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Research Development Newsletter

“Bringing research development support for The Texas A&M University System members to support the research enterprise across the System.”



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TEXARKANA



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FOREST SERVICE

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The Texas A&M University System Regents Unanimously Appoint Dr. Susan Ballabina as President of Texas A&M University



The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents unanimously appointed Dr. Susan Ballabina as President of Texas A&M University, marking a significant leadership transition for the institution. Ballabina previously served in multiple leadership roles across the Texas A&M System and was recognized for her experience in higher education administration, academic leadership, and public service. The appointment reflects continued emphasis on research growth, student success, and statewide impact as the university advances its strategic priorities.

In remarks following the appointment, Ballabina stated, "Texas A&M has a strong foundation, a clear mission, and passionate faculty, staff, students, and former students who care deeply about its future," Ballabina said. "I'm grateful for the trust placed in me by the regents and Chancellor Hegar, and I look forward to working alongside the Aggie community to build on that strength and move the university forward." The announcement reinforces the role of leadership continuity in sustaining research competitiveness, institutional partnerships, and long-term strategic development across the Texas A&M enterprise.

Research and Innovation Month

Prairie View A&M University concluded its Research and Innovation Month with a series of events highlighting faculty scholarship, student research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and strategic research growth across the institution. Activities throughout the month included research presentations, panel discussions, workshops, networking opportunities, and showcases featuring undergraduate and graduate student research across disciplines such as engineering, agriculture, health sciences, education, business, and the social sciences. The initiative provided opportunities for faculty, students, and research administrators to engage around emerging areas of innovation, share best practices, and strengthen connections that support future collaborative research efforts both within the university and across The Texas A&M System.



A central feature of the event was the keynote presentation, “*Scaling Excellence: Advancing Research Across The Texas A&M System,*” which focused on strengthening collaboration, expanding research capacity, and positioning institutions for increased competitiveness in securing external funding. The presentation emphasized the value of leveraging the collective strengths of The Texas A&M System institutions to address complex research challenges, foster innovation, and support workforce development across Texas.

Texas A&M University Naresh K. Vashisht College of Medicine

College of Medicine Launches Expanded Rural Medicine Training Efforts



Texas A&M University–Kingsville and the Texas A&M University Naresh K. Vashisht College of Medicine recently launched the Rural Campus–Kingsville, creating new opportunities for medical education and clinical training focused on serving rural and underserved communities in South Texas. The initiative is designed to increase access to healthcare training pathways while encouraging future physicians to practice in regions facing persistent provider shortages.

In another effort, the Texas A&M College of Medicine hosted its Regional Rural Medicine Camp at East Texas A&M University, introducing students to careers in rural medicine through hands-on experiences and mentorship opportunities. Together, the programs reflect a broader strategy to build a stronger rural healthcare pipeline by engaging students earlier, expanding regional partnerships, and aligning medical education with community healthcare needs. These initiatives support long-term workforce development goals while reinforcing The Texas A&M System’s role in addressing healthcare access challenges across Texas.

West Texas A&M University

One West Campaign Ends with Record-Breaking \$208.6 Million Raised

West Texas A&M University announced the successful conclusion of its One West comprehensive campaign, raising a record-breaking \$208.6 million. The campaign exceeded expectations and represents the largest fundraising effort in the university’s history, with support directed toward scholarships, academic programs, faculty excellence, facilities, and strategic institutional priorities.



The results position the university to expand student opportunities, strengthen academic and research capacity, and invest in long-term growth. Large-scale philanthropic campaigns of this kind can significantly enhance institutional competitiveness by providing flexible resources to attract talent, modernize infrastructure, and support initiatives that may not be fully funded through traditional revenue sources.

Texas A&M University Kingsville

Research and Innovation Day



Texas A&M University–Kingsville hosted its annual Research and Innovation Day, providing undergraduate and graduate students an opportunity to showcase research, scholarly activity, and creative projects from across a wide range of academic disciplines. Students presented posters, presentations, and demonstrations highlighting work in engineering, agriculture, sciences, education, business, and the humanities, offering attendees insight into ongoing research and innovation efforts taking place across the university. The event emphasized hands-on learning, faculty mentorship, and the importance of student participation in research as part of the broader academic experience.

Research and Innovation Day serves as an important platform for developing presentation skills, interdisciplinary collaboration, and early engagement in the research enterprise. Events of this kind help strengthen the pipeline of future researchers and professionals by providing students with hands-on experience in communicating complex ideas, engaging with faculty mentors, and contributing to ongoing academic and scientific inquiry.

