

B. Don Russell, Ph.D., P.E.

Regents Professor

Distinguished Professor

Harry E. Bovay Endowed Chair

Association of American Universities
Undergraduate STEM Education Initiative

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The University Distinguished Professors comprise a small group of faculty recognized for outstanding achievement and seminal contributions in research and scholarship. As the Vice-Chair of the Distinguished Professors Executive Committee, I strongly support Texas A&M as an AAU STEM Project Site.

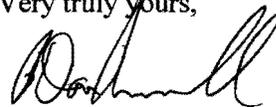
The Distinguished Professors provide leadership and a powerful faculty voice across the Texas A&M campus, and actively participate in the planning and development of the vision and strategic plans for the university. Many of us are from STEM fields making this project of special interest.

We recognize that higher education, especially in Texas, has come under increased scrutiny and even attack. Our ability to weather the storm will depend on our ability to graduate students that meet future needs of the state and the country. The goals of this initiative, to significantly increase enrollment and persistence in STEM fields, provide richer educational experiences with documented excellence in student learning outcomes, and have our students leave with an ability and desire to innovate and succeed, will go far to meet that need.

As a part of this project, the Distinguished Professors commit to be catalysts for change at Texas A&M and lead the way in implementing broad-based and institutionalized reforms that will alter teaching practices, and support faculty needs. We will continue to demand of ourselves and our colleagues the same excellence in teaching as we have in scholarship. Further, as leaders in the higher education community, the DP's are committed to making a national impact in undergraduate STEM education. Our selection as an AAU Project Site will enable Texas A&M to build on the strengths already in place as a remarkable institution with amazing commitment from our students and faculty, and disseminate new and innovative pedagogy implementation and scaffolding strategies not only throughout our campus community, but also to other AAU member institutions.

Changing the culture of a faculty and an institution is difficult. We understand our crucial role in making true sustainable change and relish the opportunity to lead the way in this initiative, as we have for many others.

Very truly yours,



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