

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

IMPACT

MAGAZINE / 2023



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL TEXAS™

Message from the Interim Dean

Dear Friends,



This year can be summed up perfectly by the title of Bob Dylan's famous song, "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Dr. Richard Rhodes, who served as the chancellor of Austin Community College for many years, started as interim president in October following the retirement of Dr. Marc Nigliazzo, and I returned to the role of interim dean of the College of Business Administration (COBA)

in August. On the academic front, our programs are now accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, which internationally validates the quality of the education we know we provide.

Another positive change has been a reenergized campus climate this fall. During the pandemic, in-person class enrollment had significantly declined, but this fall we saw many in-person class enrollments returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The strategic theme for COBA this year has been "Growing Together" as colleagues and faculty members to enhance the educational experience for students. We have scheduled more events to increase faculty interactions, and we recently launched two comprehensive development programs focused on course improvements and growth as faculty members.

We want our theme of "Growing Together" to also include you as critical partners. Our faculty and staff are here to partner with you to help you grow your knowledge base, career or business. At the same time, you could also help us to improve our programs through experiential learning partnerships, innovative tools and technologies, employment opportunities for graduates, speaking opportunities in our classes, and support in attracting and retaining top faculty.

We are thankful for your past support and approach the future with excitement, anticipating the promising prospects that await us.

Sincerely,

Lucas W. Loafman, J.D., M.B.A.

Beck Family Senior Faculty Fellow
Interim Dean, College of Business Administration



Leadership

OUTGOING DEAN

Faiza M. Khoja

INTERIM DEAN

Lucas W. Loafman

OUTGOING ASSISTANT DEAN

Marita Esposito

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Brad Almond, Ph.D.
Management and Marketing

Anitha Chennamaneni, Ph.D.
Subhani Department of Computer
Information Systems

Anthony Fulmore, Ph.D.
Accounting and Finance

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Table of Contents

2023 Progress on Strategic Plan	4
Adoption of Societal Impact Framework	5
Department Renamed in Honor of Local Tech Entrepreneur	6
College of Business Administration Earns Prestigious Accreditation	7
COBA Faculty Participates in Governor's Small Business Summit	8
Talent Pipeline Development Initiative: Making Central Texas a Place for Veterans to Thrive	9
Alumni Highlights	10
Students, Faculty and Staff in the Community	12
New Faculty in the College of Business Administration	15
Industry and Community Partnership	16
Trideum	16
Centex	16
First Heroes National Bank	16
Temple College	17
Lone Star College	17
VITA Program	18
On the Horizon for COBA	19



Mission Statement

To provide undergraduate and graduate business education to a diverse learner population including representation from military-affiliated backgrounds. By bringing together experts, we equip lifelong learners with innovative and industry-relevant knowledge, positively engage with regional stakeholders, produce impactful relevant intellectual contributions, and inspire change agents to create a better world.

Vision Statement

To be the first choice for business education in our region and beyond.