Prairie View A&M University

HCF Names President Dr. Tomikia LeGrande to The Ten Most Dominant HBCU Leaders of 2027 and Tenth Class Honors

Dr. Tomikia LeGrande, President of **Prairie View A&M University**, was named to the HBCU Campaign Fund's "Ten Most Dominant HBCU Leaders of 2027" list, recognizing leadership and institutional impact across historically Black colleges and universities. The honor highlights LeGrande's work in advancing student success, expanding institutional visibility, and strengthening Prairie View A&M University's academic and research mission. Her leadership has earned other national recognition, including the Governor's Champion of Change Award, Houston's Top 30 Influential Women Honor, and the SWAC President's Game ChangerHER Award.



The recognition reflects broader momentum at Prairie View A&M as the university continues to grow its research capacity, community partnerships, and educational initiatives. National acknowledgment of university leadership can enhance institutional reputation, support recruitment and fundraising efforts, and reinforce the role of HBCUs in advancing research, workforce development, and educational opportunity.

AgriLife Research

AgriLife Research Advances Medical Device Sterilization Breakthrough



Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists contributed to a breakthrough in medical device sterilization through work involving cold plasma technology, an emerging approach that may offer a safer, faster, and more environmentally sustainable alternative to conventional sterilization methods. The research focused on improving the sterilization of sensitive medical equipment and materials that can be damaged by high heat, radiation, or harsh chemical treatments commonly used in existing sterilization processes.

The advancement highlights the expanding role of interdisciplinary research in addressing healthcare and manufacturing challenges. By applying expertise in plasma science and engineering to biomedical applications, the project demonstrates how agricultural and life sciences research can contribute to innovations with broad impacts on public health, medical technology, and industrial processes.

External News and Highlights

[AFRL Redesigns for Strategic Advantage, Positions Research Enterprise to Accelerate Innovation](#)

The Air Force Research Laboratory has announced an organizational change aimed at strengthening strategic alignment and accelerating the transition of emerging technologies into operational use. The changes aim to improve agility across the research enterprise and enhance the delivery of science and technology capabilities for national defense.

USDA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Break Ground on New Texas Sterile Fly Production Facility

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers broke ground on a new Texas facility that will produce sterile flies to combat livestock pests through biologically based control methods. The project strengthens agricultural biosecurity and supports research-driven approaches to protecting animal health and regional food production.

Australia and the U.S. Boost Support for Critical Minerals With \$3.5 Billion

Australia and the United States committed \$3.5 billion to advance critical mineral projects, expanding efforts to secure supply chains for materials essential to defense, advanced manufacturing, and energy technologies. The investment reflects growing international focus on diversifying sources of rare earths and other strategic minerals while accelerating allied industrial capacity.

The Role of Faculty in the University of the Future

In the age of AI, the true future of higher education lies not in replacing faculty but in freeing them to do what only humans can—build meaningful relationships, cultivate wisdom, and guide students through the ethical and intellectual challenges machines cannot navigate.

Q.ANT Hits Full Production Capacity for Photonic AI Processors

Q.ANT has reached full production capacity for its photonic AI processors, signaling a significant step forward in scaling optical computing technologies. The development highlights growing momentum in alternatives to traditional semiconductor architectures for high-performance artificial intelligence workloads.

The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, NASA's Next Great Observatory, Is Finally Complete

NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope has reached completion, marking a major milestone for the agency's next-generation space observatory program. "Its surveying capabilities are over 1,000 times faster than Hubble, and can chart 200 times more sky in a single image," said NASA administrator Jared Isaacman. The telescope is expected to advance research in dark energy, exoplanets, and wide-field infrared astronomy.

Around the System: Headline News

Texas A&M Renames Poultry Science Complex After Longtime Supporters

The former Poultry Science Research, Teaching and Extension Center in College Station will now be known as the Barbara J. Huffman and William M. 'Bill' Huffman '53 Poultry Science Farm Complex in honor of donors whose contributions have supported student training and research programs.

Texas A&M Space Institute Tops Out At Exploration Park

Texas A&M University's giant Space Institute at NASA's Exploration Park has hit a major milestone, with the steel structure now officially topped out for the roughly 400,000-square-foot research campus.

Maillacheruvu Named Inaugural Dean at Texas A&M University–Texarkana

Texas A&M University–Texarkana president gave the opening remarks at this year's Forest Products Decarbonization Forum on April 9th, where he introduced **Dr. Kris Maillacheruvu** as the University's inaugural Dean of the new College of Engineering and Computing.

Verbeck Named Inaugural Vice President for Research at Texas A&M University–San Antonio

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is excited to announce the appointment of **Dr. Guido Verbeck** as the University's first-ever Vice President for Research. Verbeck will officially begin his role on July 1, 2026.

