



Office of the Provost and Senior
Vice President for Academic Affairs
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MEMORANDUM

To: TAMUK Faculty and Staff

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

Date: July 1, 2026

Re: Announcement of Special Assistant and Library Support for Doctoral Students

In early May, I announced that the university would establish a faculty-administrative role (Special Assistant to the Provost for Doctoral Support) to better ensure timely graduation of our doctoral students. Following the review process, I am pleased to share that Dr. Kelly Hall, Department Chair of Educational Leadership and Counseling, has accepted this important role effective September 1, 2026.

Special Assistant to the Provost for Doctoral Support

Dr. Hall is an Associate Professor with a PhD in Educational Administration and Foundations–Higher Education, and brings 15 years of experience guiding doctoral students through every stage of the dissertation journey. She has served on 80 completed doctoral dissertation committees: 31 as chair, 30 as methodologist, and 19 as quality reviewer. Dr. Hall has authored or co-authored 32 peer-reviewed publications, including a book chapter that introduced a "Dissertation Across the Curriculum" approach for improving doctoral persistence and completion. Transitioning into this role from her position as Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling where she led significant enrollment growth over the past three years and oversaw program reviews and degree audits, she will also capitalize on her previous coordinator experience for the EdD in Educational Leadership. In that role, she organized Dissertation Boot Camps and created dissertation rubrics to guide students toward completion. Prior to joining TAMUK, she also helped launch an EdD program in which half of the inaugural cohort graduated within three years and secured \$2.5 million in external grant funding. She currently chairs the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Graduate and Postdoctoral Education Across the Disciplines Special Interest Group. Dr. Hall will retain a 25% faculty appointment in her department along with her 75% effort as Special Assistant. Please welcome her to this doctoral support role.

Additional Library Support for Doctoral Students

During the review and interview process, it was clear that Dr. Hector Vasquez, Associate Director for Public Services in the library, had supported many doctoral candidates to completion. He has become a key resource by providing individualized guidance and mentorship on dissertation development, literature reviews, research design, data analysis, academic writing, and APA style. To advance his efforts, we will call on him to envision a dedicated space in the library for doctoral students as we renovate the first and second floors. His input on design will be instrumental moving forward.

Working together, Drs. Hall and Vasquez will help advance our doctoral support efforts and Texas University Fund (TUF) aspirations.

cc: Robert H. Vela Jr., President
Darin Hoskisson, Dean of Graduate Studies