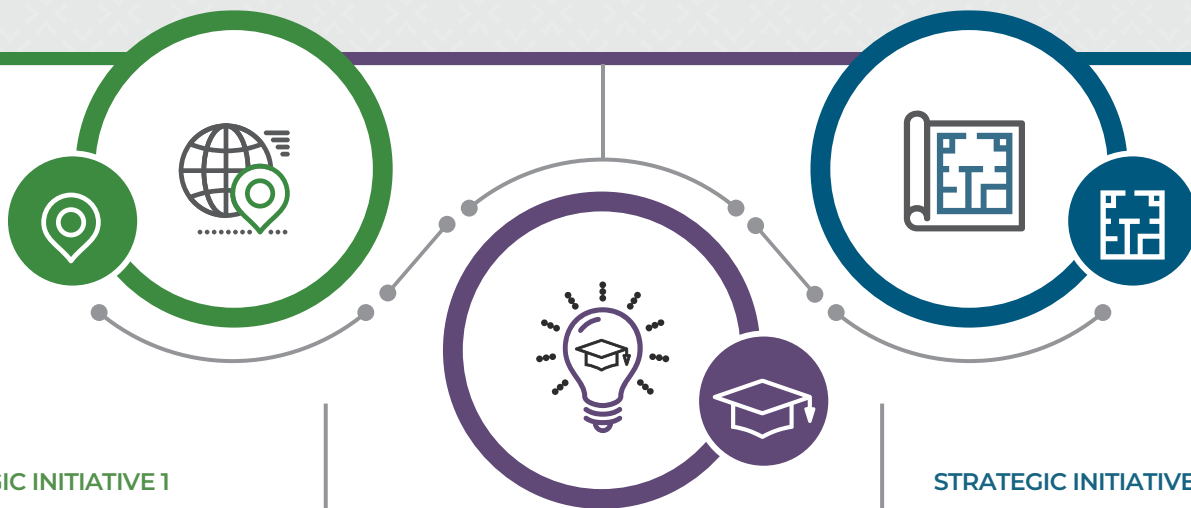
Core Values

Innovation, Knowledge, Excellence, Compassion, Integrity, Diversity and Commitment to Doing Good.

Progress on Strategic Plan:

Empower, Engage and Positive Change

The College of Business Administration 2021-2026 Strategic Plan: Empower, Engage and Positive Change is the culmination of a collective effort by administrators, faculty and staff across our college — as well as alumni, business and student community representatives — to define our college's strategic direction through 2026. This plan is grounded in the mission and values of the college and the university and is framed by three strategic initiatives and seven goals that the college established to confront the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities facing business and society. Through a unique top-down and bottom-up strategic planning process, we tapped into diverse talents, experiences and insights to develop actionable, high-impact tactics for our plan.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1

Expand geographically to off-campus locations

- **GOAL 1.1** Offer educational opportunities to promote and advance correctional education
- **GOAL 1.2** Offer selective courses and programs at regional community colleges

Progress Made on Strategic Initiative 1:

- Provides learners of all backgrounds and experiences access to latest information and expertise through:
 - Online courses
 - Workshops
 - Specialized trainings

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2

Scale and develop new and pre-existing learner and post-graduation success programs

- **GOAL 2.1** Create deliberate experiential learning opportunities for learners within programs
- **GOAL 2.2** Identify learner needs and expand learner support services for academic and career success
- **GOAL 2.3** Create lifelong learning and upskilling opportunities for communities and alumni

Progress Made on Strategic Initiative 2:

- Micro-credentials and certificates program has been effective in enhancing expertise
- Professional Development Series is helping learners build essential skills and knowledge
- Office of Learner Access and Success has spearheaded several impactful initiatives:
 - COBA Scholarships
 - Programs for Probationary and Early College Learners
 - Alumni Engagement with Learners
 - Career Development Opportunities
 - Post-Graduation Employment Efforts

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3

Create spaces where COBA learners and faculty can be catalysts for transformative learning

- **GOAL 3.1** Create centers that enable thought leadership
- **GOAL 3.2** Promote thought leadership within curriculum and scholarship

