



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

TEXAS TECH
Office of the Provost

ENGAGED SCHOLARS & PRACTITIONER NETWORK

October 2025

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VICE PROVOST OF OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT



Since my arrival at Texas Tech 21 months ago, my team and I have worked strategically and purposefully to develop initiatives and programs that not only reflect the principles of engaged scholarship but also provide the support and structure needed to develop future engaged scholars. I've taken both a broad view and a deep dive into engagement across the university, identifying opportunities for improvement and growth. Several key areas quickly emerged that I knew could strengthen outreach and engagement across campus.

One of my first priorities was improving how we recognize and support faculty engagement. I'm thrilled to announce that the new and improved **Digital Measures** system is now available. This tool allows faculty to formally document their outreach and engagement activities in teaching, research and engagement itself. In short, it provides a clear, institutional way for your engagement work to be captured, recognized and supported.

Another significant step has been collaborating with Davis College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources to pilot updates to promotion and tenure policies. This is a critical milestone in embedding engagement into the fabric of Texas Tech, and I'm excited by the progress that's already underway.

We've also entered the second year of the Engaged College Program (ECP), which officially kicked off in September. The ideas, energy and collaborative learning happening within the five participating colleges have been inspiring, and I look forward to seeing more colleges join in the future.

Community-engaged Learning (CeL)—formerly known as Service Learning—has also made important strides. Starting in 2026, CeL-designated courses will be available, bringing engagement practices directly into the classroom. Even more exciting, students will receive transcript-level recognition for their work in these courses.

The **Office of Outreach & Engagement** has been actively working to advance engagement at every level—supporting faculty, enhancing classroom experiences and strengthening the Texas Tech community as a whole. You will find more in-depth articles about each of these initiatives below.

There has never been a more exciting time for engagement at Texas Tech!

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

DAVIS COLLEGE UPDATES PROMOTION & TENURE POLICY TO INCLUDE OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year, the **Davis College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources** has led the way in revising promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines to formally recognize Outreach & Engagement, aligning with Texas Tech University's new strategic plan.

Led by Erica Irlbeck, Ph.D. a committee of faculty from across the college worked collaboratively to update the policy, which was finalized and submitted in March 2025. The most significant change is the addition of Outreach & Engagement as a fourth mission area, alongside teaching, research and discovery, and professional service.

The revised policy strengthens language in faculty appointments, allowing outreach and engagement to be included in tenure-track letters of appointment and recognized in the review process. It also provides new opportunities for non-tenure-track faculty, such as professors of practice, to include engagement activities in their dossiers.

To support implementation, the policy changes are being introduced at department meetings and incorporated into annual review and P&T templates. Additionally, Drs. Erica Irlbeck and Vikram Baliga will launch the Davis College Engaged Scholars Program in January 2026 to help faculty integrate engagement into their teaching and research.

“We will continue to build the culture of Outreach and Engaged Scholarship by reinforcing the opportunity for faculty to report what they are already doing, while keeping additional opportunities for growth in this space in front of them,” Dean Clint Krehbiel said.

[LEARN MORE](#)

ADVANCING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE ENGAGED COLLEGE PROGRAM

The Office of Outreach & Engagement launched the **Engaged College Program (ECP)** in Fall 2024 to strengthen community-engaged scholarship across Texas Tech University. This two-year initiative helps colleges integrate engagement into research, teaching and strategic planning. Five colleges—the College of Health & Human Sciences, Davis College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, the College of Media & Communication, the College of Arts & Sciences, and J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts—developed tailored action plans to foster sustainable, reciprocal community partnerships, supported with guidance, resources and funding from the Office of Outreach & Engagement. Year two of ECP is being co-led by Drs. Ersela Kripa and Ann Mastergeorge, associate vice provosts for Outreach & Engagement.

During the first year, each college team pursued self-defined projects or priorities, with a key theme emerging: the need to update operating policies to better support faculty, staff and students engaged in community work. To achieve this, the program held mandatory monthly meetings, starting with internal assessments of each unit and progressing through surveys, data analysis, drafting frameworks and goals, designing logic models and pathways, and updating strategic plans and tenure and promotion procedures. Kicking off its second year in September 2025, the cohort will share challenges, lessons learned and pathways for aligning college strategies with impactful community engagement.

