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STANDARD PRESS RELEASE

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FORMER TACHE STATE OFFICER APPOINTED AS INAUGURAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE.

Fred Fuentes, Ed.D. selected to oversee office dedicated to Latinx Student Success.

[Commerce, TX, September, 10] — The Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) is proud to announce that Fred Fuentes, Ed.D. was recently appointed as Executive Director. This initiative will be a part of the Campus Life and Student Success Department at Texas A&M University-Commerce. The inaugural position is a part of Texas A&M University-Commerce's presidential initiative to move from an Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution to full HSI status.

Dr. Fuentes is the first TACHE member to previously receive the Graduate Fellowship Award and serve in a state-wide elected position as Northeast State Regional Representative, a post now held by Vanessa Armendariz. Armendariz stated, "Dr. Fred is an amazing advocate for our students and we are lucky to have him at the university. Dr. Fuentes' countless hours working have not gone unnoticed. As a student he guided me, inspired me and mentored me. As a staff member he has supported, advocated, and motivated me and many others. I have had the privilege to work next to him on many projects, not only for our students, but for the Latinx community. Dr. Fred Fuentes has been a hero for many students who, unlike many others, have been directly affected by the political climate of the last years. Estamos todos con usted porque es un ejemplo a seguir."

He is a graduate of Del Mar College and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as well as a US Army Veteran. Dr. Fuentes earned his doctorate from Texas A&M University - Commerce in 2013 in educational leadership. Dr. Fuentes previously served as Assistant Dean and Executive Director of Enrollment Management. He led the university's effort to create the Sophomore Year Experience and the Latino American Mentorship Programs (LAMP), among many other innovative programs. The LAMP program was nationally recognized by *Excelencia* in Education in 2018 and 2019 as a "program to watch". Dr. Fuentes is the co-producer and host of the monthly online resource, *Latinx Lions*, a COVID-19 response

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program that addresses the unique needs of the fastest growing non-majority group in Texas and in the United States: Latinx/Hispanic.

Judy Sackfield, Interim Vice President for Student Success/Dean of Students/SWA, stated, "I am pleased to have Dr. Fred Fuentes as a valuable team member in the Division of Campus Life and Student Success. His focus in overseeing the new office will be to create initiatives in recruitment, retention and prepare our Latinx students with their transitions while attending Texas A&M University-Commerce."

Texas A&M-Commerce, under the leadership of President Mark Rudin, has experienced a strategic focus in serving diverse student populations, through innovative scholarship programs, and restructuring offices to serve the campus diversity of students, staff and faculty. He discussed the implementation of this new program, stating, "one of the pillars of the Texas A&M University-Commerce strategic plan is to serve an inclusive community where all are valued. Dr. Fred Fuentes epitomizes this concept and his passion for and dedication to serving the needs of the Latinx student population is unprecedented. He is a trusted advisor to many students and their parents, and we are pleased to add his knowledge and expertise to the University's new Hispanic/Latinx Outreach Center."

Fuentes expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to lead this effort, stating "last fall, for the first time in our university's history, the Latino population became the 'majority minority' group on campus. All of the data suggests that this group will continue to provide tremendous growth on our campus and in our region. It is a critical time for us to continue to increase the efforts for this student group. It is equally important that we expand the services, staff representation and leadership on the unique needs of our Latino/Hispanic students. This new office has been designed to empower students, educate families and increase resources for our community."

Nationally, and within the state, the Latinx/Hispanic population continues to experience tremendous growth. The DFW area is no different and the amount of Latinx students graduating from high school and entering universities are at record numbers. Increasingly, universities are creating new opportunities or enhancing already existing programs that serve these populations. Dr. Fuentes added, "I am honored to be appointed to this office, at this critical time in our university's history. We move forward, of course, mindful of the continued importance in ensuring that our non-Latino brothers and sisters are, in no way, limited in their resources or pursuits. This center will empower our students and it will do so with our allies and advocates!"

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Since 1974 TACHE has been committed to the improvement of educational and employment opportunities for Chicanos in higher education, and believes in diversity and inclusion regardless of background. As an association the interchangeable term "Chicano" is used to include all of a Latino or Hispanic background, as well as those who support us, however we understand that there can be many interpretations of the term. Its purpose is to provide state, regional, and local forums for the discussion of issues related to Chicanos/Latinos in higher education and to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to create workable solutions for these issues. The association has four goals: 1) Educational Advocacy, 2) Networking, 3) Recruitment and Retention and 4) Cultural Promotion.