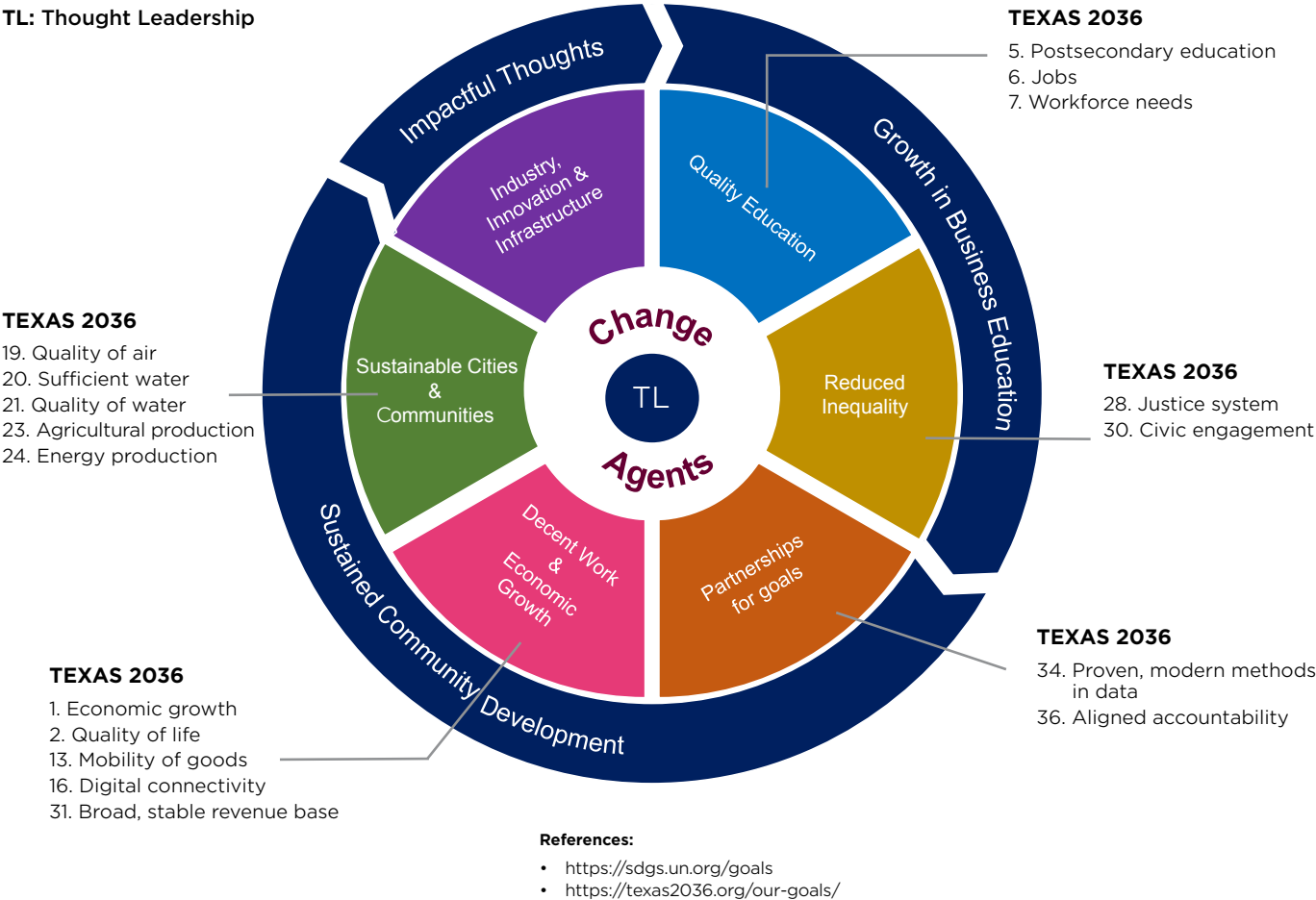
Progress Made on Strategic Initiative 3:

- Center for Cybersecurity Innovation's Cybersecurity Lab is fully operational and equipped with latest technology
- Cybersecurity Lab gives learners hands-on experience in a secure and controlled environment

Adoption of

Societal Impact Framework

The College of Business Administration is focused on creating a positive impact in our community. This plan was developed to show where we are focusing our thought leadership and how it connects to the Texas 2036 goals and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.





Department Renamed in Honor of Local Tech Entrepreneur

This spring, Texas A&M University–Central Texas unveiled the Subhani Department of Computer Information Systems (CIS), marking the first time in university history that a department has been named after anyone.

The department’s namesake, Abdul B. Subhani, is a local philanthropist and founder of Centex Technologies and the Subhani Foundation. He is also an A&M–Central Texas alumnus and former faculty member.

Thanks to an endowment fund set up through the Subhani Foundation, the CIS department is poised to make massive strides in the world of computer science and technology by providing research opportunities to faculty and students in areas including information systems, information technology and cybersecurity.

Subhani Department of Computer Information Systems



Over the past 22 years, my journey in this community has been profoundly rewarding — from being a part of the transition of Tarleton to Texas A&M University–Central Texas, to my roles as an adjunct faculty member at both universities, and founding my business 18 years ago. The establishment of the naming department represents a culmination of these experiences, a testament to the power of community, family, and friendship. Such an honor could only have been possible with their enduring support and belief in our collective vision.

— ABDUL B. SUBHANI
Founder of Centex Technologies
and the Subhani Foundation

College of Business Administration Earns Prestigious Accreditation



This spring, the College of Business Administration (COBA) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas earned international accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

This prestigious accreditation is awarded to institutions that undergo a rigorous review process to ensure the school's mission, faculty and curricula are of the highest quality.

