



## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 4, 2024

Well before the birth of the modern environmental movement, members of The Texas A&M University System were leading the way to feed the world and advance technology while preserving soils and natural resources, reducing disease, and offering a quality of life that is the envy of other nations. Our rich and distinguished history of **environmental stewardship** continues to touch our campus communities, state and world every day. In fact, one could say that our mission of teaching, research and outreach in various fields makes us the environmental voice of Texas.

This steadfast work for "the environment" is not simply represented by a single word "green." Not only can green also be a sign of ill health, but as seen from space, our sapphire and white planet does not appear green at all. No, the environment is not a color; it is the context in which we live and breathe and have our being, an integral part of everything we think and do. Environment is inherent to our day-to-day work and life, whatever our callings and wherever we are, whether in a high-rise office in a city center or on a farm or ranch far from the urban masses.

So, what is meant by "environmental stewardship?" It is the responsible and accountable administration, care, development and enjoyment of resources placed under our control. The faithful steward is rewarded, not necessarily with praise from others, but with a rich inheritance passed down through generations. Stewardship is a unifying concept, excluding no one, in the call to maintain and improve both our built and natural environments. Yes, there are rules and regulations, but the rules establish a framework for action that reflects our intent.

This view toward stewardship of our human and natural resources has also long characterized how we plan, design and build our own facilities and how we operate them, where, behind the scenes, many professionals, workers, contractors and volunteers have continued to maintain and improve our built environments and their efficient use of resources. Moreover, environmental stewardship is a commitment that has been codified by the A&M System Board of Regents in System policy 24.01.03 Environment. As President of Texas A&M University-Kingsville, I heartily endorse this policy and call on the TAMUK community to commit to these principles and seek ways to live them out.

If you would like to learn more, have ideas for how we can improve, or would like to play an active role, you are invited to reach out to Ricky Barrera at (361) 593-2646 and/or [kujrb001@tamuk.edu](mailto:kujrb001@tamuk.edu), our contact for environmental matters and coordinator of our Environmental Advisory Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Vela Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Robert Vela Jr.  
President