Sanders to Join Texas A&M University Leadership

Michael Sanders was recently chosen as the new vice president for enrollment management for **Texas A&M University–Victoria**. His service reflects an ongoing commitment to advancing best practices and collaboration across the higher education landscape.

Texas A&M–Corpus Christi Students Train To Study And Protect Reefs Off The Third Coast

The hands-on training is designed to mirror real-world fieldwork, giving marine biology students a chance to practice the same techniques used by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientists to monitor reef health over time.

PVAMU Among 15 HBCUs Launching National Research Coalition

Fifteen Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), including **Prairie View A&M University**, today launched the Association of HBCU Research Institutions (AHRI), a national coalition designed to accelerate world-class research, expand institutional capacity, and elevate HBCU leadership in addressing society's most pressing challenges.

Texas A&M Biological and Agricultural Engineering Graduate Program Ranks No. 6

Texas A&M University's Biological and Agricultural Engineering graduate program was ranked No. 6 nationally, reflecting continued excellence in research, graduate education, and interdisciplinary innovation. The recognition reinforces the program's leadership in addressing challenges related to agriculture, water, sustainability, and engineered systems.

Texas A&M University–Kingsville Hosts Caring Campus Regional Convening

Texas A&M University–Kingsville hosted a regional convening focused on the Caring Campus initiative, bringing together higher education professionals to share strategies for improving student engagement and success. The event supported collaboration and the exchange of practices aimed at strengthening student outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

Reddy Advocates for Biomedical Research in Washington

Indra K. Reddy, PhD, senior vice president and interim chief operating officer of **Texas A&M Health**, recently joined national leaders in Washington, D.C., to advocate for sustained federal investment in biomedical research. His engagement with policymakers emphasized the importance of continued investment in research to drive scientific advancement and improve health outcomes.

TAMU-CC and Corpus Christi ISD Sign Dual Credit Agreement Bringing College-Level Courses to Moody High School

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Corpus Christi ISD signed a new dual credit agreement that will provide Moody High School students access to college-level coursework. The partnership expands educational pathways for students while strengthening college readiness and early engagement with higher education opportunities.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Opens New Texas 4-H Headquarters

The **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service** has opened a new Texas 4-H headquarters, establishing a centralized space to support statewide youth development programming. The facility is intended to enhance coordination of 4-H activities, expand educational outreach, and strengthen engagement opportunities for students across Texas.

Modernized Greenhouses at Texas A&M Support Innovative Plant Science

More than an upgrade, this investment by the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and **Texas A&M AgriLife Research** has transformed the 24,372-square-foot facility into a state-of-the-art hub for innovation, enhancing capabilities to deliver solutions at scale. Modern features, including efficient LED lighting, advanced ventilation, and a central control system, give scientists the precision to conduct world-class research year-round. These tools empower them to develop the leading-edge agricultural solutions our world needs.

Gift From Gilbreath, Henson Creates Graduate Education Scholarship Endowment

A signing event today marked the establishment of two endowments for the **Tarleton State University** College of Education: the David Gilbreath and Tony Henson Distinguished Department Chair in Educational Leadership and Technology Support Endowment, and the David Gilbreath and Tony Henson Counseling and Educational Leadership Scholarship Endowment.

TTI Hosts Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum, Bringing Focus to Rider Safety Trends

The **Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI)** hosted the 2026 Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum on April 11, 2026, in San Marcos, Texas. The annual event brought together motorcycle riders, safety advocates, and transportation professionals from across the state to discuss current trends, share research, and explore strategies to reduce motorcycle crashes and fatalities on Texas roadways.

Texas A&M Researchers Race to Stop New World Screwworm 60 Miles from Texas Border

Texas A&M University researchers are working urgently to monitor and contain the spread of New World screwworm near the Texas border. The effort focuses on surveillance, early detection, and coordination with federal and state partners to prevent the pest from entering the United States.

The World's Largest Explosion Lab Is in Texas

RELLIS campus is home to the world's largest academic explosion testing facility, supporting research on blast effects, structural resilience, and public safety. The laboratory offers comprehensive testing capabilities for government, industry, and academic partners seeking to enhance infrastructure protection and mitigate hazards.

Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine Rises to No. 3 in U.S., No. 5 in World in 2026 QS Rankings

Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences was ranked No. 3 nationally and No. 5 globally in the 2026 QS World University Rankings for veterinary science. The recognition reflects the college's continued excellence in research, education, clinical training, and global impact in animal and human health.

Around the System: Funding Success

Governor Greg Abbott today announced that a Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund (TSIF) grant of \$13 million has been extended to **Texas A&M University** for an expansion of its Cyclotron Institute in College Station, which has provided high-energy heavy-ion particle testing for more than 30 years.