“Our AACSB accreditation was a 10-year journey, beginning when Dr. Larry Garner, our founding dean, brought up the possibility at a faculty retreat in 2013,” said Lucas W. Loafman, interim dean of COBA.

After putting in the work to hire top-notch faculty, find more budgetary resources, refine the curriculum and implement extensive programmatic assessment measures, the process really accelerated in 2019 when the initial self-evaluation report was approved with only a few areas to focus on.



AACSB accreditation is the gold standard for accrediting global business programs. In the United States, AACSB accreditation has become essential to keep up with peer institutions to maintain competitiveness.

— LUCAS W. LOAFMAN
Interim Dean of COBA

“Over the next four years, we continued to work on those areas and other improvements, including having to adapt our final self-evaluation report to newly revised standards, before finally receiving accreditation earlier this year,” said Loafman.

Throughout the world, an AACSB accreditation is recognized as meaning a school has reached standards of excellence in business education. Less than 6 percent of business schools worldwide have gotten this accreditation, so COBA receiving this honor means it ranks among the best business institutions in the world.

“Though the process was long and resource-intensive, the quality of education for COBA students at Texas A&M University–Central Texas has certainly improved as a result,” said Loafman.





COBA Faculty Participates in Governor's Small Business Summit

Two College of Business Administration (COBA) professors at Texas A&M University-Central Texas served as panelists in the 2023 Governor's Small Business Summit in Temple this past May.

Dr. Brad Almond, associate professor of management and department chair, and Dr. Sunme Lee, assistant professor of marketing, shared their expertise at the first summit of the year.

"It is exciting to see the exponential growth and investment happening in Central Texas right now," said Almond. "I was really excited that someone from the governor's office had us on the radar as an important catalyst to further drive and sustain this growth."

The goal of the summit is to connect individuals with the resources they need to start and grow their small businesses. Through panels stocked with experts in their fields, entrepreneurs and small-business owners get the opportunity to hear insightful conversations about relevant business topics.

Having faculty members like Almond and Lee, who are highly regarded by the Texas business community, is part of why COBA is able to provide such a high-quality education to its students.



Being a panelist was truly an enriching experience. It allowed me to connect with local small-business owners in the Temple area and share my expertise in digital marketing. These gatherings foster a sense of community and knowledge-sharing among entrepreneurs, empowering them with the information and strategies needed to navigate the ever-evolving business landscape.

— DR. SUNME LEE
Assistant Professor of Marketing

Talent Pipeline Development Initiative: Making Central Texas a Place for Veterans to Thrive

Transitioning from the military to civilian life can be difficult for soldiers once they've completed their service. A new initiative, called the Central Texas Talent Pipeline Development Initiative, hopes to help soldiers transitioning into the civilian workforce by providing them with education and resources to fill jobs that are most in demand in the Central Texas region.

The initiative, which is in the early stages of planning, was founded by John Crutchfield, who is the retired president and CEO of the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce and executive director of the Killeen Economic Development Corporation and Killeen Industrial Foundation.

"All transitioning soldiers will have a strong foundation in soft skills such as discipline, punctuality and problem-solving, which are important to employers," said Keith Sledd, a member of the initiative's standing committee and executive director of the Heart of Texas Defense Alliance. "However, not all military occupational specialties will have a corresponding civilian career equivalent. The key is developing a talent pathway that offers skills from the certificate level to the graduate level."

Prior to the creation of Texas A&M University-Central Texas, the region had the largest population in the state without access to a publicly funded university. According to the Veteran's Inventory Report, about 800 soldiers per month transition out of Fort Cavazos, and large numbers of those soldiers and their families wish to remain in Central Texas. Even more will want to stay if good jobs are available.

"Relevant education will render these soldiers and their family members more employable and will attract better jobs," said Crutchfield. "This can create a source of talent that will become an economic development strategic advantage and will cause new companies to locate in Central Texas."

The creation of the talent pipeline will greatly



STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Dr. Faiza Khoja
- Keith Sledd
- Ron McNamara
- Abdul Subhani
- Todd Fox
- Lorri Golva
- Mark Phillips
- Dr. Linda Angel

benefit military spouses and families as well. The military lifestyle often requires frequent moves, which can make it difficult for military spouses to maintain regular employment. Through the Central Texas Talent Pipeline Development Initiative, these spouses and family members will also gain access to education and workforce opportunities.

