



As President — What Makes Averett a Great Place to Work?

Hands down it's the people. Our students, our faculty and our staff. I feel that everyone here truly understands that we have one reason — and one reason only — to do all that we do, and that reason is our students.

It's something of a cliché in higher education to want all of the people to be aware of the shared mission. The standing joke is the college lawn-mower worker who, when asked to define his job, says "I'm part of the recruitment team." At Averett, it's a fact of life.

We all know that we are here for the students, and that commonality of purpose is defining, energizing, motivating and unifying.

Our faculty and staff members are hired for their desire to be part of a transformational vocation as much as for their specialized talents. You'll find that almost all the people here feel that they are working at Averett more as a calling than as just a job.

There is pride here in every area, and that pride comes directly from having been a part of students' success. The people who work here not only hope that they are changing lives for the better; they know they are.

They know that when we refer to "the Averett University family," it's not just a marketing phrase. In fact, it's a long tradition of providing educational opportunity ... to young women in the pre-Civil war era to adults of all ages to virtually thousands of first-generation students, among others.

Averett's faculty members are exceptionally willing to innovate. The liberal arts is always the foundation, of course, but with that providing the foundation, our faculty have not only developed signature programs (such as equestrian studies, aeronautics and nursing) that separate us from many other colleges and universities, but also they are successfully responding to the rapidly changing marketplace that now is ubiquitous.

For me personally, it is a rare and wonderful thing to have such open-minded and responsive faculty members. Also for me, this is a great place to work because I have the full support of trustees and other benefactors, including thousands of alumni.

The payoff is as wonderful for us as it is for the students. It's the opportunity not only to be a part of our students' lives, but also to watch them discover, develop and live their dreams.

And the students are aware. I honestly feel that at Averett, I get to work with students who are cognizant of our dedication and who are grateful for it — more so than any other students I've served across my many years in higher education.

Finally, Averett is a special place to work because we are the area's only four-year college or university, and people can see the difference that Averett is making in the Danville community. We all take our community responsibilities seriously, and that makes daily life sweet.

Thanks to all the great people who share Averett's mission, I simply can't imagine a better place for me to work.

Dr. Tiffany M. Franks
President
Averett University