



MEMORANDUM

To: TAMUK Campus Community
From: James M. Palmer *JMPalmer*
Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Date: February 19, 2024
Re: Leadership of the College of Education and Human Performance

For the past year, Dr. Linda Villarreal has served remarkably as Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Performance. After serving 44 years in public education, she came out of retirement and agreed to help lead TAMUK's original college, the College of Education and Human Performance. I am very pleased to report that Dr. Villarreal has agreed to continue serving through May 2025.

At the time of her appointment, the Educator Preparation Program (EPP; the teacher and leader program) was rated "Accredited Warned" by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The program was on the verge of losing accreditation. Within a year, along with her team of faculty and staff members, the program increased their rating to fully accredited and is operating at a higher level of program quality. In addition to this vastly important outcome, she has helped to increase enrollment in graduate and doctoral programs by 40%, attain accreditation in Exercise Science from the American College of Sports Medicine (through the leadership of Dr. Chris Hearon and the department) as one of the first and only public institutions to earn this in Texas, and proudly provide quality professional development opportunities to over 200 teachers within South Texas to partnering school districts.

In spite of these tremendous accomplishments, much remains to be done. She will assist with critical work required to 1) increase undergraduate enrollment and retention, 2) finalize curriculum mapping in all programs, working with colleges across campus, and 3) help regional school districts create "Grow Your Own" teacher pathways to address the national, state, and regional teacher shortages. In addition, TEA conducted a comprehensive review of our teacher program in January, and Dr. Villarreal, along with her team, facilitated the process prior and during the review and will work closely with the team on all follow-up efforts, which I am confident will result in a redesigned and highly effective educator preparation program.

Dr. Villarreal has dedicated her professional life to public education serving as a classroom teacher, campus principal, superintendent of schools, executive director of the Education Service Center, Region 2, and now as the Interim Dean. She is passionate about her profession and considers it the one that teaches all other professions. She is a proud three-time alum of Texas A&M University-Kingsville, obtaining her bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees here. She is a Javelina *par excellence*. Please thank Dr. Villarreal for her dedication to this important work and for agreeing to continue through spring 2025.

We will launch a national search for the next dean in fall 2024 with an anticipated start date of June 2025.

cc: Robert H. Vela Jr.