



Office of Communication
and Marketing
WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY™

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Copy by Chip Chandler, 806-651-2124, cchandler@wtamu.edu

WT, Education Credit Union Partner for Student-Led Branch in Canyon

CANYON, Texas — West Texas A&M University students will make up the majority of the workforce at a newly redesigned branch of [Education Credit Union](#), University and Credit Union officials announced Jan. 19.

ECU will convert its existing branch at 2100 Fourth Ave. in Canyon into the student-led Buff \$mart Branch after construction is complete on the new ECU Branch located at 1900 Farm-to-Market Road 2590 in Canyon.

The full-service retail branch will provide the same financial services to ECU members that all branches offer, but outside of a few management-level ECU staffers, all other employees will be WT students.

“We value our partnership with WT, which has helped equip countless students with the life skill of managing their finances for several years,” said Eric Jenkins, president and CEO of Education Credit Union. “With the reconfiguration of this branch, we will not only serve our members, but we also will provide WT students the opportunity to gain invaluable experience in the workplace.”

Students will work in multiple operational areas, including marketing, accounting, compliance, business development and training.

ECU [formalized its partnership with WT in 2020](#) by making a significant donation to support the [Education Credit Union Buff \\$mart Program](#), which offers peer-to-peer financial coaching for WT students. The program helps students improve their understanding of financial literacy and empowers them to make informed choices to improve their financial well-being.

That partnership has worked so well that ECU and WT wanted to expand it by now offering students paid internships through a student-led branch, said Meghan Williams, Buff \$mart coordinator.

“Through this initiative, we’ll be able to expand paid internship opportunities, and students will get hands-on work experience and opportunities for community engagement and networking,” Williams said.

Internships are valuable to students in a multitude of ways, said Kim Muller, director of WT’s Office of Career and Professional Development.

“In addition to personal, academic and financial benefits, surveys show that 95 percent of employers say that candidate experience is a factor in hiring decisions,” Muller said. “Through internships like those to be offered at the Buff \$mart branch, our students will be able to explore a potential career field and develop career-related skills while establishing a work history and being mentored by professionals.”

The partnership is firmly in line with the goals of the University’s long-range plan, [*WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World*](#), said University President Walter V. Wendler.

“Too often, internships count job shadowing, watching and observation as ‘work.’ Such experiences do provide insight and knowledge, but very little experience with the real responsibility for the production of goods, ideas or services,” Wendler said. “By contrast, the experiences these students will have will better prepare them for their future.”

The *WT 125* plan is fueled by the historic, \$125 million [One West](#) comprehensive fundraising campaign. To date, the five-year campaign — which publicly launched Sept. 23 — has raised more than \$85 million.

About Education Credit Union

Since 1935, [Education Credit Union](#) has excelled in service, care, and financial protection for its members and their families. Education Credit Union’s vision is to be the preferred financial provider through all stages of life. Education Credit Union: Learn more. Live more.

About West Texas A&M University

WT is located in Canyon, Texas, on a 342-acre residential campus. Established in 1910, the University has been part of The Texas A&M University System since 1990. WT, a Hispanic Serving Institution since 2016, boasts an enrollment of about 10,000 and offers 59 undergraduate degree programs, 39 master’s degrees and two doctoral degrees. The University is also home to the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, the largest history museum in the state and the home of one of the Southwest’s finest art collections. The Buffaloes are a member of the NCAA Division II Lone Star Conference and offers 14 men’s and women’s athletics programs.