



Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review

Creating a Culture of Excellence—Serving the Public Good

Introduction

The Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review strongly reaffirms the aspirational vision and Twelve Imperatives that have been the foundation of *Vision 2020 - Creating a Culture of Excellence*. Recognizing that Creating a Culture of Excellence is an ongoing process, the Mid-Term Review Task Force refreshed the Imperatives and Precepts and developed Pathways to the Precepts which offer strategies for continuing to advance the University toward its aspirational vision of being one of the ten best public universities in the nation by 2020.

As an overarching framework for conducting the Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review and fulfilling the Task Force charge, the Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review Executive Committee developed the Philosophical Framework to guide the work of the Mid-Term Review Task Force.

Vision 2020 - Inside Out

It is our position that Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) strongly reaffirm its ultimate aspiration of being recognized as one of the ten best public universities in the nation by 2020. While maintaining and enhancing our historical distinctiveness of service and developing leaders of character who embody our core values, Texas A&M will leverage its extraordinary role as a land-, sea- and space-grant institution to continue to build a Culture of Excellence focused on meeting the evolving educational and societal needs of the state, nation, and world.

In fulfilling the aspirations of Texas A&M, the Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review Executive Committee views the changing environment as an opportunity to prioritize and focus strategic initiatives and strategic partnerships that leverage our strengths to address state, national, and world needs.

Our traditional Core Values of Excellence, Integrity, Leadership, Loyalty, Respect, and Selfless Service will continue to guide our decisions, programs and student development emphases. We will continue being effective and efficient stewards of resources and the public trust. We will develop and leverage the university's human resources to create a learning, research and service environment of the first order. (Texas A&M Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review Executive Committee, March 2011).

To that end, the original Vision 2020 Twelve Imperatives are also reaffirmed:

<i>Imperative 1:</i>	<i>Elevate Our Faculty and Their Teaching, Research and Scholarship</i>
<i>Imperative 2:</i>	<i>Strengthen Our Graduate Programs</i>
<i>Imperative 3:</i>	<i>Enhance the Undergraduate Experience</i>
<i>Imperative 4:</i>	<i>Build the Letters, Arts and Sciences Core</i>
<i>Imperative 5:</i>	<i>Build on the Tradition of Professional Education</i>
<i>Imperative 6:</i>	<i>Diversify and Globalize the A&M Community</i>
<i>Imperative 7:</i>	<i>Increase Access to Knowledge Resources</i>
<i>Imperative 8:</i>	<i>Enrich Our Campus</i>
<i>Imperative 9:</i>	<i>Build Community and Metropolitan Connections</i>
<i>Imperative 10:</i>	<i>Demand Enlightened Governance and Leadership</i>
<i>Imperative 11:</i>	<i>Attain Resource parity with the Best Public Universities</i>
<i>Imperative 12:</i>	<i>Meet Our Commitment to Texas</i>

Acknowledging the progress that Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) has made in its Vision 2020 quest as well as the need to continue to improve, the focus in pursuing the remaining years of Vision 2020 will be ***Creating a Culture of Excellence—Serving the Public Good.***

The Idea

On October 10, 1997 President Ray Bowen placed a stake in the ground. He proposed that Texas A&M strive to be recognized as one of the ten best public universities in the nation by the year 2020, while at the same time maintaining and enhancing our distinctiveness of service and developing leaders of character. This goal set in motion the efforts of more than 250 people from on and off campus to determine where we were then and how to narrow the distance between the place we were and the goal President Bowen envisioned. This has served as the foundation of Vision 2020.

In the fall of 2010, President Bowen Loftin initiated a Mid-Term Review of the University's progress toward accomplishing Vision 2020. The purpose of the Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review was:

To assess Texas A&M's progress in *Creating a Culture of Excellence* during the first 12 years of Vision 2020 and to identify the state, national and global opportunities that will enable our university to be recognized:

- (1) As one of the ten best public universities in the nation by 2020, and
- (2) As an invaluable resource to the state, nation and the world.

