

March 19, 2026

Zehua Song
zehuasong2000@outlook.com

Dear Zehua,

Congratulations! It is my great pleasure to inform you that you have earned the distinct honor of being offered a Texas A&M University System 2026-2027 **Doctoral Research Excellence Assistantship in Geology & Geophysics**. The Doctoral Research Excellence Assistantship is designed to enhance Texas A&M's research capacity and productivity. Your selection reflects not only your academic excellence but also your commitment to advancing knowledge and contributing meaningfully to your field. This assistantship represents a significant investment in your future, providing **three years** of funding to support your doctoral studies. The total value of the assistantship is **\$120,000** *plus* tuition and required fees.

As a recipient of this assistantship, you have the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of academic excellence and productivity. This entails maintaining full-time enrollment for both the fall and spring semesters (9 semester credit hours each), making consistent Satisfactory Academic Progress towards degree completion, and maintaining employment as a graduate assistant for the duration of your award. Summer enrollment requirements are based on your stipend/assistantship duration. If your assistantship extends through the summer, you must enroll in 6 semester credit hours. Please register for courses at least two weeks before the first day of classes each semester to ensure timely payment processing. Students who register on or after the first day of classes may incur late registration penalty fees that are not covered by the contracts the Grad School posts for tuition and fees.

Your Doctoral Research Excellence Assistantship package is broken down as follows:

- 2026-2027: \$40,000 annual assistantship at 50% FTE (20 hours/week), tuition and required fees*
- 2027-2028: \$40,000 annual assistantship at 50% FTE (20 hours/week), tuition and required fees*
- 2028-2029: \$40,000 annual assistantship at 50% FTE (20 hours/week), tuition and required fees*

**At full-time enrollment (9 hrs. fall & spring, 6 hrs. summer)*

Departments may structure the assistantship as either a 9-month or 12-month appointment, funded through a designated Grad School account. DREA recipients on a 9-month appointment should receive approximately \$4,444 per month, while those on a 12-month appointment should receive approximately \$3,333 per month.

The Grad School will post payments to cover your tuition and fees. Your department or employing unit is responsible for enrolling you in payroll and benefits using a designated Grad School account. If you are not a Texas resident, you may be eligible for the [Non-Resident Tuition Waiver](#). Please note that you will need to complete this form each semester if the waiver is not posted by your department. If you are employed by your home academic unit, the department is responsible for posting the Non-Resident Tuition Waiver. If you have any questions about your eligibility or the process, please contact your department or the Grad School (gradbusinessservices@tamu.edu) for assistance.

HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

As a graduate student employed in a 50% FTE assistantship, you are eligible to participate in a Texas A&M University System insurance program. *After the 60-day waiting period, the employing unit pays the employer contribution for the graduate student employee health plan.* During employee onboarding, you will review your options with benefit services.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMMING

During your award tenure, you are highly encouraged to engage in available student development initiatives and programming created to support your academic and professional success. Available professional & academic development and social support activities are noted below.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Awardees are highly encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities, as these activities enhance scholarly growth, strengthen research and teaching competencies, and prepare awardees for a broad range of academic and professional careers. These opportunities may include activities offered across campus, within their college/department, or within the community. The Graduate and Professional School offers the professional development activities listed below. Awardees are

encouraged to consult with their faculty advisor when selecting activities to pursue. While awardees may participate in multiple professional development opportunities, academic responsibilities should remain the top priority; therefore, participation should be planned accordingly.

- **Graduate Resources and Development for Aggies (GRAD Aggies)**: GRAD Aggies, a collaboration between the Graduate and Professional School and several non-academic offices, provides high-impact learning experiences while promoting a commitment to lifetime learning. GRAD Aggies focuses on several skill areas: Personal Wellbeing, Research & Academics, Communication, Instruction & Assessment, Leadership & Mentoring, and Career Development.
- **CIRTL Associate and/or Practitioner Level Certificates**: The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) is an international network of research-intensive universities who have joined together to enhancing undergraduate education through the development of future faculty. CIRTL@Texas A&M offers programming focused on evidence-based teaching and learning practices. Participating students can earn one of three internationally-recognized certificate levels: Associate, Practitioner, and Scholar.
- **Graduate Mentoring Academy (GMA)**: The Graduate Mentoring Academy aims to improve the graduate mentoring experiences of our students and increase our mentoring capacity as an institution. GMA participants can expect to increase their mentoring competence and skills so that they can be better mentors and mentees to others. Workshops are formatted in a learner-centered and engaging format that includes case studies, discussion opportunities, and reflection activities.
- **Aggie Collaborate**: Aggie Collaborate provides a unique opportunity to gain meaningful leadership experience. This program engages graduate students, postdocs, and faculty who are looking to advance their own research projects by leading diverse teams of undergraduates seeking hands-on research experiences. Faculty mentors benefit by expanding their research capacity and developing grant proposals focused on student success, broadening participation in research, and developing new research leadership programs. Aggie Collaborate creates opportunities by structuring a diverse, multilevel Research-Intensive Community dedicated to the success of all its members.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

- **New Fellows Socials**: New Fellows Socials occur in the Fall and Spring semesters. The gatherings are meet-and-greet style events where Texas A&M administrators and staff, Grad School representatives, and program faculty mix and mingle with new fellows. The Fellows Socials promote community among fellows and offer opportunities for you to share your achievements and inspire one another.
- **My Grad Journey**: My Grad Journey provides a dynamic management tool for collecting and curating your scholarly profile. To assist you in achieving your career goals, we highly encourage you to submit updated data, annually, and engage in programming designed to facilitate career development and success such as Individual Development Plans (IDPs), mentoring development, etc.

To take part in this exceptional academic opportunity, you must sign and return all acceptance documents to grad-award-admin@tamu.edu by **April 15, 2026**.

Again, congratulations on this remarkable accomplishment! We look forward to witnessing your growth and success as a scholar at Texas A&M. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Shannon D. Walton at 979-845-3631 or via email at grad-award-admin@tamu.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fuhui Tong".

Fuhui Tong, Ph.D.
Associate Provost and Dean, Graduate and Professional School