Dr. Ping Chang—Distinguished and Regents Professor of Oceanography at **Texas A&M University, College Station**—was awarded \$2,898,540 from the Gulf Research Program (GRP) to research the use of high-resolution Earth system models to improve weather and climate simulations and predictions. This award will extend the

teams' efforts [by completing a large ensemble of simulations spanning the full range of future greenhouse gas emission scenarios.](#)

Dr. Ram Ray, Professor in the College of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources at **Prairie View A&M University**, has secured a nearly \$600,000 grant from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture [to support the training of the next generation of students prepared for careers in agricultural trade.](#)

Dr. Kelly Núñez Ocasio, Assistant Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, was awarded \$518,229 from the National Science Foundation to research the impacts of changing environmental conditions on weather systems of Africa. This project directly addresses that need by producing more realistic projections of future weather patterns over Africa and the Atlantic.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences at **Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi** has been awarded a \$467,093 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to expand nursing education capacity across Texas. Over the next two years, [the funding will enhance student recruitment, retention, and graduation outcomes, while also expanding access to clinical and simulation-based learning.](#)

Texas A&M University–Central Texas received \$2.5 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Forge Economic Development Incubator. The Forge, which launched May 6th, [will connect veterans and military families with career services, entrepreneurship support, and advanced manufacturing resources](#) through the university's Military Talent Pipeline initiative.

Around the System: Honors

Dr. Alexei Sokolov, Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, was recently named Fellow of the [American Association for the Advancement of Science \(AAAS\)](#) in recognition of [his contributions to nano-biophotonics and laser spectroscopy.](#)

Dr. Michael K. Schmit, Professor and Department Head of Counseling at **East Texas A&M University**, was [recently awarded the Addictions/Offender Counselor Educator Excellence Award](#) from the International Association of Addictions and Offender Counselors (IAAOC).

Dr. Cynthia Gallardo, Assistant Professor of Educational Administration at **Texas A&M International University**, was recently recognized with an Honorable Mention from the American Educational Research Association [for contributions to educational leadership.](#)

Dr. Michael Tomaszewski, Specialist Emeritus of **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service** and Visiting Professor of Animal Science with **Texas A&M AgriLife Research**, was honored as a 2026 Dairy Challenge Founder Award by the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge [for his lifelong contributions to the Dairy Challenge program](#)

Dr. Priti Verma, Professor of Finance at **Texas A&M University–Kingsville**, earned the 2026 Best Paper Award [during the 2026 American Accounting Researchers & Educators \(AARE\) Conference for co-authoring the manuscript, *The Risk-Return Dynamics of Corporate Cryptocurrency Adoption: Evidence from Bitcoin Holdings*.](#)

Jeff Warne, Research Scientist and the Program Manager of the Multimodal Freight Program at the **Texas A&M Transportation Institute**, has been awarded the Hoy A. Richards Career Achievement Award by the 2026 National Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Conference. Presented biennially, the award is the conference's highest honor, recognizing a career of exemplary achievement in improving the safety of highway-rail grade crossings.

Ms. Amy Criss, Director of Military and Veteran Services at **West Texas A&M University**, was honored with the Faculty/Staff Military-Connected Excellence Award by The Texas A&M University System [for her dedication and commitment to veterans and their families.](#)

Drs. Brian Albanese and **Amanda Wright** from Psychological and Brain Sciences at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, were recently named “[Rising Stars](#)” by the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

Texas A&M International University Dean of the Graduate School, **Dr. Lola Norris**, was [selected as part of the 2026 City of Laredo Women’s Hall of Fame](#) by the Laredo Commission for Women.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension specialist **Danae Hicks** was recognized as the National Child Passenger Safety Technician of the Year, presented by the National Child Passenger Safety Board. She was [recognized for her leadership and dedication to providing trusted resources, training, and reliable information to parents, caregivers, and colleagues](#).

Dr. Alex Hunt, Regents Professor of English, Vincent-Haley Professor of Western Studies, and Director of the *Center for the Study of the American West* at **West Texas A&M University**, [was inducted as a Fellow in the West Texas Historical Association](#).

Tarleton State University [recognized faculty, staff, and student employees at its annual awards ceremony for outstanding contributions in teaching, scholarship, service, and operational excellence](#). The awards highlighted achievements across academic and administrative roles, reflecting a broad institutional commitment to student success, community engagement, and university values.

Texas A&M University–Texarkana Professor of Biology, **Dr. Nurul Alam**, has been named a 2026 Piper Professor, one of the most prestigious accolades available for college professors in Texas. [Dr. Alam has taught numerous biology courses at A&M–Texarkana over the past 20 years and has received several teaching awards during that time](#).

