

TACRAO NEWS

SPRING 2026

Moments from El Paso

Membership Matters

Regional Roundup

Innovation in Action

Committee Spotlights: A Look Behind the Curtain

On the Horizon

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Message from the President

Lori's Launchpad

SPRING UPDATE: TACRAO in Bloom

As I reflect on a successful 2025 Annual Conference, I want to thank the many individuals who made it possible, especially LAC co-chairs Cassandra Lachica-Chavez and Georgina Antillon. Their leadership created a conference experience that was engaging and memorable for all attendees! I'm also deeply grateful to the volunteers, presenters, facilitators, and sponsors whose contributions made the conference a highlight for the TACRAO community.

Spring always brings me a sense of renewed energy, and it's a great reminder of how the TACRAO community continues to bloom through the work we do together. From across the state I hear stories about our members supporting students and colleagues, solving problems, and helping their institutions move forward. Many of our TACRAO committees have also been busy growing ideas and putting them into action this year. For the Houston conference, session planning committees are generating ideas and connecting presenters, and Corporate Relations is actively recruiting sponsors. Enrollment Reporting recently hosted a webinar, and Legislative Issues will be sharing an update soon. Site Selection is exploring options for the 2028 conference location, while the ad hoc Subscription and Membership committee is moving mountains with membership database cleanup – just to name a few efforts!

As we move into the months ahead, you'll hear more from these groups and many others. I also want to recognize the Communications Committee for its outstanding work on our refreshed newsletter format this year; please share it with your colleagues. Thank you to Madelyne Tolliver and the entire team for your creativity and dedication!

TACRAO thrives because of members who stay connected and involved, so I also want to thank those who volunteered their time to serve on TACRAO committees this year. Your willingness to share your time, talents, and ideas are what keeps our association strong and forward-focused. Your efforts do not go unnoticed! If you're looking for opportunities to get involved, visit our [Get Involved](#) page then let us know how you'd like to contribute. I look forward to the successes we will continue to cultivate together throughout the year. Thank you for being part of the TACRAO community!

Lori Zerr
TACRAO President



Lori Zerr
President
University of Texas
Health Science Center
at Houston

Reed's Ramblings:

Can you believe its been four full months since we took over El Paso? I can tell you its taken about that much time for the moisture to return to my sinuses but my memories still remain fond. It was an amazing experience with the more than 300 of you who braved the government shutdown and uncertainty around air travel to be there! From expanding our collective minds at La Nube to rocking the night away with Fungi Mungle at the ballpark, I've heard from so many of you that it was an experience for the ages.

We were also treated to some phenomenal professional activities I should add. From the opening speech from Ginger Kerrick to the closing ceremony, the draw and talents of TACRAO were on full display. We learned everything from the vagaries of new policies (which literally changed as we were meeting) to the nuances of workplace personalities through the lens of "The Sorting Hat". I've still got notes I'm sorting through!

Thanks again to our amazing Local Arrangements Committee who did an amazing job navigating some of the most unique conference circumstances in recent history! It was an amazing experience.



Chris Reed
Past President
Texas A&M University



Tiffany Lipscomb
Secretary
University of North Texas

Tiffany's Tidbits

A quick reminder that **Memberships Dues** renewal invoices will go out in May. You may pay your membership online or via PO, so be on the lookout for those invoices soon.

Also, please work with your institution's key contact to make sure your membership roster is up to date with any changes needed to add or remove new employees or those that may have left your institution.

Thank you for your assistance in keeping our records up to date, and feel free to reach out if you have any questions!

Innovation in Action: Elections & College Fairs Get an Upgrade

TACRAO Partners with StriveScan for College Fairs

TACRAO is pleased to announce a new partnership with [StriveScan](#) to bring student barcode scanning technology to our College Fairs. This tool will enhance the experience for both students and colleges by making information exchange more efficient, while also providing valuable data insights for our organization and fair organizers. Keep an eye on your inbox for additional information about our partnership – including upcoming webinars!