Alumni Highlights

Kaylah Johnson (M.B.A., 2016) **LEAD PRODUCT MARKETING MANAGER AT AT&T**



Kaylah is a Killeen native and a graduate of Central Texas College and Texas A&M University–Central Texas. She holds an

A.A.S. in business (2012), a B.B.A. in marketing (2014) and an M.B.A (2016).

Kaylah began her career with AT&T in 2016 after being accepted into the AT&T Business Sales Leadership Development Program in Atlanta.

After successfully completing the program, Kaylah relocated to Chicago, where she drove small-business sales growth as a business sales executive for two years.

In 2018, she relocated back to Texas, where she held several project management roles leading cross-functional initiatives at the regional and national levels.

Since 2021, she has been the lead product marketing manager leading go-to-market strategy and growth initiatives for those who serve their country and communities — military, veterans, first responders, nurses, physicians and teachers.

Beryl Castillo (M.B.A., 2010) **LEAD UNIT PROGRAM COORDINATOR/SQUADRON HR ADMINISTRATOR AT UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

Beryl earned her M.B.A. with a concentration in human resource management from Texas A&M University–Central Texas in 2010, and is now completing a doctoral-level degree.

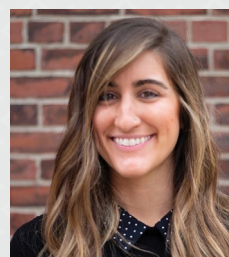
After fulfilling all required courses during her M.B.A. studies, Beryl was accepted to an incredibly competitive internship with the Disney College Program before graduation.

Since graduating, she has worked in the private and military sectors as a human resource specialist and human resource manager.

Beryl is also a technical sergeant in the U.S. Air Force Reserve with in-depth knowledge of human resource military programs. She has over a decade of experience in the field, with a primary focus on recruiting, staffing, benefits and entitlements, leadership, and management.

Her degree and faculty support from Dr. Vitucci provided a solid, research-based foundation for her to be an effective HR asset to her current organization.

Kerri Sutherland (M.B.A., 2011) **HR BUSINESS PARTNER AT AXIS COMMUNICATIONS**



Kerri holds an M.B.A. with a concentration in human resource management from Texas A&M University–

Central Texas and is recognized as a Senior Certified Professional by the Society for Human Resource Management.

Kerri has held the position of human resource business partner at Axis Communications since 2017. She has over a decade of experience in the field, with a primary focus on hiring, employee development and employee engagement.

Kerri's human resource journey began at various international tech companies, and she currently supports the remote sales organization at Axis by recruiting and retaining top talent while safeguarding the company's culture.

She also sits as the chair for Axis' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and serves on the board of a local nonprofit humane society.

Xavier Coleman (B.S., 2016)
LEAD ENGINEER AT BOOZ ALLEN
HAMILTON IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Xavier graduated from Texas A&M University–Central Texas in 2016 with a B.S. in computer information systems

and a concentration in software engineering and database design. Earning his degree from the university helped Xavier properly transition from the military to the workforce.

Xavier served in the United States Army for eight consecutive years. A month after military discharge, he enrolled as a student at A&M–Central Texas.

Currently, as a lead engineer at Booz Allen Hamilton in Washington, D.C., he leads and develops cloud operations for a government project. Previously, he worked at IBM and General Dynamics.

Kimberly Hartman (M.B.A., 2016)
SENIOR HR BUSINESS PARTNER,
INDEED, INC.

Kimberly graduated from Texas A&M University–Central Texas in 2013 with a bachelor's in business

The university provided me with a clear understanding of what the workforce was like and where I wanted to take my next journey in life.

— XAVIER COLEMAN
Alumni

administration and again in 2016 with her M.B.A.

Kimberly has been working in HR for 16 years and is passionate about learning and development. She currently works for Indeed, Inc. as a senior HR business partner and teaches part time at A&M–Central Texas and for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

The bulk of her career so far was spent with the United States Postal Service, where her specialty was labor relations and HR compliance. Later, she moved on to the nonprofit sector, where she specialized in building an HR infrastructure and recruiting.

