



**Charles P. Mouton, MD, MS, MBA**  
President *ad interim*  
Executive Provost and Executive Dean  
Thomas N. and Gleaves T. James  
Distinguished Chair

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July 31, 2023

Christopher Messenger, PhD, MS, RD, LD  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Nutrition & Metabolism  
Chair, Faculty Senate  
University of Texas Medical Branch  
301 University Blvd.  
Galveston, TX 77555-1124

Dear Dr. Messenger,

Academic freedom is the cornerstone of a robust and thriving institution of higher education. It empowers our educators, researchers, and clinicians to explore new frontiers of knowledge, challenge existing ideas, and engage in critical discourse without fear of censorship or reprisal.

Since its founding, the University of Texas Medical Branch has played a crucial role in advancing life-saving research and educating the health care professionals of tomorrow, and it is essential that our faculty members are encouraged to pursue intellectual curiosity and scholarly excellence without constraints on their ideas or perspectives.

It is my firm belief that UTMB must continue to nurture an environment where groundbreaking discoveries are made, innovative treatments are developed, and the educational experience of our learners prepares them to be the next generation of health care leaders. This freedom not only enhances the quality of education and research within our university but also contributes significantly to the betterment of society at large.

As we continue to foster an inclusive and intellectually stimulating environment, I urge all members of our university community to embrace the principles of academic freedom. Please join me in upholding the values of open dialogue, respect for diversity of opinions, and the pursuit of knowledge as we continue fulfilling our vital education, research, and patient care mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles P. Mouton".

Charles P. Mouton, MD, MS, MBA  
President *ad interim*  
Executive Provost and Executive Dean, John Sealy School of Medicine