New Election Experience On the Way

The Technology Committee, in partnership with Vice President for Technology Jodie Rexroat, recently completed a review of potential platforms to enhance TACRAO's election process. The team recommended a more user-friendly solution with an updated interface. After thoughtful discussion, the TEC voted to move forward with their recommendation. This transition will modernize the way members participate in elections while also reducing the association's annual election cost by nearly 50%.

Many thanks to Jodie and the Technology Committee for their thorough research and quick turnaround!

Be on the lookout for notifications from the Nominations Committee about opportunities to participate in our 2026 election cycle!

Want to be a conference presenter?

Are you interested in presenting at TACRAO's annual conference? Do you have questions about what being a presenter entails? Are you a former presenter who is looking for tips to spruce up your session?

Join TACRAO's session-planning VPs on April 22 at 12pm CST for a virtual info session on conference presentations!

[RSVP Here](#)



SAVE THE DATE Summer Meeting!

The TACRAO Executive Committee is pleased to announce details for the 2026 Summer Meeting!

Dates: Monday, July 20 – Wednesday July 22, 2026

Location: [Hilton College Station & Conference Center](#)

Room rate: \$150 per night

Registration fee: \$175 Regular & \$200 Late or on-site

Mark your calendars and plan to join us in College Station for professional development and networking with your colleagues from across the state.

Registration and hotel room reservations will open in May. The agenda and other details will be shared as they become available.

We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Behind the Curtain: TACRAO Committees

Ever wondered what TACRAO committees *actually* do? From shaping conference sessions to keeping us connected and compliant, our committees are the engine that keeps everything running smoothly.

We are doing something new this year!! In our newsletters, we'll spotlight a few committees so you can get to know the people, the purpose, and maybe even find your place to jump in!

Committee Spotlight: Honorary Membership Committee

The TACRAO Honorary Membership Committee plays a vital role in recognizing and celebrating the outstanding contributions of individuals within our organization that are retiring or leaving the profession with substantial service and contributions. Our committee is dedicated to reviewing nominations and selecting recipients for honorary membership, which is one of the highest honors bestowed by TACRAO. This special recognition is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment, leadership, and service throughout their careers in the field of recruitment, admissions, collegiate records and enrollment management.

Each year, the committee seeks input from our membership, encourages nominations, and meticulously evaluates each candidate's impact on both TACRAO and the broader higher education community. Our goal is to ensure that those whose efforts have shaped our organization's success are honored appropriately and remembered as part of TACRAO's enduring legacy – now nearing **110 years!**

We encourage all members to stay tuned to TACRAO email announcements to nominate colleagues and celebrate the achievements of those selected. The Honorary Membership Committee values history, service, and inclusiveness in every step of the process, and we are proud to help uphold the traditions and values of our association. Thank you for supporting our mission to recognize excellence within TACRAO!

Sofia Almeda, Chair | The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Jodi Torrez | The University of Texas at Austin

Hannah McDonald | Texas A&M University-Central Texas

Committee Spotlight:

Residency Committee

Have you ever wondered who helps tackle complex residency questions or keeps our residency resources organized across TACRAO? The Residency Committee is here to support members, share expertise, and help strengthen our collective knowledge. We'd love to give you a quick look at what we do, what we're currently working on, and how you can be part of it!

What does the committee do?

The Residency Committee maintains the residency contact list, assists members with challenging residency cases, and offers training sessions and Q&A opportunities at TACRAO events.

What are we working on right now?

We're currently developing a potential training workshop for the TACRAO 2026 Fall Conference, and we're excited about the opportunity to share practical tools and insights with our colleagues.

What's the time commitment?

The committee typically meets once per quarter for a one-hour Zoom meeting, with occasional additional meetings depending on project needs.

Why get involved?

It's a great opportunity to collaborate with colleagues across the state, share knowledge, and help support the TACRAO community. In the coming months, we'll also be reaching out to members to share some of their more challenging residency cases to help us build meaningful training materials.

