



Case Study

TAMUS Confirms Faculty ACUE Certification Across Eight Campuses Proven To Reduce DFW Rates and Elevate Student Achievement

A study conducted across eight Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) campuses found that students taught by ACUE-certified faculty achieved significantly better outcomes: 12% fewer DFWs and 6% higher grades, with notable gains among male and Black/African American students. Not only does this directly link teaching excellence to student performance, but when students succeed in more courses, they avoid course repetition and improve their academic experience, helping them maintain momentum toward earning their degree. Scaled across a university system, these outcomes compound into thousands more students completing courses, advancing toward degrees, and achieving long-term success.

In Their Words

"We set out to meet faculty where they are and strengthen their teaching pedagogy. The impact of our partnership with ACUE is clear: Students taught by ACUE-certified faculty are more engaged and achieve better outcomes. Scaling this strategy across an entire university system affirms that our students will experience excellence in every class."



Shonda Gibson, PhD

Senior Associate Vice Chancellor
and Chief Transformation Officer,
The Texas A&M University System

THE CHALLENGE

The Priorities

TAMUS aimed to enhance faculty effectiveness across its university system by ensuring consistent instructional excellence. Leaders sought scalable professional development that could reach thousands of instructors and equip them with skills to deliver high-quality teaching in both online and in-person environments.



**THE TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

TAMUS is one of the nation's largest university systems, encompassing 12 universities and eight state agencies that serve more than 170,000 students. Established in 1876, its flagship campus in College Station was the state's first public institution of higher learning. Today, the system is recognized for its strong commitment to research, service, and economic impact across Texas.

THE SOLUTION

The Partnership

The Texas A&M University System established its partnership with ACUE in 2020 to provide faculty access to the only nationally recognized teaching credential endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE) proven to improve student achievement and close success gaps.

Instructors were initially given the opportunity to enroll in 25-week certification courses on Effective Teaching Practices and Effective Online Teaching Practices, as well as 6–8 week stackable short courses, offering flexible pathways to strengthen evidence-based instruction. With newly expanded access to Foundations of Effective Teaching and ACUE's virtual community of practice—the System continues to deepen a culture of teaching excellence across its campuses.

The Study

The study examined whether students taught by ACUE-certified faculty achieved better outcomes than their peers. The evaluation focused on faculty who were certified during the 2022-2023 academic year and analyzed completion, passing, DFW rates, and average grades, tracking changes before, during, and after certification.

The Methods

We used a Difference-in-Differences (DID) approach to compare outcomes over time between ACUE and non-ACUE sections. Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) aligned sections on semester, department, level, and faculty tenure to ensure valid comparisons. Analyses controlled for faculty/student demographics, and course characteristics.

THE RESULTS

12%

Fewer D's, F's, & Withdrawals

Students of ACUE-certified faculty receive 12% fewer D's, F's, & withdrawals on average.

6%

Overall Grade Improvement

Students of ACUE-certified faculty achieve 6% higher grades on average.

13%

Stronger Sub-Group Achievement

Black/African-American, and male students achieve up to 13% better grades when taught by ACUE-certified faculty.

Read the technical report and explore additional case studies that show the link between teaching excellence at our partner-institutions and their scalable student outcomes.. [Visit our impact page.](#)