




MEMORANDUM

To: TAMUK Campus Community

From: James M. Palmer 
Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: April 23, 2024

Re: Announcement of Associate Vice President for Academic Success

Following an extensive national search for the next Associate Vice President for Academic Success, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Robert Ayala has accepted the position. He will begin July 1, 2024.

Dr. Ayala brings to the community of Texas A&M Kingsville administrative and academic experience commensurate with the requirements of the position. He currently is the Dean for Academic Success for Northwest Vista College in San Antonio, Texas. He has contributed to research in many areas of academia and has presented at various conferences both nationally and statewide. Dr. Ayala has been awarded over 14 million dollars in grants as PI or Co-PI. Many of these grants and other work have centered around student success, retention, and persistence. His undergraduate work was completed at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and his graduate work was completed at Angelo State University and the University of Texas at San Antonio, respectively.

Dr. Ayala has collaborated with high schools, four-year universities, and community college leaders and faculty, building useful pathways for student success, reducing time to completion. He has led colleges in building successful academic programs and course offerings, linked developmental courses, budding internships, collegiate academies, and a new first-year experience camps in STEM marked by service, experiential learning, and personalized instruction. He is resolute in his drive to serve students and the community by expanding opportunities and access to higher education.

As Associate Vice President for Academic Success, Dr. Ayala will direct division and departmental operations, initiatives, and activities and will be responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating strategies that support increases in retention and graduation of undergraduate students. He will oversee professional academic advising, the Pathways Academic Assistance Center (PAAC), the Writing Center, the first-year seminar, the summer bridge program, and the Academic Collegiate Enhancement (ACE) Program. He will also oversee the HEART Project. Reporting to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the position is a member of the Academic Advisory Council, and works closely with administrators, faculty and staff to promote best practices in student success by working collaboratively on student placement, new student orientation, among other areas. The position will have a considerable role in developing and supporting the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Please join me in welcoming him into his role as Associate Vice President when he comes to campus. Also, please thank Dr. Maria Velez-Hernandez for serving in her interim leadership capacity over this area. She has done a remarkable job since taking on the role a year ago and will continue to support this area through the summer to ensure a strong transition in leadership.

cc: Robert H. Vela Jr.