Virginia Leathers

Chair – Residency Committee

[vleathers@wtamu.edu](mailto: vleathers@wtamu.edu)

Committee Spotlight: Corporate Relations Committee

The committee is comprised of three members. Each member will serve a three-year term, with one member rotating off each year. The Chair-elect will be appointed by the Executive Committee. The Chair-elect's appointment will be based on his/her proximity to the future annual meeting where he/she will serve as Chair.

The Corporate Relations Committee communicates and coordinates with potential Exhibitors for the annual TACRAO Conference. We manage all communication and recruitment and make sure the company has opportunities for sponsorship and presentation of sessions.

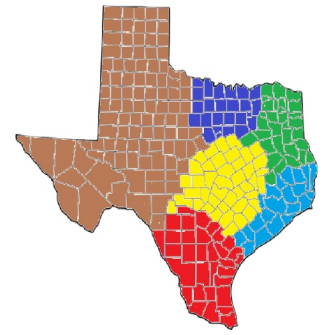
Beginning in March, we set up Exhibitor registration and then send the first communication to all potential exhibitors. We work with each Exhibitor to register and submit presentations. We also coordinate sponsorships items/monies. The time commitment is consistent from March through the conference and relies heavily on exhibitor response.

This committee is very rewarding in that members form relationships with Exhibitors and form a better understanding of how they impact TACRAO and institutions around the state of Texas.

Bobbie Brown

TACRAO 2026 Corporate Sponsor Committee Chair

REGIONAL NEWS



EAST TEXAS

ETACRAO Officers

The region met at the TACRAO Annual Conference in El Paso to elect officers, select a host for the annual spring ETACRAO meeting, and talked about other hot topics impacting institutions in our region.

The officers elected were:

- President: Jody Harris (Registrar, Panola College)
- Vice-President: Dora Luna (Associate Registrar — Records & Registration, Stephen F. Austin State University)
- Secretary: Jordan Collard (Admissions Counselor, Kilgore College)
- Host School Representative: Caroline Whitaker (Director of Student Records / Registrar, Trinity Valley Community College)

ETACRAO Annual Meeting

ETACRAO's annual meeting was hosted by Trinity Valley Community College – Athens Campus on Thursday, March 5th. We had very productive discussions in our hot topics sessions, and we ended the day at the local roller-skating rink for skating and trivia (with only one major injury.)



EAST TEXAS Continued

Panola College Updates

The Panola College Board of Trustees approved the following new awards pending approval by SACSCOC and the THECB.

- Associate of Science in Mathematics, Fall 2026
- Associate of Science in Social Work, Fall 2026
- Associate of Applied Science in Construction Supervision and Management, Spring 2027
 - o Level I Certificate in Construction Site Supervision and Management, Spring 2027
 - o Level II Certificate in Construction Site Supervision and Management, Spring 2027
 - o Construction Site Technician OSA, Fall 2026
 - o Construction Project Scheduling OSA, Spring 2027
- Strategic Leadership and Supervision Certificate, Spring 2027



NORTH TEXAS

Southern Methodist University Updates

The SMU Registrar's Office welcomed three new staff members: pictured below left to right.



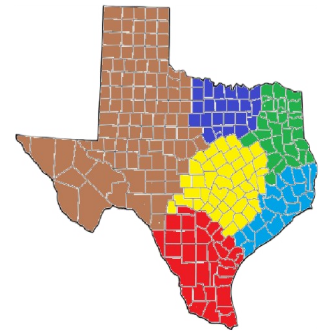
Gary Lewis, Coordinator of Readmission and Transfer

Michelle Park, Manager of Academic Programs

Hannah Poenisch Ward, Assistant Registrar for Athletic Certification & Academic Advisement



REGIONAL NEWS



NORTH TEXAS Continued

Grayson College Updates

New Hires – Joselyn Gonzalez – Dean of Enrollment Management

Retirements – Barbara Malone retired from Director of Counseling and Social Services with over 40 yrs of service

