



From the Desk of the **CHANCELLOR**

April 28, 2026

Dear Horned Frog Faculty and Staff,

As we close out the academic year, I am proud to recognize the students, faculty and staff whose ideas and impact are shaping what innovation looks like at Texas Christian University.

That spirit is embodied in the new **Chancellor's Innovation Prize**, **created** to identify and pilot AI-enabled solutions that improve how our university operates and serves its community. The level of creativity and innovation in this year's submissions was phenomenal, and I am pleased to announce the winners and runners-up of this year's competition.

Chancellor's Innovation Prize Winners

After a thorough process, those selected as prize winners this year — the students, faculty and staff members whose ideas rose to the top of an extraordinary field of submissions — are:

- **Student Category:** Matthew Neves for Frog Pass, an AI-powered student attendance engine for TCU Athletics; and runner-up: Mia Hernandez van Deelen and Carlota Castellortort Pinto for ELEVAR, an AI solution for effective mentorship program management
- **Faculty Category:** Junyu Zhang, Xiaolu Zhou, Ph.D., Happy Herman, Kelly Lee and Rylea Dunlap for FrogOrg, an AI-powered platform purpose-built for TCU organizational operations and leadership development; and runner-up: Austin Graybeal, Ph.D., for Frog Forward, a conversational AI advisor for TCU Kinesiology degree planning
- **Staff Category:** Joy Tuidier for Procure AI, a platform for smart decisions, safer contracting and faster university procurement; and runner-up: Caroline Collier and Corey Zapata-Smith for their AI-powered institutional content optimization tool

This prize exists because innovation at TCU is not a talking point. It's what happens when this community is asked to think differently and rises to meet the moment. More on this year's honorees and their prize-winning ideas will be included in the next issue of Inside TCU.

Innovation On Display Across Campus

That same momentum has been visible across campus throughout the semester as the collective work to advance our strategic plan, **LEAD ON: Values in Action**, continues to produce meaningful results.

- The inaugural **Research and Creative Activity Festival** showcased the remarkable breadth of scholarship happening across this campus.
- Last week's **Texas Innovation Conference and Awards** convened innovators from Texas' leading R1 and R2 universities alongside leaders in business, government and entrepreneurship for a two-day program featuring action-oriented sessions and a statewide awards program recognizing more than 100 startups and university innovators.
- An interdisciplinary undergraduate team from the College of Fine Arts and the Louise Dilworth Davis College of Science & Engineering was named one of nine **finalists** for NASA's "Habitats to Return to the Moon" challenge.
- Students from the Department of Fashion Merchandising in the College of Fine Arts partnered with the iconic Four Sixes Ranch to reimagine its **retail experience**, a concept unveiled this month at the NCHA Celebrity Cutting event.

Investing in Excellence

- Our 22nd **Investment Strategies Conference** drew institutional investors and Neeley School of Business students into discussion about the Frontiers of Finance, featuring the biggest names in finance and investing.
- The Roach Foundation's \$10 million **investment** in our strategic plan and commitment to our research enterprise is a powerful signal of where this institution is headed.
- Driven by market demand, TCU launched a new degree in **professional aviation** in the College of Education, planting our flag in one of North Texas' defining industries.
- For the fourth consecutive year, 100% of Anne Burnett Marion School of Medicine graduates **matched** into residency programs at renowned organizations, from Yale School of Medicine to UT Southwestern Medical Center.

These results reflect the dedication and quality of the people in this community, and they make me proud to highlight ways we are advancing and celebrating our students, faculty and staff.

The Faculty and Staff Campaign closes April 30: Your gift — whatever the size — directly supports the students at the center of everything we do. To give or learn more, visit [here](#).

Celebrating YOU! Let's celebrate TCU excellence at our **year-end faculty and staff event**, this Thursday, April 30, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. at the Amon G. Carter Stadium Champions Club. I look forward to seeing you there.

JOIN US! A New Commencement Tradition: The **all-university commencement** on May 8 in Amon G. Carter Stadium will be a spectacular celebration of our students' hard work and dedication to their academic journeys. I ask each of you to attend and support this new tradition and join me and other leaders in ushering these proud Horned Frogs into their new era as alumni.

Let's Finish Strong, Lead On and Go Frogs!

Daniel W. Pullin
11th Chancellor