Kimberly served on the Combined Federal Campaign in various leadership roles and is a graduate of Armed Services YMCA's Five-Star Leadership program. She is also the past president of her local SHRM chapter, the Central Texas Human Resource Management Association.

Sandylane Oquendo (M.B.A., 2018)

ASSISTANT PROGRAM OFFICER
AT LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT
CORPORATION

Sandy holds a bachelor's of applied arts and science in business occupations and an M.B.A. with an emphasis on management and leadership from Texas A&M University–Central Texas.

In 2002, Sandy left her home in Puerto Rico to serve in the U.S. Army. She spent 10 years serving and completed three combat deployment tours in Iraq. In 2013, Sandy retired with the rank of staff sergeant. Post-military, Sandy and her family relocated to Houston, where she has built a career in the nonprofit sector and continues to serve beyond the uniform.

Sandy manages a portfolio of four financial opportunities centers with an excess of 15 federal and private grants valued at over \$1.7 million.

Sandy provides technical assistance to the financial opportunities centers, including financial reports, housing counseling, financial coaching and income support. She also coordinates and facilitates monthly training for coaches in the network.



Whether you are starting your higher education journey or picking up where you left off, the university's campus is designed to meet your needs. As a bilingual person, returning to school was nerve-racking. However, my academic advisor, Mr. Lalone, made me feel at ease. In the process, I met some of the best professors who pushed me beyond my comfort zone. Joining the university's American Marketing Association chapter allowed me to network and think bigger.

— SANDYLANE OQUENDO
Alumni



Students, Faculty and Staff in the Community

Help Is Here: Academic Support for All COBA Students

Feeling supported is a huge factor for individual success. The College of Business Administration (COBA) at Texas A&M–Central Texas is committed to providing each student the resources and tools they need on their pathway to graduation and entering the workforce.

The Office of Student Access and Success is available for all COBA students to utilize so that they can reach their fullest potential. The academic advisors do so much more than just help select courses.

“Overall, COBA Access and Success advisors approach students holistically,” said Dr. Marita Esposito, former assistant dean of COBA. “Each advisor is cross-trained and works with various offices and constituents on and off campus to ensure that students receive the resources and training they need to succeed. There are also liaisons in strategically placed areas that help students to be successful.”

FIND YOUR SUPPORT

Students can work with their advisors to:

- Find opportunities for professional development
- Network with COBA faculty, alumni and prospective employees
- Meet and maintain relationships with mentors
- Participate in student engagement activities within COBA
- Identify strategies for personal success, and make a plan to achieve their goals





A Time to Give: Service-Learning Initiatives

Last year, students in Dr. Ankita Singhvi's data analytics course participated in service-learning activities that gave them the opportunity to give back to their community while gaining real-world experience.

Some of the organizations that benefited from working with Dr. Singhvi's data analytics students included:

- United Way
- Make-A-Wish Foundation
- Innovation Black Chamber of Commerce
- Shepherd's Heart
- Local libraries and elementary schools

One student worked with a local animal shelter and said, "I am hopeful that my service will allow the shelter to identify trends that increase their number of pet adoptions. The shelter will be able to utilize those trends to find more pets homes and make room for the shelter to accept more pets in the future."



They would get experiential learning by selecting an actual nonprofit they wanted to work with, and then analyze the data practices to figure out how those nonprofits could be more efficient. I think through this project, we've been able to reach a lot of organizations and help tell their stories.

— DR. ANKITA SINGHVI
Assistant Professor of Accounting



A Magical Time: COBA Student Interns at Disney

One student in the College of Business Administration (COBA) landed an internship last year that was — quite literally — made of magic. Laura Dooley is an undergraduate student and research assistant in the Division of Research, Economic Development, and Innovation, as well as a mom and military spouse. And now she can add “Disney intern” to her list of titles.

A lifelong Disney fan, Dooley’s eye was drawn to an email from the university’s Office of Career and Professional Development when she saw the word “Disney” in the subject line. She became the third Texas A&M University-Central Texas student to accept an internship offer at the most magical place on earth.



If I saw a car filled with kids, or if the parents seemed like they’d appreciate a surprise, I offered them free parking as an extra perk. It’s remarkable how something so small can make such a big difference.