Newly appointed – Corey Leird was appointed as the new Director of Counseling and Social Services

Record Graduation – Fall 2025 – 688 conferrals, First Summer Graduation in Summer 2025 with 316 awards

New Programs F25-S26 – Computed Tomography Advanced Technology Certificate (Post Radiology AAS credential)

Major Events Hosted –

- Residence Hall Beam Signing held on Dec 2, 2025
- Every Month Mobile Food Truck is on campus to provide perishable and non-perishable food security to those in need – this is open to the public and helps stock Vics Market, the student food pantry on campus
- Celebrated Black History Month on Feb 6
- Annual Miller Barber Viking Golf Tournament to help support scholarships – held Oct 2025
- November 2025 Grayson College Honors College hosted Honors College Symposium where 23 students showcased their research projects
- Annual Empty Bowls Event benefiting Visions of Sugarplums raised over \$3300 to help provide food for the less fortunate children in Pottsboro Community

Exciting Things Happening:

- New Residence Hall to open in Fall 2026 with room for 200+ students
- New Health Science Building to open in Fall 2027
- West campus remodel for Police Academy
- The week of Jan 28th – the Viking Women’s Basketball team checked in at No. 21 in latest NJCAA ranking
Grayson College awarded more than 1.4 million in grants.

Future Programs Being Added:

- Transitional program for Paramedics to earn Associate Degree in Nursing
- Agribusiness, Ag Entrepreneur, Ag, Technology
- Orbital Welder & Pipefitting programs in Career Ready
- Small Scale Farmer
- AAS in Cosmetology & Esthetician with possibilities of Salon & Spa Business Operations (AAS)
- Dental Hygiene & Dental AAS preparing for 2028-2029



NORTH TEXAS Continued

The King's University Updates

A new Associate of Arts Degree with (4) Pathways to select from that is being launched for Fall 2026:

The Associate of Arts (AA) degree is a two-year degree designed to provide students with a strong foundation in biblical studies, theological literacy, and general education, while offering the flexibility to explore an academic pathway aligned with any of the undergraduate programs offered at The King's University. This program equips students to develop a Spirit-formed worldview and cultivates their abilities to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage meaningfully in both ministry and professional contexts.

Four Pathways:

Counseling
Bible and Ministry
Messianic Jewish Studies
Worship Leadership



THE KING'S
UNIVERSITY

Whether students are pursuing a call to vocational ministry or preparing for a career in a secular field, the AA degree offers a formative academic experience rooted in Christian values. All courses within the program are fully transferable to The King's baccalaureate degree programs, making it an ideal entry point for those seeking to continue their education and deepen their calling in a Christ-centered context.

This information is also on our website: <https://www.tku.edu/academics/undergraduate/associate-arts/>

WEST TEXAS

Odessa College Updates

Celebrating Success and Community Engagement

We are thrilled to share several exciting wins from Odessa College!

This past fall, we celebrated 426 graduates and awarded a total of 527 credentials—marking a record-breaking fall graduation for our institution. Among these graduates was our very first RN to BSN cohort, a milestone achievement we are especially proud of.

As of yesterday's enrollment report, Odessa College has reached 10,265 students enrolled for Spring 2026, reflecting continued growth and strong community engagement.

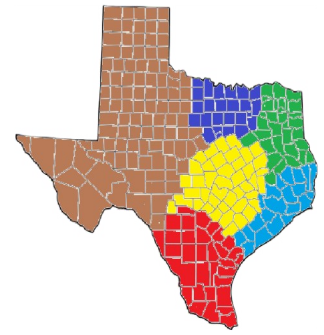
On February 4, multiple divisions across campus hosted "Ignite Your Future," a large-scale event welcoming all middle schools from Ector County. The event brought in well over 2,000 eighth-grade students to explore dual credit opportunities and learn about the wide range of programs available to them. Local industry partners were also invited and highlighted, reinforcing the strong connection between education and workforce pathways in our region.

We are grateful for the continued collaboration and support that make these accomplishments possible.



