



June 2026

Few challenges in higher education are as consequential—or as solvable—as the one at the heart of this letter: the direct connection between how faculty teach and whether students succeed. It is a challenge we both care about deeply, which is why we are writing to you, and why we want to put a piece of independent research directly in your hands.

In May 2026, researchers at Sam Houston State University published the most rigorous independent evidence to date on the impact of ACUE’s Certification in Effective Teaching, in the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*. Analyzing nearly 1,800 comparable courses, they found that students taught by ACUE-certified faculty were significantly more likely to pass, rated their instructors more highly, and experienced meaningfully lower rates of D grades, failures, and withdrawals (DFW) that so often derail degree completion. The effect was strongest in introductory courses—precisely where the stakes for persistence and long-term success are highest.

We believe this evidence deserves your attention. ACUE—the Association of College and University Educators—offers the only nationally recognized Certification in Effective Teaching, endorsed by the American Council on Education. The model is faculty-centered and flexible by design to fit alongside the demands of a full teaching and research load. More than 600 institutions have partnered with ACUE, and its community of practice, ACUE Commons, connects thousands of faculty across those institutions to sustain a culture of teaching excellence.

Enclosed you will find the full study and a summary of its key findings. We would welcome the opportunity to explore what this could look like on your campus.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hermalyn".

Andrew Hermalyn
Chairman and CEO
ACUE

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Mitchell".

Ted Mitchell
President
ACE