— LAURA DOOLEY
COBA Student

“The interns live in Flamingo Crossing,” said Dooley. “It is a huge neighborhood on the resort property, and it has everything an intern could possibly want. We had shared living quarters, pools, a world-class gym, firepits, hammocks, and meeting spaces for professional development.”

During her time at Disney World, she worked face-to-face with guests, either welcoming them from the toll booths or helping them in the sections designated for parking or departures. Dooley worked to keep the flow of guests moving, whether that meant admitting cars full of new guests, helping tired parents navigate the park grounds with eager kids in tow, reuniting families, or making someone’s day by providing a “magical moment.”

“That means if I saw a car filled with kids, or if the parents seemed like they’d appreciate a surprise, I offered them free parking as an extra perk. It’s remarkable how something so small can make such a big difference,” she said.

New Faculty in the College of Business Administration

We had a few additions to our team during the fall 2023 semester. The College of Business Administration is pleased to welcome the following new faculty members.

Dr. Deepti Gupta



Dr. Deepti Gupta is an assistant professor at Texas A&M University-Central Texas. She has an M.S.

and a Ph.D. in computer science, both from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

After receiving her Ph.D., she joined Goldman Sachs as a cloud security architect. She has also worked as a faculty member in the Department of Computer Science at Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, and as an adjunct faculty in the Department of Computer Science at St. Edward University, Austin.

Dr. Gupta's research interests lie in the areas of security and privacy in the Internet of Things (IoT) leveraging cloud and edge computing. She also researches the application of AI and machine learning to secure IoT and cyber-physical systems infrastructures in various application domains, such as smart health care, wearable IoT and smart home.

She is also drawn to designing federated learning algorithms to deal with non-independent and identically distributed data using game theory. She developed

novel anomaly detection models and fine-grained access control models to develop secure infrastructure for IoT. She has several conference and journal publications, and continually serves as an expert reviewer for various journals and technical program committees for conferences and workshops.

Dr. Gupta is an active team member of IEEE ComSoc Young Professionals, AnitaB.org and WiCyS, and she serves as co-chair of the N2Women fellowship.

Dr. Chen (Chester) Xiang



Dr. Chen (Chester) Xiang recently joined Texas A&M University-Central Texas as

visiting assistant professor of supply chain management in the Department of Management and Marketing. His courses include production and operations, transportation logistics and distribution, and business statistics.

Dr. Xiang completed his Ph.D. in operations management at the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University. His research has been published in the *International Journal of*

Production Economics and the *International Journal of Production Research*.

Before joining A&M-Central Texas, he was an assistant professor of supply chain management at Clarkson University and received multiple teaching awards and research grants during his time there. Before joining academia, he was a manufacturing engineer for Ford Motor Company.

Dr. Xiang also serves as treasurer of the board of the Cerebral Palsy Association & Community Health Center of the North Country in New York state.

Dr. Hashai Papneja



Dr. Hashai Papneja is a visiting assistant professor at Texas A&M University-Central Texas.

He holds an M.B.A., an M.S. in industrial engineering, and a Ph.D. in management information systems. He researches how humans interact with chatbots to create better outcomes and how predictive analytics can be used in business applications.

Industry and Community Partnership

Partnerships with businesses in the Central Texas region have proved invaluable for Texas A&M University-Central Texas students. Internship and employment opportunities, campus improvements, and real-world learning scenarios have blossomed from these partnerships.



Trideum

In 2021, Trideum cut the ribbon to its on-campus office at Texas A&M University-Central Texas, which supports the U.S. Army Operational Test Command at Fort Cavazos. A&M- students are regularly offered internships at Trideum, some of which turn into full-time job opportunities post-graduation.

Centex

Centex President and CEO Abdul Subhani is a Texas A&M University-Central Texas graduate and former faculty member. The Department of Computer Information Systems was recently renamed in his honor, and thanks to an endowment fund from the Subhani Foundation, the College of Business Administration will be able to provide educational and research opportunities to local students.

First Heroes National Bank

First Heroes National Bank sponsors events at Texas A&M University-Central Texas, and its president, Col. Todd Fox, is a member of the Industry Advisory Council in the College of Business Administration (COBA). This council is made up of several business and civic leaders from throughout Central Texas and works to ensure COBA is meeting the highest possible standards.