ODESSA
COLLEGE

REGIONAL NEWS



WEST TEXAS Continued

University of Texas at El Paso Updates

UTEP Breaks Spring Enrollment Record

The University of Texas at El Paso has reached a historic milestone this spring, enrolling **nearly 25,000 students**, marking the highest spring enrollment in the University's history.

Enrollment growth was strong across both undergraduate and graduate programs. **Undergraduate enrollment increased by 5.1%**, building on UTEP's continued momentum from fall 2025. Interest in graduate education also remains strong, with **new master's enrollment up 6.0%**.

UTEP also welcomed more new transfer students this spring, with enrollment **up 3.1% compared to last spring**, reflecting the University's growing appeal and accessibility.

UTEP Celebrates the Opening of \$110M Texas Western Hall

UTEP recently celebrated the opening of **Texas Western Hall**, a state-of-the-art, **\$110 million learning complex** designed to serve thousands of students each year.

The new facility features:

- 30 modern classrooms
- Faculty offices
- A café
- A rooftop terrace

The latest instructional technology

Texas Western Hall represents a significant investment in student success and campus innovation.



UTEP Recognized Among the Nation's Best by *U.S. News & World Report*

U.S. News & World Report has ranked UTEP among the **top universities in the nation** for its **undergraduate computer science and nursing programs**, according to its December *Best Colleges* guide.

In addition, UTEP was named one of the **Top 100 universities for social mobility** among national universities, highlighting the University's commitment to expanding access and opportunity for students.



Texas A&M University Kingsville Updates

Texas A&M University-Kingsville announces historic gift that will power the institution's next century

KINGSVILLE, TX - Texas A&M University-Kingsville has announced a landmark \$38 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. The donation will reshape the future of South Texas's first institution of higher learning and elevate opportunities for the region. The contribution is the single largest gift in the University's history.

Nursing program's future decided for TAMUK

Director named; degree pathways developed

Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) is launching a nursing program to serve the community and its future students. The need for nurses in the rural community of South Texas was at the forefront of TAMUK President Dr. Robert Vela's mind when he began the steps to bring a nursing program and school to the university. The region surrounding Kingsville is projected to have a deficit of more than 6,000 full-time nurses for the population by 2032. The process to start the program is already underway with degree pathways chosen, \$5 million in funding acquired and an Inaugural Director hired.

"As the founding public institution of higher education in South Texas, it's vital that we address this growing need with commitment and courage. Establishing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program will address regional needs for nurses with the appropriate degree required by the largest hospital systems in the South Texas region," Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. James Palmer said.

Retirement

March 31, 2026-Dr. Rito Silva, VP of Student Affairs and Community Relations, 35 years of service. Dr. Robert Vela, TAMUK president, shared his gratitude for Silva's work and recognized his achievements and impact he will leave on this community.

"During his years here, Dr. Silva has not only been a champion for our students, but he has also been a community-minded leader. Through his role leading community relations, Dr. Silva has continually strengthened existing partnerships and sought new collaborations with partners like local school districts and the Community Action Corporation of South Texas, all of which expanded opportunities for our students and communities," Vela said. "I am sincerely grateful for the positive impact he has made here and wish him a retirement filled with joy."

Dr. Robert Ayala, AVP of Academic Success, is stepping into the role of Vice President of Student Affairs.

Southwest Texas College Updates

Southwest Texas College has some exciting news to share in regards to moving forward with our first bachelors program. As per our recent Board of Trustees meeting on February 20th, SWTX will soon have an opportunity for students to pursue a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Organizational Management and Leadership.



University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Updates

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley celebrated a sixth straight year of record enrollment in the Fall! **First Class Day enrollment totaled 35,812** – representing students from our undergraduate and graduate populations, as well as our School of Podiatric Medicine and School of Medicine. The first class day of Spring brought record enrollment again! The Division of Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs is proud to serve students from across the state and beyond, and we are thrilled to have fostered an environment of strong teamwork in the ten years since UTRGV was founded in 2015.



