany Charles (Director of Admissions) 2026 Trent Argos Memorial Award

Building:

Smith Engineering, Science and Nursing Building: Opening Spring 2027

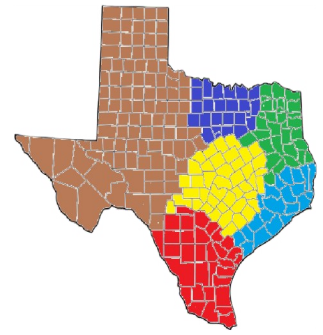
Texas Southern University



The Office of Admissions & Recruitment at Texas Southern University welcomes two new team members:

- Mr. Jeffrey Pierce II joined the Office of Admissions & Recruitment this month as the Executive Director of Admissions & Recruitment. Before joining Texas Southern University, Mr. Pierce served as Director of Admissions at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.
- Ms. Chenetta Mallette joined the Office of Admissions & Recruitment this month as the Director of Admissions Operations. She comes to Texas Southern University from Winston-Salem State University, where she served as Senior Associate Director of Admissions.

REGIONAL NEWS



SOUTHEAST TEXAS Continued

Rice University



RICE

New Hires

Loong Choi – Registrar Specialist

Todd Deese – Deputy Registrar

CENTRAL TEXAS

Blinn College



Blinn College opened their new Waller – Workforce & Technical Education Complex this summer offering programs in HVAC, Advanced Manufacturing & Mechatronics, EMT, & Certified Medical Administrative Assistant, as well as traditional core classes.

The first academic building on Blinn College's new 100 acre Waller Campus has broken ground and is currently scheduled to open for classes Spring 2028.

Texas State University



Recent Retirements: Mr. Gary T. Ray, AVP for Enrollment Management, retired Aug 2026

Promotions: Dr. Beverly Woodson Day, promoted to Associate VP for Enrollment Management

Record Enrollment: Fall 2026 - record enrollment of more than 47,000 students

New things happening on campus: Joining the Pac-12 Conference for Athletics, Launching first NCAA Div I women's gymnastics program in Texas, Expanding Bobcat Promise to first time in college freshman who graduate in the top 25% of their high school class and have a family adjusted gross income of \$100,000 or less.

REGIONAL NEWS

SOUTH TEXAS

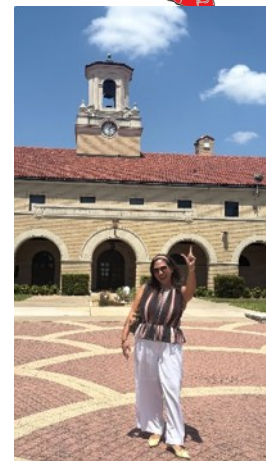
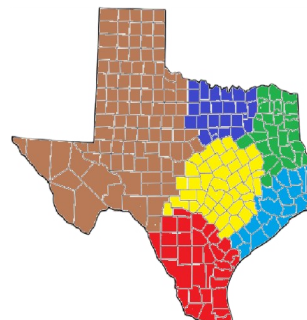
Texas A&M University—Kingsville

We are excited to welcome Jacqueline Garza to the Recruitment Team at Texas A&M University-Kingsville!

Jacqueline will be joining us as a Regional Admissions Representative serving the Rio Grande Valley. We are thrilled to have her on the team and look forward to the energy, enthusiasm, and dedication she will bring to our recruitment efforts across the RGV.

In this role, Jacqueline will help connect prospective students and families throughout the Rio Grande Valley with the opportunities, experiences, and community that make TAMUK such a special place to call home.

Welcome to the Javelina family, Jacqueline! We are so excited to have you on board and can't wait to see the impact you will make!



A Record-Breaking Year for TAMUK!

Texas A&M University-Kingsville has reported its largest freshman class in the history of the university—1,337 students!

This incredible milestone is a reflection of the hard work, dedication, collaboration, and commitment of so many people across our campus. From recruitment and admissions to student services, academic programs, campus partners, and everyone who played a role in welcoming our newest Javelinas.

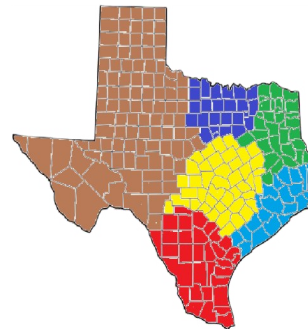


Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi

Rene Zamora, Director of Campus Visits at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Chair of the 2026 TACRAO Nominations Committee, recently earned his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership. He has also been selected as a contributing author for the second edition of the *Strategic Enrollment Management Handbook*, where his case study will focus on reframing campus tours as a strategic enrollment and yield strategy.



REGIONAL NEWS



EAST TEXAS

Panola College

Panola College is expanding our campus with two new buildings.

