




MEMORANDUM

To: TAMUK Campus Community

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

Date: April 23, 2024

Re: Announcement of Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Following an extensive national search for the inaugural Dean of Undergraduate Studies, I am pleased to announce that Maria E. Velez-Hernandez has accepted the position. She will begin June 1, 2024.

Dr. Velez-Hernandez brings to the position administrative and academic experience commensurate with the position. She is currently Interim Associate Vice President for Student Success, a role she has held for a year, and oversees 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. Under her guidance, her team implemented the new advising structure designed to holistically serve undergraduate students, improved readmission processes and support for students, and enhanced tutoring facilities. She manages several federal grants including the USDA-AgriCULTURE Program for \$275,000 and the \$5,000,000 Department of Education HEART grant.

In her previous role as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, she was responsible for undergraduate program and research initiatives including degree audits, scholarships and awards, student grievances and limited submission procedures for sponsored programs. As Associate Dean, she secured funding from THECB Accelerating Credentials of Purpose and Value for \$450,000 to improve teaching technology and programs in the Department of Biological and Health Sciences. She is a tenured associate professor in the Department of Biological and Health Sciences, has led seven study abroad programs for graduate and undergraduate students, has mentored graduate and undergraduate students and has served in the Faculty Senate. Dr. Velez is also a graduate of the Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA), and is an honorary member of the Golden Key.

As Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Velez-Hernandez will serve as the chief administrative officer in matters related to planning and assessment of quality undergraduate programs. The position will oversee, with Academic Affairs, the core curriculum, the General Studies and Applied Arts and Sciences degrees, study abroad and student exchanges, the Honors College, and components of the undergraduate catalog, including policies and procedures. The position will work closely with the Associate Vice President for Academic Success, transfer teams, academic deans and faculty, and also interacts with various teams on activities such as New Student Orientation, Hoggie Days, among others.

Please join me in welcoming her into her role as Dean of Undergraduate Studies starting June 1.

cc: Robert H. Vela Jr.