Three **Tarleton State University** faculty members — **Drs. Rajani Srinivasan, Bryant Wyatt, and Abolghassem Zabihollah** [have been recognized at the Texas Innovation Conference Awards](#) for their leadership in translating research into real-world solutions that advance industry, improve lives, and address global challenges. The awards highlight university innovators whose research demonstrates strong potential for commercialization, scalability, and societal impact.

Dr. Hyunseok Hwang, Assistant Research Scientist at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at **Texas A&M University**, [received recognition for an award-winning article in the field of public administration](#). The research highlights contributions to scholarship examining governance, public management, and policy-related issues within the discipline.

Faculty members at **West Texas A&M University** [were recognized during a year-end event honoring outstanding institutional service and contributions to the university community](#). The awards highlighted excellence in leadership, mentorship, committee service, and support for the university’s academic mission.

Dr. Abdoulaye Djire, Assistant Professor of Materials Science & Engineering at **Texas A&M University**, [was named a 2026 Camille Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award recipient](#). The award recognizes early-career faculty who demonstrate outstanding research accomplishments in the chemical sciences along with a strong commitment to undergraduate and graduate education.

Around the System: Research Highlights

Dr. George Agbaworvi and collaborators published research in the American Chemical Society journal *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, [demonstrating an atom-precise method for controlling first-order phase transitions in quantum materials relevant to neuromorphic computing](#). The work advances the understanding of how atomic-scale material modifications can enhance the stability and signal-processing capabilities of brain-inspired computing systems designed for low-energy artificial intelligence applications.

[A new study](#) from the lab of **Dr. Jun Wang**, Professor of Neuroscience and Experimental Therapeutics at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, discovered that the brain stores competing alcohol-related memories in

different groups of the same type of brain cell within a single brain region. The findings suggest that the brain keeps both the memory that drives relapse and the memory that helps suppress it, allowing the two to exist side by side and compete for control over behavior.

The digital agriculture team at the **Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Corpus Christi** has launched a project to provide commercial cotton producers with advanced digital management tools and to evaluate the new technology's performance. The tools provide early-season estimations of crop biomass and fiber yield, allowing producers to make more timely decisions about crop management.

Dr. Shihui Chen, Professor of Kinesiology at **Texas A&M University–Texarkana**, recently co-authored a study on the association between 24-h movement behavior guidelines and psychological health among adults with diabetes in developing countries. Their findings, published in the *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, demonstrate that meeting the guidelines reduces the risk of depression, enhances cognitive function, and improves quality of life for individuals with diabetes.

Dr. Emiliano Lopez Barrera, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at **Texas A&M AgriLife Research**, recently led a study examining patterns that shape how households buy, use, and discard food—developing a new way to estimate consumer food waste across countries and over time.

Dr. Shoufeng Lan, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the **Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station**, and his team recently demonstrated a new approach to light-driven motion, showing that lasers can lift and steer objects in multiple directions without physical contact. The study, “published in *Newton*,” introduces micron-scale devices, i.e., metajets, that generate controlled motion when illuminated by laser light.

Dr. Shihao Huang, Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering at **Tarleton State University**, joined a team of international researchers to examine the influence of frozen climatic conditions on railway track settlement rate. The study, published in *Cold Regions Science and Technology*, presents a novel framework for predicting winter-related settlement and track geometry deterioration, with an explicit representation of freezing persistence and freeze-thaw cycling.

Dr. Seyed Mohammad Davachi, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at **Texas A&M International University**, has co-authored a study on the design of electrospun bioactive nanofibrous wound dressings. Their findings, published in *Materials Today, Chemistry*, showed strong efficacy, especially against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*. Overall, the developed dressing demonstrated mechanical, biological, and therapeutic effects, thereby making it an effective bioactive wound dressing.

Researchers with the Wells Shark Biology and Fisheries Science Lab at **Texas A&M University at Galveston** are spanning the globe to monitor the impacts of lunar phases and, beyond that, to understand how animal behavior in Earth's waters is driven.

Dr. Feng Zhao, Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the **Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station**, is part of a team that is researching a novel wound dressing that uses materials created by human cells—without including the cells themselves. Their findings, published in *Acta Biomaterialia*, present a promising strategy for diabetic wound management.

Dr. Ken Muneoka, Professor of Veterinary Physiology & Pharmacology at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, and his team have developed a two-step treatment for successfully regenerated skeletal and connective tissue. Their study, published in *Nature Communications*, represents a shift in how scientists understand regeneration in mammals—not as a lost ability, but as one that remains present but inactive.

Dr. Lucy Pickering, Professor of Applied Linguistics and Director of Research Integrity and Compliance at **East Texas A&M University**, recently led the NSF-funded LEAP Conference (Leveraging Ethical Authorship & Publishing Practices for Early Career Engineering Faculty), which brought together a wide range of experts, including senior administrators and faculty from leading universities nationwide.