- The Matthews Gateway Center
- The Center for Innovation and Technology (CIT)

More information can be found [here](#):

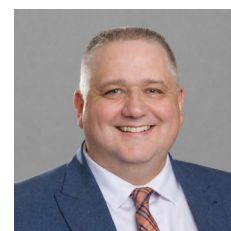


Steven F Austin State University

The Registrar's Office successfully launched Degree Works, our new degree audit system, on September 1. We are excited about the ways Degree Works will support academic chance student success.

planning and en-

University of Texas at Tyler



- UT Tyler is excited to congratulate Dennis Cliborn on his appointment as Registrar, effective October 1. Dennis is a highly respected leader whose dedication to student service and institutional success has made a lasting impact across our campus. We are confident he will continue to excel in this new role and help move UT Tyler forward. Congratulations, Dennis, on this well-earned opportunity!
- Cathryn (Cat) Davis was promoted in June from Graduation Specialist in the Registrar's Office to Graduate Enrollment Counselor II in Graduate Admissions.
- Kassandra (Kassie) Garcia has been promoted to Academic Scheduling Coordinator following Laurie Kimball's departure for UT Arlington, where Laurie is now Associate Registrar of Scheduling & Curriculum.
- We are also welcoming Klayton Kent as our new Graduation Specialist in the Registrar's Office beginning October 1. Klayton is currently a graduate student at SFA, so I thought you might appreciate that connection as well!

WEST TEXAS

El Paso Community College

Tejano Flex Marks Milestone with Institutional Support

El Paso Community College (EPCC) celebrated an important milestone for Tejano Flex Learning, also known as Competency-Based Education (CBE), during a special event at the Valle Verde Campus Flexitorium.

Competency-Based Education (CBE) – a flexible approach to learning!

CBE is a flexible way to earn course credit. It focuses on the competencies (knowledge + skills) you will need in your chosen career and allows you to move through the course at your own pace. Regardless of your work, life, or family responsibilities, CBE can flex around your schedule!

(<https://www.epcc.edu/Media/Lists/News/Article.aspx?ID=1827>)



REGIONAL NEWS

WEST TEXAS *Continued*

Texas Tech University

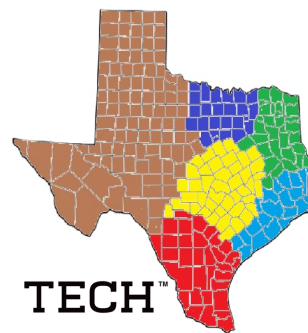
Enrollment Milestone: Texas Tech recently surpassed a historic student milestone.

For the first time in school history, Texas Tech opens the fall semester with more than 45,000 students and another record number of first-time-in-college students.



TEXAS TECH™

45,000-



The Texas A&M University System

(<https://news.tamus.edu/stories/regents-approve-plan-to-build-10-stormproof-community-shelters-worth-254-5-million/>)

BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Texas A&M University System Regents today approved a plan to build 10 storm shelters worth \$254.5 million across the state.

Regents voted to commit about \$25 million in matching funds to apply for up to \$229 million in Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM).

“This allows us — for just 10-percent of the cost — to build storm shelters at campuses that will be used as basketball arenas, convocation centers or even lab space most of the time, thanks to FEMA,” said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System.

A safe room is a hardened structure specifically designed to meet the FEMA criteria and provide near-absolute protection in extreme wind events, including tornadoes and hurricanes.



Sul Ross University

Washington Monthly and *Excelencia* in Education have recognized

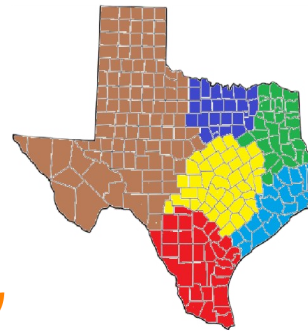
Sul Ross State University as one of the top colleges and universities in economic mobility for Hispanic students in the nation.

SRSU is #9 among four-year institutions in the second annual edition of the Best Colleges for Hispanic Students. This analysis combines the accessibility focus of the *Monthly's* college rankings with the deep knowledge that *Excelencia* has built over more than 20 years of listening to, learning from, and working with institutions.



REGIONAL NEWS

WEST TEXAS *Continued*



University of Texas at El Paso

New Era, New Pete: UTEP Athletics Bringing Paydirt into the 21st Century

As UTEP enters a new era in the Mountain West Conference, the University is also unveiling a bold new look for its iconic mascot. Paydirt Pete has evolved over the years, with the most recent iteration launching in 1999. The new Pete has been modernized while harkening back to the popular "retro" logo from the 1980s.



New Conference, Old Rivals: UTEP Officially Joins Mountain West July 1

At an event celebrating UTEP's July 1 move to the Mountain West Conference, President Heather Wilson shared that Paul Foster and Alejandra De La Vega-Foster have pledged \$2.5 million to support UTEP Athletics' "Climb Higher" campaign, now entering its second phase, "Reach the Peak."



UTEP Breaks Ground on Miner Crossing, New 507-Bed Student Housing Complex

Students will soon live in a state-of-the-art residence hall equipped with a fitness center and brand-new dining facility near the center of campus. Last week, University officials broke ground on a new \$102 million complex, named Miner Crossing, that will provide a much-needed expansion of UTEP's on-campus housing.



Record Persistence and New Students Drive UTEP Enrollment to All-Time High of 27,368

With more new students attending UTEP than ever before and current students staying at higher rates, total enrollment has surpassed 27,000 for the first time in the University's history, setting a record for the second year in a row. Based on UTEP's official census count, Fall 2026 enrollment stands at 27,368 – an increase of more than 4% over last fall's 26,297, which had been the previous high.

2025-2026 Communications Committee

Chair, Newsletter, & Southeast Texas Editor	Madelyne Tolliver	Victoria College	madelyne.tolliver@victoriacollege.edu
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