UTRGV also had the exciting opportunity to enjoy its **inaugural football season** as the newest Division I football team in the Southland Conference. The very first season game saw the Vaqueros deliver a 66-0 victory over Sul Ross State University to a sold-out stadium of 12,000 seats! UTRGV is the only inaugural team to go undefeated at home with a final home record of 7-0, while our overall record was 9-3. We welcome our TACRAO friends to tune into our televised games and cheer us on this coming Fall, or better yet, come by the RGV for a home game! You can read more about our inaugural football season [here](#).

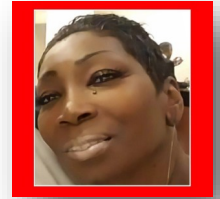
The Vaqueros are having a memorable academic year and, like all of you, we're running full speed ahead to Spring Commencement now! Good luck from your UTRGV colleagues!





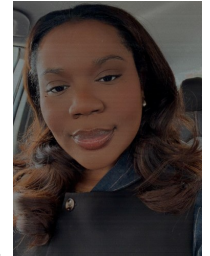
Texas Southern University Updates

Ms. Yvonne Valentine, Director of Academic Records, successfully defended her dissertation and graduated with a PH.D. from Texas Southern University in December 2025. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Valentine on this outstanding achievement.



The Registrar's Office at Texas Southern university also recently welcomed 2 new team members.

- Ms. Hailey Robinson joined the office in October as the Enrollment Officer. Ms. Robinson previously worked for Texas Southern University's TRIO office before joining the Registrar's Office.
- Ms. Faith Foster joined the office in January and serves as the Graduation Coordinator for the Registrar's Office. Ms. Foster is also a proud Texas Southern University alumna from the Jesse H. Jones School of Business, class of 2020.



Ms. Marquita Etienne has been promoted to Customer Service Manager. She has served for 16 years at Texas Southern University and is recognized as an outstanding, committed team member.

The Office of Admissions at Texas Southern University also recently welcomed 3 new team members.

- Ms. Maricruz Reynozo joined the office in March as a Transcript Evaluator. A proud graduate of the University of Houston–Clear Lake, she earned a B.S. in Psychology. Prior to joining the Admissions Office, Ms. Reynozo worked at the University of Houston Main Campus.
- Mr. Antonio Lopez joined the office in March as a Transcript Evaluator. He earned a B.A. in History from the University of Houston Main Campus. Before joining the Admissions Office, Mr. Lopez also worked at the University of Houston.
- Ms. Alexandra Allard joined the office in March as an Admissions Counselor for Transfer Students. She earned a B.S. in Kinesiology from Angelo State University and an M.S. in Sports Management from the University of the Incarnate Word.

Texas Southern University Welcomes Five New Educational Planners to Recruitment Team

Texas Southern University is pleased to announce the addition of five new Educational Planners to our recruitment team. These dedicated professionals will play a vital role in supporting prospective students and families throughout the admissions process.

New Team Members:

- Andrea Hurtado
- Cameron Golston
- Camia Thompkins
- Lauryn Bracken
- Nicholas McDaniels

Houston Christian University Updates

At Houston Christian University, we had a record-breaking enrollment. Currently, our Freshman funnel for Fall 2026 is projecting well. We also have been hitting records at events from Fall to Spring! We have had solid staffing for going on 5 years with the same team. Thank the Lord for good morale and a department we call family.

New Building

The new STEM building will be opening Spring 2027 at Houston Christian University.

Smith Engineering, Nursing & Science Building



COMING SOON!

Smith Engineering, Nursing & Science Building



Victoria College Updates

At Victoria College, we are very excited to announce the opening of our new Student Success Center. The three-story expansion and renovation of Victoria College’s Student Success Center brings key student resources together under one roof. Students now have convenient access to the library, admissions, advising, the Learning Lab, Pirate Pantry, financial aid, testing services, and more.

The project coincided with VC’s 100th anniversary in 2025 and officially opened to students in January 2026.



2025 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS







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