Mission Statement

Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups, women and men alike, as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the 21st century, Texas A&M seeks to assume a place of even greater preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

History and Development

Texas A&M, the first public institution of higher education in Texas, opened for classes in 1876. It is now one of a select few institutions in the nation to hold land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant designations. The University owes its origin to the Morrill Act approved by the Congress on July 2, 1862. This act provided for donation of public land to the states. The land was to be sold at auction, with the proceeds set aside in a perpetual fund. The act directed that interest from this fund be used to support a college whose “leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and mechanical arts . . . in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”

By resolution of the Legislature of the State of Texas in November 1866, Texas agreed to provide for a college under the terms of the Morrill Act, but no such institution was organized until the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas through act of April 17, 1871. The same act appropriated $75,000 for the erection of buildings and bound the state to defray all expenses of the college exceeding the annual interest from the endowment. Proceeds from the sale of the 180,000 acres of land scrip received under the Land Grant College Act were invested in $174,000 of gold frontier defense bonds of Texas, forming a perpetual endowment for the institution. A commission created to locate the institution accepted the offer of 2,416 acres of land from the citizens of Brazos County in 1871, and instruction began in 1876.

In 1888, twelve years after the opening of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, the faculty initiated programs of instruction at the graduate level. In 1890, two Master of Science degrees were conferred without any indication of the specialization of the recipients. Initially, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas emphasized graduate programs in agriculture and engineering, which were administered by a faculty committee for graduate studies. In 1898, a single Master of Science degree in horticulture was awarded, followed by a scattering of Master of Science degrees in agriculture over the next 22 years. The acceleration in the awarding of Master of Science degrees after 1920, however, prompted the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas to establish the Graduate School in 1924, with the dean of the college serving as graduate dean.

In keeping with the diversified and expanded character of the institution, the 58th Legislature of Texas, on August 23, 1963, changed the name of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas to Texas A&M University. With the name change, the Graduate School was designated the Graduate College. It was renamed the Office of Graduate Studies in 1987, and in 2013 the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, and is administered by the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies under the Division of Academic Affairs.

In 1936, the Board of Directors of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas approved “certain programs of study and research leading to the doctorate.” In the same year the Academic Council of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas delineated qualifications required of the faculty for participation in graduate instruction, thereby establishing the graduate faculty. The first Ph.D. was awarded in 1940. In the 1960’s, the Board of Regents envisioned a broader role for graduate studies and created programs of graduate instruction in all of the academic colleges throughout the University.

As the State of Texas grew, so did its land-grant institution. Texas A&M now has a physical plant valued at more than $1 billion. The campus in College Station includes 5,200 acres and is one of the largest campuses of any major institution of higher education in the nation.

On September 17, 1971, the designation “sea-grant college” was assigned to Texas A&M in recognition of its achievements in oceanographic and marine resources development. Texas A&M was one of the first four institutions nationwide to achieve this distinction. Patterned after the century-old, land-grant idea, sea-grant colleges are federal-state partnerships for furthering marine work through practical research, education and advisory services. The designation clearly establishes the University’s leadership relative to marine affairs of the state.

Texas A&M added a third special designation on August 31, 1989, when it was named a “space-grant college.” This new designation, bestowed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, came to the University based on its continuing commitment to space research and its participation in the Texas Space Grant Consortium, a group of 24 higher education institutions, 22 corporations, two non-profit groups and three state agencies under the leadership of Texas A&M and The University of Texas at Austin.

In addition to its traditional strengths in agriculture and engineering, Texas A&M is an established leader in areas such as the space, nuclear, computer, biotechnological, oceanographic and marine resources fields. It also has placed added emphasis on the arts and sciences and business, and continues to enhance its prominent role in these fields.

A mandatory military component was a part of the Land Grant designation until the 1950’s, and the Corps of Cadets has played an important part in Texas A&M’s history and development. Even though membership in the Corps of Cadets became voluntary in 1965, Texas A&M historically has produced more officers than any other institution in the nation, with the exception of the service academies. The University is one of only three institutions with a full-time corps of cadets, including ROTC programs, leading to commissions in all branches of service—Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Texas A&M offers a variety of programs in undergraduate and graduate studies through its academic colleges and schools — Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture, the Bush School of Government and Public Service, Mays Business School, Education and Human Development, College of Engineering, Geosciences, Liberal Arts, Science, and Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, as well as degree programs from the
Texas A&M University Health Science Center, with locations across the state, and Texas A&M School of Law, in Fort Worth.

Texas A&M has two branch campuses: a marine and maritime campus on Galveston, Texas A&M University Galveston campus, and an engineering campus in the Middle Eastern country of Qatar, Texas A&M University Qatar campus. In addition, Texas A&M’s extensive research efforts in all fields, in conjunction with the agricultural and engineering experiment stations, resulted in annual expenditures of more than $866 million in 2014, ranking the University 17th nationally by the National Science Foundation.

Classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research Intensive University (very high research activity), Texas A&M embraces its mission of the advancement of knowledge and human achievement. The research mission is a key to advancing economic development in both public and private sectors across Texas and the nation. In addition, research-intensive experiences prepare students to compete in a highly competitive, knowledge-based, global society and to continue developing their own creativity, learning and skills throughout their lives.

In 2001, Texas A&M became one of only 62 members of the Association of American Universities, a prestigious organization that restricts its ranks to the premier public and private institutions of higher learning in the United States and Canada. In 2004, the Kappa of Texas Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was installed at Texas A&M.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes summarize the knowledge and skills Texas A&M expects students to gain during their educational experience as Aggies. These learning outcomes ask students to connect their course- and degree-level learning to their overall goals as they take on leadership positions in their professions and communities, and prepare them to engage in learning for a lifetime.

First and foremost, Texas A&M expects students to have mastered the material presented in their individual courses, from entry-level general education courses required of all undergraduates, to capstone courses restricted to seniors in a major, to specialized graduate seminars.

The broader institutional student learning outcomes ask students to connect the pieces of their education into a whole that synthesizes what they have learned. Students graduate not only knowing facts and understanding basic concepts, but also demonstrating an ability to apply and explain those facts and concepts creatively in new situations. Through this process, students gain the skills and knowledge that allow them to thrive in our complex world.

Master’s

A student who graduates from Texas A&M with a master’s degree will:

- Master degree program requirements, including theories, concepts, principles and practice, and develop a coherent understanding of the subject matter through synthesis across courses and experiences.
- Apply subject matter knowledge in a range of contexts to solve problems and make decisions.
- Use a variety of sources and evaluate multiple points of view to analyze and integrate information and to conduct critical, reasoned arguments.
- Know how to communicate effectively.
- Use appropriate technologies to communicate, collaborate, conduct research and solve problems.
- Develop clear research plans and conduct valid (data-supported), theoretically consistent and institutionally appropriate research.
- Choose ethical courses of action in research and practice.

Doctoral

A student who graduates from Texas A&M with a doctoral degree will:

- Master degree program requirements, including theories, concepts, principles and practice; develop a coherent understanding of the subject matter through synthesis across courses and experiences; and apply subject matter knowledge to solve problems and make decisions.
- Apply a variety of strategies and tools, use a variety of sources and evaluate multiple points of view to analyze and integrate information and put forth critical, reasoned arguments.
- Communicate effectively.
- Develop clear research plans, conduct valid, data-supported, theoretically consistent, and institutionally appropriate research and effectively disseminate the results of the research in appropriate venues to a range of audiences.
- Use appropriate technologies to communicate, collaborate, conduct research and solve problems.
- Teach and explain the subject matter in their discipline.
- Choose ethical courses of action in research and practice.