To that end, a Mid-Term Review Task Force composed of an Executive Committee, Steering Committee and 12 Imperative Study Teams (over 200 faculty, staff, students and external constituents) were presented with the following charge:

- (1) Examine the premises upon which the original Vision 2020 was developed in light of the current and anticipated future contexts;
- (2) Synthesize recent planning from Task Forces, the Academic Master Plan and recent strategic planning efforts of the colleges and other units to inform the Mid-Term Review Task Force and to ensure that Vision 2020 remains as the source of guiding principles for current and future planning efforts;
- (3) Assess and document Vision 2020 accomplishments to date;
- (4) Synthesize and prioritize strategic initiatives derived from Vision 2020 that build on two or more Imperatives, given our efforts to use Vision 2020 as a guide to current and future planning,;
- (5) Assess the University's capacity (systems, staff and access to resources) to utilize identified strategies and accomplish prioritized strategic initiatives; and
- (6) Provide input to the Vision 2020 Executive Committee on a monthly basis and a final report within a timeframe that will allow the Task Force to complete its work by Summer, 2011.

An underlying intent of the Mid-Term Review Task Force was to build upon the *Culture of Excellence* developed during the first 12 years of Vision 2020, which to a large degree had an internal focus on building and further enhancing institutional capacity, and to shift the future emphasis primarily to an external focus - "*Vision 2020-Inside Out.*" or *Creating a Culture of Excellence-Serving the Public Good.*

The Task Force conducted its work from December 2010 through July 2011. This report is the result of the Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review.

The Best

To accomplish our goal, significant research during the development of the original Vision 2020 was undertaken to ascertain which public universities are regarded as "the best" and why.

To identify qualitative and quantitative attributes of superior public institutions, two approaches were taken. The first was to consider the most prominent ranking systems and their results, as published by *U.S. News & World Report* and the National Research Council (NRC). Six institutions were ranked among the nation's ten best public universities by both of these sources: University of California – Berkeley, University of Michigan, University of California – Los Angeles, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, University of California – San Diego, and University of Wisconsin – Madison. In addition, a number of other universities were deemed worthy of study, in order that all colleges and programs at Texas A&M could be accurately measured against leading academic counterparts. These institutions were Georgia Institute of Technology, University of California–Davis, University of Illinois–Urbana-Champaign, Pennsylvania

State University, University of Minnesota, The Ohio State University, Purdue University, University of Florida, and University of Texas at Austin.

In the ensuing years, the (NRC) has ceased ranking institutions, therefore, it is no longer a source for institutional comparative rankings. However, in 2010, the (NRC) produced a comprehensive data-based assessment (on 20 different characteristics) of research doctorate programs in the United States. This assessment provides an unprecedented collection of data on over 5,000 doctoral programs in 62 fields at 212 universities in the United States—including faculty research productivity, institutional support for students, and the diversity of faculty and students, among many other characteristics.

The data were collected from academic year 2005-2006 through questionnaires sent to those identified as doctoral faculty by their institutions, as well as through questionnaires sent to the heads of doctoral programs, administrators, and students. Information on characteristics such as publications and citations came from public sources and uses a considerably longer timeframe. This shift from institutional rankings to doctoral program rankings was accomplished to illustrate how the data can be used to rank the quality of programs based on the importance of particular characteristics to various users. It does not include an authoritative declaration of the “best programs” in given fields, as the study committee concluded that no single such ranking can be produced in an unambiguous and rigorous way.