Dr. Ashok Shetty, University Distinguished Professor at **Texas A&M University**, led research demonstrating

[that a nasal spray treatment reversed key signs of brain aging in preclinical models](#). The study explored how targeted delivery of therapeutic compounds to the brain could improve cognitive function and reduce age-related neurological decline.

Drs. Steven Riechman and Adrien Robin from the new Tactical Performance and Thermoregulation Laboratory at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, are investigating how the body manages heat and blood flow when gravity is altered, as it would during spaceflight. Although astronauts are a primary focus, [this research could also impact applications on Earth](#).

Biochar research at **Prairie View A&M University** is transforming crop residue into far-reaching environmental solutions, and a new biomass processing and biochar production unit is set to accelerate that work. Led by Professor of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, **Dr. Ram Ray**, [the initiative centers on a waste-to-value model that converts unused biomass into biochar](#), a stable, carbon-rich material that can remain in soil for years and support long-term soil health and environmental sustainability.

Dr. Daniel Hajovsky, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at **Texas A&M University, College Station**, recently collaborated with a team of researchers across the country to conduct one of the largest analyses ever of the relationship between children's cognitive abilities and reading. Their findings revealed that [auditory processing and comprehension knowledge predict strong reading more than visual processing or general intelligence](#), as previously believed.

Dr. Shoufeng Lan, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the **Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station**, [led research demonstrating a new light-powered propulsion approach using micron-scale “metajets” that can be lifted and steered in three dimensions by lasers](#). The team published the work, “Optical propulsion and levitation of metajets,” in the journal *Newton*, advancing research into optical propulsion systems that could one day support long-distance space travel. The findings contribute to emerging aerospace technologies focused on fuel-free propulsion concepts and reinforce Texas A&M's growing role in advanced space engineering research.

Dr. Kiran Gadhave, AgriLife Research entomologist, [led a project using artificial intelligence to improve forecasting models for destructive crop pests](#). The research integrates AI-driven analysis with environmental and agricultural data to provide earlier and more accurate warnings for pest outbreaks that threaten crop production.

Dr. Benjamin Neuman, Professor of Biology at **Texas A&M University**, [and his team have developed a method to directly observe one of the most important — and previously invisible — forces that determines whether drugs are effective](#). These forces, known as π - π interactions between molecules, have long been recognized as critical for drug binding but have never been measured directly in living systems.

Dr. Rahul Srinivasan, associate professor of neuroscience at the **Texas A&M University Naresh K. Vashisht College of Medicine**, [has identified a protective brain pathway that may help slow the progression of Parkinson's disease by strengthening the brain's own dopamine-producing neurons, but the positive effect was only observed in females](#). The findings provide new insight into sex-specific neurological pathways and could inform future therapeutic approaches for neurodegenerative disease.

RURAL RESILIENCE

[AgTech Innovation Drives Future of Animal Agriculture](#)

Advances in agricultural technology are transforming animal agriculture, with new tools and data-driven approaches improving efficiency, sustainability, and animal health. For **Texas A&M AgriLife Research**, the summit serves as a critical platform to both share innovations and collaborate with industry partners to accelerate solutions.

[From Isolation to Connection: Virtual Programs Support Rural Schools](#)

The **Texas A&M Telehealth Institute** has developed an innovative solution that connects school counselors with mental health experts without requiring them to leave their communities—in partnership with [Collegiate Education](#).

[Texas Schools Reimagine Student Success Pathways](#)

In South Texas, five rural school districts—Agua Dulce, Premont, Brooks County, Freer, and Benavides—created the Rural Schools Innovation Zone to share resources and offer specialized academies.

[New Report Supports Recovery Efforts After Central Texas Floods](#)

The **Texas A&M Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center** uncovers hidden business impacts and strengthens the case for long-term recovery support from flood-related disruptions.

[ETAMU Hosts Regional Rural Med Camp To Build Healthcare Pipeline in East Texas University](#)

East Texas A&M University recently hosted the *Regional Rural Med Camp* April 16–17, bringing high school students from across the region to campus for an introduction to careers in healthcare. The camp, organized with the **Texas A&M University Naresh K. Vashisht College of Medicine**, provided students with early exposure to medical, nursing, and allied health professions.

