



THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Sharmila Pathikonda, Ph.D.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Research &
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The Texas A&M University System



Dr. Sharmila Pathikonda currently holds the position of Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of Research Development at the Office of Research in The Texas A&M University System, overseeing a network of 11 universities and 8 state agencies. In this pivotal role, she spearheads large strategic initiatives, fosters collaborative research endeavors, and enhances the overall research enterprise across the system.

In her current role, Dr. Pathikonda's expertise in STEM fields proves invaluable, providing specialist scientific support for federal grant proposals spanning diverse areas such as cancer biology, climate science, energy innovation, and nuclear engineering. Her passion for science, coupled with robust quantitative training has propelled her success in research development.

Dr. Pathikonda holds a diverse and comprehensive educational background. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree with majors in Botany, Microbiology, and Chemistry, as well as her Master of Science degree in Biochemistry, both from Bangalore University in India. Her academic journey continued with a Ph.D. in Environmental Biology from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette, where her research focused on understanding the ecological and physiological responses of freshwater marsh plants to salinity stress.

Following the completion of her doctoral studies, Dr. Pathikonda pursued postdoctoral research, delving into Hierarchical Bayesian statistical modeling of plant functional traits. This interdisciplinary work took her to the University of Wyoming and later to Arizona State University, where she expanded her expertise in mathematical modeling and its application to understanding the impacts of environmental change on tree species distributions.

With over 13 years of experience in research, education, and administration, Dr. Pathikonda takes pride in her role as a champion for early-stage researchers. In her capacity as the Director of Research Development, Dr. Pathikonda is responsible for guiding the development of core ideas and concepts forming the strategic foundations of major engineering and scientific research proposals. This includes facilitating multi-institutional research and educational partnerships, curriculum initiatives, and support structures. Additionally, she plays a key role in developing and working on proposals seeking grant funding from federal and state research agencies, private foundations, or industry. Dr. Pathikonda is also actively engaged in serving on proposal review panels for the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Dr. Pathikonda envisions enhancing the research enterprise within the Texas A&M University System, which boasts a research expenditure exceeding \$1.2 billion. Her goal is to provide high-quality support to researchers, contribute to strategic research development efforts, and elevate the overall research portfolio. Dr. Pathikonda aspires to create a conducive environment for researchers, ensuring a positive trajectory in research expenditure, and advancing the System's ambitious vision for research and education.