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING AT TEXAS TECH

In the last 18 months, Texas Tech has made major strides in developing Community-engaged Learning (CeL), a university-wide initiative that connects academic learning with real-world impact through sustained, reciprocal partnerships with communities. A slight departure from Service Learning, this initiative emphasizes sustained, collaborative and reciprocal partnership with community members, positioning Texas Tech to deepen its societal impact through teaching and scholarship.

A key milestone was the selection of Mellinee Lesley, Ph.D., as the first Faculty Fellow for CeL in fall 2024. She was later named associate vice provost for Community-engaged Learning, Outreach & Engagement, and has since led the development of the initiative, including the launch of the inaugural Faculty Affiliates Pilot Program to build faculty expertise and leadership. Additional milestones include the development of the first four CeL courses, set to debut in spring 2026, and the approval of a CeL transcript designation that formally recognizes students' community-engaged experiences. These efforts are laying the groundwork for a sustainable, multi-tiered model of faculty development and scholarship that aligns with Texas Tech's institutional priorities.

"I want to see it grow and become a really strong foundation. I want to see faculty studying it and developing scholarship from their community-engaged learning practices. But also, I really want to see students having very successful experiences and to feel really connected to something larger than just getting a degree so they can get a job," Lesley said.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)



ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP SUMMIT

Outreach & Engagement recently hosted its **7th Annual Engaged Scholarship Summit**, bringing together faculty, staff and students to explore how teaching, research and creative activity can foster meaningful community connections.

Summit Highlights:

- Opening remarks by Vice Provost Rod Williams, Ph.D.
- Keynote by national engaged scholarship leader Steve Abel, Ph.D.
- Presentation on the Families in Ranching Succession Toolkit
- Insights from the J.T. & Margaret Talkington College leadership
- Panel discussion with Associate Deans Council & Engaged College Program members
- Resource fair featuring Outreach & Engagement and International Affairs
- Networking at the Engaged Scholars & Practitioner Social

Thank you to our speakers and participants. Your dedication makes this summit impactful. We look forward to building partnerships, sparking collaboration and creating lasting societal impact.

SUMMER AT A GLANCE AT THE NATIONAL RANCHING HERITAGE CENTER

This summer, the **National Ranching Heritage Center** advanced engaged scholarship through Ranch Life Learning professional development workshops. In total, 955 educators from Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma participated, receiving more than 3,000 Ranch Life books and activity guides for classroom use. More importantly, educators gained strategies to connect ranching heritage with reading, science and social studies—ensuring agriculture becomes part of everyday learning.

Ranch Life Learning's impact is expanding. A new research study with Collegiate Edu-Nation, Texas AgriLife Extension and Texas Tech's Department of Agricultural Education Communications will track outcomes in rural schools, and the program was recently added to the National Ag in the Classroom Curriculum Matrix. The Cash Family Ranch Life Learning Center earned the Texas Association of Museums award for Best in Museum Experience and welcomed thousands of visitors. Ranch Life Learning continues to stand out as a model for engaged scholarship that bridges museum education, research and community impact.

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

FACULTY FORUM

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Topics: Updates to Digital Measures, Community-engaged Learning, Promotion & Tenure, New Strategic Plan and upcoming Carnegie Classification.

Date: Nov. 6

Time: 1-3 p.m.

Location: Dairy Barn

[RSVP HERE](#)

LITERARY LUBBOCK

Texas Tech University Press is hosting its 20th annual Literary Lubbock Event. The program includes an opening reception, plated dinner, author presentations and book signings, and live musical performances.

Date: Nov. 11

Time: 6-8:30 p.m.

Location: Frazier Alumni Pavilion

Tickets on sale for \$65 until **Nov. 4**

\$1,000 sponsorships tables deadline **Oct.31**.

[PURCHASE TICKETS](#)



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