[2026 Annual Conference - NALBOH](#)

Join the National Association of Local Boards of Health in strengthening public health leadership at the local level. The 2026 NALBOH Annual Conference will be held in San Antonio, TX. **October 12-14, 2026.**

[2026 Digital Health Summit – TexLa](#)

The TexLa Digital Health Summit brings together rural healthcare providers, digital health leaders, policymakers, and innovators to advance telehealth adoption and digital solutions in Texas and Louisiana. The 2026 Digital Health Summit will be held in Bastrop, TX, **July 30 – July 31, 2026.**

[The A&M System Expands College Pathways Through Rural Education Collaborative](#)

The Texas A&M University System is expanding efforts to strengthen early college awareness and career pathways for students across the state through the Texas Rural Education Collaborative (TREC). As part of this work, **Texas A&M University's** LevelUp Texas initiative will expand to serve additional communities in partnership with **Texas A&M University–Texarkana, East Texas A&M University, and Texas A&M University–Victoria**. (read more: [Texas A&M University-Victoria](#))

[Opening Doors: Collaboration Brings Care Closer to Home in Burton](#)

The newest Texas A&M BUILD clinic is opening in Burton, located in Washington County, a rural Central Texas community. The new clinic is part of an ongoing joint effort between the **Texas A&M University Health Science Center** and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) to expand care to rural, underserved areas.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding Opportunity List

Select funding opportunities are spotlighted here. For details and weekly funding opportunity updates, please check the Funding Opportunity List above.

Stride Ventures Launches AI Efficiency Challenge to Accelerate Deployment-Ready Innovations in U.S. AI Infrastructure

Stride Ventures announced a new AI Efficiency Challenge focused on advancing scalable, deployment-ready technologies for U.S. artificial intelligence infrastructure. The initiative aims to support innovation in computing efficiency, energy use, and infrastructure performance as demand for AI capabilities continues to grow.

NSF Announces \$1.5B for NSF X-Labs Initiative

The National Science Foundation (NSF) announced \$1.5 billion over the next decade toward the NSF X-Labs initiative to tackle pressing scientific challenges through novel and innovative research partnerships. This substantial long-term investment underscores NSF's commitment to new models of research outside of traditional institutions, reflecting the truly interdisciplinary nature of today's modern science ecosystem. The first round of NSF X-Labs funding opportunities invites proposals on: (1) [Scientific Instrumentation for Sensing and Imaging](#); and (2) [Quantum Systems](#).

ARPA-H Launches New Program to Deliver Rigorous, Gold-Standard Research Faster

The Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health ([ARPA-H](#)) announced the launch of its Intelligent Generator of Research ([IGoR](#)) program, a systemic effort to deliver gold-standard biomedical science faster. The program will accelerate breakthroughs with a next-generation, AI-powered research ecosystem built to expand the experimental capabilities available to researchers.

DOE Announces Over \$10 Million Available for High-Performance Computing Innovation Program

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI) today announced a new solicitation for projects that improve America's manufacturing competitiveness through the use of powerful supercomputers. DOE will award up to \$400,000 to small and medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) and their National Laboratory, university, and nonprofit partners. In total, DOE will make over \$10 million available for potential selections. Projects funded through this solicitation will accelerate the development of new materials and improve manufacturing and industrial processes through artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digital simulation.

Grants to Support Reducing Nuclear Dangers

The philanthropic [Consortium to Reduce Nuclear Dangers](#) — which currently includes Carnegie Corporation of New York, Longview Philanthropy, PAX *sapiens*, Founders Pledge, Global Challenges Foundation, and additional partners — invites applications for projects aimed at reducing nuclear dangers. The consortium funds innovative, action-oriented work to reduce nuclear risks. Projects must present a clear, plausible link between proposed activities and lower risk outcomes, with a credible path to reducing nuclear dangers.

EDA Invests Approximately \$25 Million for AI Upskill Accelerator Pilot Program

EDA is investing approximately \$25 million for a national competition to support industry-driven partnerships to upskill workers in AI technologies, helping train workers to support growth in industries that are integral to regional economies. The AI Upskill Accelerator Pilot Program will support eligible entities in the design and implementation of workforce training to provide in-demand AI skills that are critical to enhancing business outcomes. The EDA anticipates making 5-8 awards for non-construction projects totaling \$1 million to \$8 million, with project durations of 24 to 36 months.

FDA to Fund New Animal and Veterinary Innovation Centers

THE FDA is soliciting applications for inclusion as Animal and Veterinary Innovation Centers, which are intended to form long-term partnerships to address priority areas for the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine

(CVM). This includes CVM developing cooperative agreement(s) with academic research institutions to drive research into the development of:

- interventions to prevent, control, or eliminate Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus in animals, or interventions that reduce the circulation of the virus;
- intentional genomic alternations in animals and the advancement of regulatory science in this field, with a focus on agricultural resilience, food security, animal health, or public health; and/or
- products for minor species, minor uses in major species, and other unmet veterinary medical needs in major species that create a significant animal or public health burden.

