



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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March 14, 2006

Office of the President
Robert M. Gates

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, The Vision 2020 Committee

SUBJECT: Report

My apologies to the Committee for not commenting directly to you on your Report before now. The report is indeed quite interesting and is proving very important to us as we move forward.

We are deeply in your debt for the time, energy and insight you have contributed. Please permit me to outline some of the follow-up actions we have already taken:

The report is on our website and available to the entire university community.

- At David's invitation, Bobby Bisor provided a very comprehensive briefing on the report to the entire Academic Program Council (the PowerPoint presentation is attached). The Academic Program Council has wide participation - all Deans, all Vice Presidents (including Galveston), Faculty Senate Speaker, and representatives from the Distinguished Professors, Council for Principal Investigators, Department Heads, as well as Student Body President and Graduate Student Council President. Each was given a hard copy of the report.
- David has briefed other groups and provided copies, e.g. to the Distinguished Professor Executive Committee.
- David has tasked three of our Councils to consider the report and provide recommendations. The Education Environment Council and the Research Council will consider the report in relation to the original goals set in the Vision 2020 document with a view to suggesting revisions and clarifications. The Finance Council will consider the broader issue of funding support for the future of the university in the context of historically declining support from the State. We anticipate that the results of the deliberations from the Councils will form a basis for interaction on these important issues with the faculty through the Faculty Senate.

- Paul Meyer is using the ideas put forward in the report as a basis for restructuring the university's assessment processes.
- The report's observations about university funding have proved most useful in my conversations with Senator Steve Ogden as we look forward to the next legislative session. Senator Ogden, Chairman of the Texas Senate Finance Committee, has shown interest in the concept of special funding for research universities in the state in the context of improved state and national competitiveness. The Senator is especially interested in seeking ways to retain Texans in graduate school in the state and has asked about possible strategies.
- The report's observations about funding have also served as a basis for conversations with the University of Texas' new leadership as we both prepare for the next legislative session. The concept of a combined position on funding priorities is under consideration and will likely become reality.

I hope you will agree that we are moving to take advantage of the many useful suggestions in the report. We expect to come back to the committee as our various internal discussions mature to share the results and our proposed actions. In the meantime, thank you again for providing us with a report that has already stimulated much interest and continued momentum.



Robert M. Gates

Attachment

Report of the Vision 2020 Council

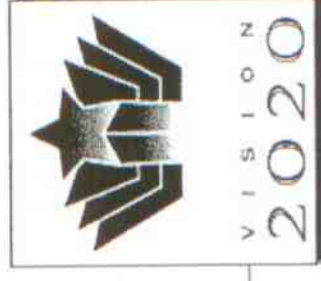
Academic Program Council

January 25, 2006



Vision 2020 Council Charge

- To provide an independent and objective assessment of the progress and challenges toward achieving the goals of Vision 2020



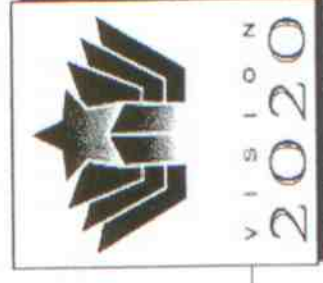
Affirmation of Priorities

- Elevate the faculty
- Strengthen graduate programs
- Enhance the undergraduate academic experience
- Diversify and globalize the A&M community
- Focus on the built environment



Vision 2020 Council Composition

- Four external members
- Six internal members
 - Three faculty members
 - Two students
 - One staff member



Assessment Process

- Presentations by selected deans, faculty members, & students
- Review of reports & other documents (both internal & external)
- Consultation with the President, Provost & others



Assessment Process (cont.)

- Not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of every component of Vision 2020 or the University



General Observations

- Significant & focused progress
- Concentrate on enhancing quality rather than superficial rankings
- Enhance quality while remaining true to heritage
- Significant value & responsibility as a Tier I research university



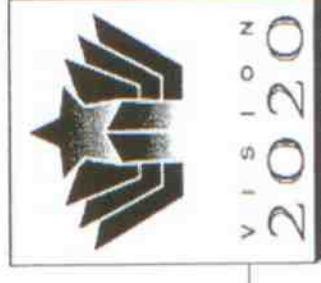
Notable Accomplishments

- Association of American Universities (AAU)
- Phi Beta Kappa chapter
- Faculty Reinvestment Program
 - 234 new tenured/tenure track faculty on board
- Diversity of faculty & student body
 - Increased numbers
 - Opened regional Prospective Student Centers
 - Created Vice President for Diversity position



Notable Accomplishments (cont.)

- Research program
 - Expenditures continue to increase
 - New 10-year Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) contract
 - Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine (TIGM)
- Library investment
- Campus Master Plan



Notable Accomplishments (cont.)

- Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience
 - Access to majors
 - Retention & graduation rates
 - Better teaching
 - Student enrichment



Notable Accomplishments (cont.)

- Vice President for Communication & Chief Marketing Officer
- More open & shared governance model
- Capital Campaign
 - Raised more than \$1.1 billion
 - Endowed 55 chairs
 - Endowed 44 professorships
 - Raised more than \$100 million in graduate fellowships & undergraduate scholarships



Challenges Remaining

- Institutional goal setting, metrics & assessment
- Interdisciplinary research & studies
- Diversity
- Institutional leadership & governance