To provide relevant ranking data as Texas A&M continues its quest to be recognized as one of the ten best public universities in the nation by 2020, the Mid-Term Review Task Force went through an extensive process of identifying institutions that are generally considered among the best public universities in the nation. The starting point was to select those public institutions that are members of the American Association of Universities (AAU) which are generally considered among the best. This was followed by identifying those metrics used by AAU and other appropriate measures that are typically used as indicators of the best public universities. In determining the appropriate metrics and peer institutions, several points informed the Mid-Term Review Task Force's consideration and ultimate adoption of the metrics that are indicative of the best public universities in the nation. We know the following:

- (1) There are no universally accepted metrics that serve as common standards/criteria to yield an absolute set of ranked institutions;
- (2) There are, however, several metrics that are generally associated with the best public universities;
- (3) “being recognized as one of the ten best public universities” is most effectively represented by multiple indicators that collectively create a group identity of being included among the very best public universities;
- (4) A strategic goal, complementing “being recognized as one of the ten best public universities in the nation,” should relate to meaningful differentiation from competitors focusing on institutional strengths and priorities to address student, state, national and global needs, marketplace and employer interests.

Therefore, a set of metrics was developed that are indicative of those institutions that are generally “recognized as among the best public universities.”

Based on these metrics, the original Vision 2020 fifteen institutions noted as the "best" comparable peers along with four additional institutions generally considered among the best public universities were selected as institutional peers. This set of institutions serves as the benchmarks against which Texas A&M will assess its progress toward "being recognized as one of the ten best public universities in the nation by 2020." The institutions selected are listed below.

- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Indiana University
- Michigan State UniversityLand Grant
- The Ohio State UniversityLand Grant, Sea Grant
- Pennsylvania State UniversityLand Grant, Space Grant
- Purdue UniversityLand Grant, Space Grant
- University of California–Berkeley.....Land Grant
- University of California–Davis
- University of California–Los Angeles
- University of California–San DiegoSea Grant, Space Grant
- University of Florida.....Land Grant, Sea Grant
- University of Illinois–Urbana- ChampaignLand Grant
- University of Maryland.....Land Grant
- University of Michigan.....Space Grant
- University of MinnesotaLand Grant, Sea Grant, Space Grant
- University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill.....Sea Grant, Space Grant
- University of Texas–Austin
- University of Washington
- University of Wisconsin–MadisonLand Grant, Sea Grant, Space Grant

Our Strengths

Texas A&M University is committed to improvement. Its history of aspirational and strategic planning and informed intentional execution of these plans have brought the University to the brink of greatness. Accordingly, coupled with the results of this Mid-Term Review, the University should continue to draw upon and implement the thoughtful and comprehensive planning efforts conducted and recommendations made over the past few years as means of achieving Vision 2020.

Many characteristics distinguish us nationally. Texas A&M University has more than 2,000 faculty who are at the top of their fields; we have achieved international recognition as a leader in research; admission to the University is in great demand from prospective students, we have an outstanding student body that benefits from our historical emphasis on developing student leaders, who are academically prepared and are highly sought after by employers; we have a highly professional and committed staff; we have excellent facilities; we have supportive former students; and we have significantly beneficial partnerships with industry, government and non-profit organizations. Our

continuing and increasing position of strength is evidenced by the recognitions bestowed on the institution and faculty, the quality of our students and accomplishments of our graduates, and our contributions to the public good.

Some representative examples of this evidence since the inception of Vision 2020 include:

- Chartered as a distinguished member of Phi Beta Kappa
- Accepted an invitation to join the nation's 63 best research universities as a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU)
- One of only a few universities in the country to be designated as a land grant, sea grant, and space grant university
- Hired over 1,000 outstanding faculty (some new and some replacement)
- Seventh largest university in the United States with an enrollment of 49,129 students in Fall 2010
- Achieved over \$3 billion in research expenditures since 1999 and ranked 11th (2009) among the Top 20 institutions in Research Expenditures by the National Science Foundation and third among public universities without a medical school
- Enrolled more than 75,000 first year and transfer undergraduate students of whom 25% were first generation college students
- Achieved one of Texas' highest graduation rates for students of color and non-minority students
- Raised \$1.5 billion in the *One Spirit, One Vision Campaign for Texas A&M* including funds for 55 endowed faculty chairs, 44 professorships, and over \$100 million in graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships
- Cited for its value and payback ratio based on surveys conducted by national publications (*U.S. News and World Report, The Princeton Review, Smart Money, and Forbes*)
- Increased enrollment of international students to almost 4,500 representing more than 124 countries and contributing cumulatively nearly \$1M annually to the Texas economy
- Doubled Library materials expenditures (from \$8.9M in 1999/2000 to \$17.8M in 2008/2009), ranking 11th among ARL academic libraries
- Planned and built over \$800M in new facilities since 2000
- Achieved the lowest administrative costs as a percentage of general costs of any university in the State of Texas

Building on our strengths that have resulted from our ongoing commitment to improvement and our accomplishments in *Creating a Culture of Excellence* has uniquely positioned us to contribute to the public good in additional, unprecedented ways.

