



Dr. Thomas Connolly is a Lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Department of Aerospace Engineering & Engineering Mechanics, where he periodically teaches Dynamics (EM 311M), Introduction to Computer Programming (COE 301), Engineering Computation (COE 311K), Mechatronics (ME 340 and ME 140L) and Dynamic Systems & Controls (ME 344). In the past, Dr. Connolly has also taught ES 177: Cultural Analysis for Global Professionals, the first engineering course to be designated with a Global Cultures flag.

In 2021, Dr. Connolly received a Transformational Online Instruction Contributions (TONIC) award from the Office of the Provost in recognition of his work in adapting the content and delivery of ME 140L (Mechatronics Laboratory) for online learning. The TONIC award recognized professional (non-tenure-track) instructional faculty who demonstrated exceptional creativity and rapid innovation for hybrid and online instruction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Connolly's teaching activities complement his work as a member of the Academic Affairs team in the Office of the Dean, where he has been directing and implementing the TA Certification Program for the Cockrell School of Engineering since its inception in 2013. All new TAs attend a professional development institute where they actively learn research-based and evidence-based practices in engineering education, including: promoting engineering thinking and academic rigor, increasing student engagement and participation in various engineering learning environments, engaging students in "productive struggle", fostering student success and self-efficacy, and navigating the cultural norms of higher education in the United States.

Dr. Connolly is a strong advocate for international engineering education. In 2004, he spent a semester abroad teaching Dynamic Systems and Control Theory in the Mechanical Engineering Department at Boğaziçi (Bosporus) University in Istanbul, Turkey. For over twenty years, Dr. Connolly has worked with undergraduate and graduate students from Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia in various academic capacities, including teaching, research, and mentoring. In 2017, he mentored a team of UT Austin engineering and business students who won the Shell Ideas360 international engineering design and entrepreneurship competition in London, England.

Since 2018, Dr. Connolly has led a Maymester program in Engineering Dynamics (EM 311M & ME 314D.) Students participate in visits to engineering companies and project sites, in addition to engaging in activities to broaden their understanding of different cultures and the practice of engineering as a profession in an international setting.

From 2011-2013, Dr. Connolly was a program coordinator at the Charles A. Dana Center for Science and Mathematics Education at UT Austin, where he oversaw development of an innovative college-level course in Statistics that blended active learning practices with student success principles. To complement this curriculum, Dr. Connolly developed and implemented programs for faculty training in course customization, developing active learning practices, and implementing strategies for providing curriculum-integrated student success supports, especially for students identified as being at-risk for leaving STEM-related majors.

From 2001 - 2010, Dr. Connolly was a faculty member in Mechanical Engineering at Penn State University in Erie and The University of Texas at San Antonio, where he taught a broad range of undergraduate engineering courses, with a focus on laboratory and design courses. During this time, he established the first externally funded research programs in engineering education at UT San Antonio, where he was the Principal Investigator for several research initiatives under the auspices of the National Science Foundation.

Prior to his academic career, Dr. Connolly worked as a systems integration engineer on the Space Station and Space Shuttle programs at the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, and as a reliability engineer on the B-2 Stealth Bomber program at LTV Aerospace & Defense in Dallas, TX.

Dr. Connolly earned a B.E. in Mechanical Engineering from the State University of New York at Stony Brook (1988), and an M.S.E. in Aerospace Engineering (1995) and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering (2000), both from UT Austin.