The relationship, although less than two years old, has already produced full-time technology careers for several A&M-CT students who first joined Trideum as interns while pursuing their degrees in A&M-CT's College of Business Administration. In addition, the Trideum/A&M-CT partnership supports the local intellectual triad of academia, government and industry to support technological innovation in systems engineering, software development and applied research efforts in the region. Our interns/employees, while working in an academic environment, develop capabilities for non-traditional software customers, gaining insight and real-world experience in technology careers focused on simulations, design and engineering.

— LISA STANDLEY
Software Engineering Lead, Trideum



Temple College

Texas A&M University–Central Texas and Temple College have partnerships in many different areas of study, including business and computer information systems.

On-site advisors are available for students across all disciplines exploring transfer pathways. Representatives from various A&M–Central Texas departments and enrollment services regularly visit the Temple campus to ensure students are informed of all their transfer options.

Lone Star College

In 2021, Lone Star College (LSC) and Texas A&M University–Central Texas signed an articulation agreement that allowed for improved data sharing between the two institutions to ease the transfer process.

Students can easily transfer from LSC to A&M–Central Texas to complete a bachelor’s degree in business and computing programs. The following bachelor’s degrees are offered at LSC and have a transfer pathway into A&M–Central Texas master’s programs:

- Nursing
- Cybersecurity and energy
- Manufacturing and trades management



By creating partnerships, we create an opportunity for the students to enrich themselves as well as their families through increased job mobility and advancement. This then translates to the community, as many of the students will stay in the local area and reinvest their time, money and experiences locally.

— STEPHEN W. PHELPS

Dean, Business and Career Professions, and
Department Chair, Criminal Justice,
Temple College



It is important for advisors at various colleges to build relationships because we help to connect our students to their next step. The more connections we have, the more information we can share with our students to help them be successful. All of us are in the business of helping our students reach their goals! We do this best by doing it together.

— TARA DEVOLEY

Academic Advisor,
Lone Star College - Montgomery



VITA Program

Filing taxes can be a daunting task. But this tax season, Texas A&M University–Central Texas accounting students helped the residents of Central Texas breathe a little easier by volunteering to assist qualifying families file their taxes.

Led by assistant professor of accounting Dr. Ran Li, students signed up to participate in the 2023 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program via a partnership between the College of Business Administration (COBA) and United Way of Central Texas. This valuable program offers free tax filing assistance to residents who make \$60,000 or less per year, the elderly, people with disabilities, and those who speak limited English.

Accounting students who volunteer for VITA have an opportunity not only to give back to their community but also to apply skills they learned in the classroom to real-life scenarios.

2023 VITA REPORT

Site	Number of Returns	Paper Returns	Acceptance Rate	Refund Amount	Average AGI	EIC
Rose Hall/Gatesville	308	25	97%	\$393,439	\$31,013	\$74,181
First Baptist Temple	199	11	99%	\$254,084	\$29,235	\$89,101
HOT Goodwill/YMCA Harker Heights	281	31	98%	\$379,971	\$27,866	\$138,618
CT Workforce/Fort Hood	298	25	98%	\$384,076	\$35,598	\$93,074
TOTAL	1,086	92	98%	\$1,411,570	\$30,928	\$394,974



Our area needs competent general accountants and tax accountants. With the IRS VITA program, our students can step in and help the community while gaining real-world experience.

— DR. RAN LI
Assistant Professor of Accounting

In 2023, student volunteers filed 1,086 tax returns, a huge increase from the 301 returns filed in 2021. They saw a refund amount of more than \$1.4 million go directly back into the pockets of the community members they helped, while also saving them hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax preparation fees.

Through the program, COBA students gained invaluable work experience and became crucial assets to the surrounding community for a win-win.

On the Horizon for COBA



Looking forward to 2024

Meaningful partnerships near and far are what make Texas A&M University-Central Texas a wonderful place to live, work and learn.

With hopes of continuing to demonstrate the College of Business Administration's commitment to excellence for current and future students and faculty, partnerships with the following organizations have been proposed:

- Samsung
- TEL Tokyo Electronics
- McLane Technology & McLane Intelligent Solutions
- Harvey 5 Enterprises





**College of
Business Administration**

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