NVIDIA Expands Academic Grant Program for Higher Education and Research

NVIDIA's academic grant program continues to provide universities and researchers with access to advanced computing hardware and AI technologies that support research and education initiatives. The program is designed to accelerate innovation in fields such as artificial intelligence, data science, engineering, robotics, and scientific computing.

The Texas A&M University System Research Excellence Fund

The Research Excellence Fund (REF) is a Texas A&M University System-wide, competitive, merit-based funding program designed to strengthen research capacity, foster collaboration among System members, and enhance competitiveness for major external funding.

[REF FAQ](#)

EVENTS



Online Learning Consortium National Conference

Date: August 3-5, 2026

Location: Fort Worth campus

[Website](#)



2026 Texas A&M Conference on Energy

Date: September 23-24, 2026

Location: Texas A&M Memorial Student Center

[Website](#)



100th Annual Transportation Short Course

Date: October 12 - 14, 2026

Location: Kyle Field Hall of Champions

[Website](#)

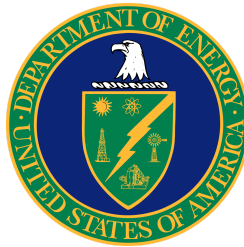
RESOURCES

The Texas A&M University System **Research Development website** features federal agency resources to support System researchers with checklists, outlines, templates, graphic and design concepts, and other information for NSF, NIH, USDA, DOE, DOD, and NASA. We continually add new resources to support specific research opportunities.

[RDO Website](#)

SPONSOR NEWS

Department of Energy



[The Genesis Mission Consortium, led by the U.S. Department of Energy and administered by RTI International, unites national laboratories, academic institutions, and private-sector partners to accelerate scientific discovery using AI.](#) The consortium focuses on critical areas including energy, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, materials science, nuclear energy, quantum information, and semiconductors, leveraging shared computing resources, data, and expertise to drive rapid innovation.



Synchronizing time in modern warfare – often down to billionths of a second – is critical for mission success. The [Robust Optical Clock Network \(ROCKN\) program](#) enables precision timekeeping, even in contested and/or GPS-denied environments, creating the opportunity for unprecedented endurance and coordination for warfighters around the world.

National Science Foundation



A major reorganization at the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** involving a restructured internal organization, questions about abolished divisions, workforce changes, and ongoing debate among scientists has drawn significant attention from the research community; see <https://www.science.org/content/article/national-science-foundation-just-had-big-reorganization-here-are-five-things-know> for the full explanation.

[NSF Supplement 1 to PAPPG 24-1](#)

Applies to all financial assistance awarded on or after Dec. 8, 2025.

[NSF Supplement 2 to PAPPG 24-1](#)

Applies to all financial assistance awarded on or after Jan. 22, 2026.

[Updated Merit Review Process](#)

NSF uses a merit review process in which expert reviewers evaluate all proposals based on the National Science Board-approved criteria of *intellectual merit* and *broader impacts* to help guide funding decisions and ensure that NSF supports high-quality research with societal value.

National Institutes of Health



National Institutes
of Health

End of NIH's Leniency Period for Use of Common Biosketch and Current and Pending Support Forms

NIH NOT-OD-26-079 – April 21, 2026

The current leniency period previously communicated in [NOT-OD-26-033](#) will end on **May 7, 2026**, the final AIDS standard receipt date for [Cycle 1](#).

Use of the Common Forms for Biographical Sketch, Current and Pending (Other) Support, and NIH Biographical Sketch Supplement will be required for all application due dates and Just-In-Time (JIT), Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR), and Prior Approval submissions **on or after May 8, 2026**.

On May 8, 2026, system warnings will change to errors that will stop any submission not using compliant Common Forms.

Important Updates and Reminders

Updates regarding entry of zero effort on Current and Pending (Other) Support:

On April 22, 2026, Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae ([SciENCv](#)) and eRA deployed system updates to allow entry of zero person months effort for Proposals/Active Projects and In-Kind Contributions on the Current and Pending (Other) Support Form.

Updates regarding Research Security Training Certification:

On April 22, 2026, SciENCv added the Research Security Training (RST) Certification back to the Common Forms to provide individuals time to comply with the requirement for applications submitted for due dates on or after May 25, 2026 ([NOT-OD-26-017](#)).

If you certified your Common Forms prior to the addition of this text on April 22, 2026, and:

Have not yet submitted your application for a due date on or after May 25, 2026, **you should regenerate your Common Form PDF(s) prior to submission.**

Have submitted your application for a due date on or after May 25, 2026, you do not need to resubmit your application with regenerated Common Forms. NIH staff will collect updated documents to meet the RST certification requirement at JIT for applications selected for possible funding.

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