



For Immediate Release

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY–SAN ANTONIO PROFESSOR SELECTED FOR DISTINGUISHED AWARD

A&M–SA professor first in University history and one of 10 in Texas to be named Piper Professor

SAN ANTONIO – On May 2, 2022, the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation announced the selection of Texas A&M University-San Antonio Associate Professor of Biology and Biology Program Coordinator Dr. Megan Wise de Valdez as a Piper Professor of 2022. Dr. Wise de Valdez is one of 10 professors awarded the distinction in the State of Texas and this marks the first time a Texas A&M-San Antonio professor has received the distinction while at the University. Selections are based on nominations submitted by each college or university in Texas and 10 awards of \$5,000 each are bestowed annually to outstanding professors for their exceptional teaching at the collegiate level.



“I get a lump in my throat when I think about having been awarded the Piper Professorship because it has made me feel seen and valued for something that often goes uncelebrated; the care and dedication put towards mentoring students,” said Dr. Wise de Valdez. “Successes in teaching and mentorship are so often overshadowed by the value placed on our role as researcher or scholar and that is why it is so gratifying to be honored for my most treasured role, that of an educator.”

Begun in 1958 with eight awards originally, the roster of Piper Professors includes remarkable professors from two and four-year colleges and universities, public and private. Participation is by invitation only. To be eligible, candidates must be nominated through the college or university’s Office of the President. Each Piper Professor receives a certificate of merit, a gold pin, and an honorarium.

Dr. Wise de Valdez started at Texas A&M-San Antonio in Fall of 2010 as the first tenure-track faculty member in the biology program. Her current areas of research are mosquito ecology in

Bexar County and surrounding areas of Texas. Dr. Wise de Valdez earned her Ph.D. at Colorado State studying parasite-induced behavioral alterations of mosquito larvae and her master's degree from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln where she studied the ecology and transmission dynamics of a leech-gregarine host-parasite relationship. She received her undergraduate degree in biology also from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Interested in vector ecology and behavior, Dr. Wise de Valdez teaches a popular upper-division course in this special topic. In addition, she currently involves undergraduate researchers in city-wide mosquito surveillance studies where they evaluate mosquito diversity and distribution patterns among neighborhoods of different socioeconomic status. Dr. Wise de Valdez takes students to the Southwestern Association of Parasitologists and the Texas Mosquito Control Association's annual scientific meetings, where some get the opportunity to present the research they conduct. She also serves as an advisor for the Biology Club, a student-run organization on campus. [Read more about Dr. Wise de Valdez.](#)

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About Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Established as a stand-alone university in 2009, Texas A&M University-San Antonio is a comprehensive four-year public university that reflects the culturally diverse, heritage-rich community it serves. Situated on nearly 700 acres in south San Antonio, the University offers 33 undergraduate degrees and 16 graduate degrees to nearly 7,000 students. A&M-San Antonio is home to the Henry G. Cisneros Institute for Emerging Leaders and the Cyber Engineering Technology/Cyber Security Research Center. The University holds the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation and is one of only 24 higher education institutions in the U.S. to have received the [Seal of Excelencia](#) certification from *Excelencia* in Education for its support of Latino student success. More than 75 percent of A&M-SA students identify as Hispanic, and 73 percent are the first in their family to attend college. A&M-San Antonio is a military-embracing institution; in 2020, Military Times ranked the University No. 35 in the nation for "Best for Vets: Colleges." Visit tamusa.edu for more information. [#onamission](#)