Continuous Improvement

The need to continue to improve is real. The rapidity of knowledge growth and social, economic, political, educational and technological change mandate constant improvement. As a public institution, Texas A&M University must contribute in significant ways to the *Statewide Priority Goal for Higher Education - "To prepare individuals for a changing economy and workforce by: providing an affordable, accessible, and quality system of higher education; and furthering the development and application of knowledge through teaching, research, and commercialization."* While we are not resourced as some of our peers, we do have substantial resources including high caliber faculty, staff and students with a commitment to "get things done." We view the current and foreseeable economic outlook as an opportunity rather than a limitation. Having hired over 1,000 new and replacement faculty, including National Academy members and Nobel Laureates since 1999, the strength of our faculty has grown significantly as evidenced by research and scholarly productivity. This growth positions us to leverage this strength to advance the frontiers of knowledge and scholarly contributions. Many of our academic and research programs are very strong, as evidenced by their national recognition. Considerable progress has been made in the humanities and social science programs, however, much work remains in these areas in order to achieve our aspirational vision. A top ten public research university must have a number of nationally and internationally recognized faculty and a number of top-10 and top-20 ranked academic programs.

To reach this milestone, the Mid-Term Review Task Force conducted in-depth assessments of the accomplishments and opportunities for improvement related to the original Vision 2020 Premises, Precepts and Goals and further evaluated those in light of the current and future anticipated contexts. Comprehensive synthesis of recent institutional planning efforts was also conducted to inform the updating and alignment of the Mid-Term Review and its ultimate recommendations to identify three "**Marks of Excellence**" and a number of "**Illustrative Actions**" and five "**Foundations of Excellence**" that (1) leverage institutional strengths and opportunity gaps, (2) draw upon multiple Vision 2020 Imperatives and Precepts informed by recent institutional planning, (3) are externally focused and (4) provide collective evidence of **Creating a Culture of Excellence—Serving the Public Good**. These "**Marks of Excellence**" (Vision 2020—Inside Out) followed by their related "**Illustrative Actions**" are as follows:

- (1) **Lead in Scholarly Impact:** Our scholars' work (faculty and students) will have more impact in the classroom, the laboratories, the disciplines and in the lives of people around the world. We will leverage our scholarly strengths to:
 - **Foster multidisciplinary and multi-modal research**
 - **Inform public policy**
 - **Fuel economic development and the entrepreneurial spirit**
 - **Build energy capacity**
 - **Enlarge the food supply**
 - **Enhance national security**
 - **Strengthen the letters and the arts**

- *Advance the professions*
- *Innovate in technology*
- *Generate advancements in health and the life sciences*
- *Enhance and sustain the environment*
- *Build on the extension model to expand scholarly engagement*

(2) ***Lead in Educating the Next Generation:*** We will graduate highly recruited leaders who are critical thinkers, effective communicators, and lifelong learners with diverse and global perspectives. We will build on our historical emphasis on student leadership development to:

- *Accelerate our strengthening graduate programs*
- *Graduate students who are highly valued in their professions*
- *Increase the number of graduates and decrease time to degree*
- *Ensure that students have high-impact educational experiences including international experiences*
- *Enrich the quality of life for a diverse campus environment*
- *Develop responsible servant leaders with a commitment to public service*
- *Value the residential experience*
- *Enhance the integration of curricular and co-curricular experience*
- *Maintain accessibility*

(3) ***Lead in Stewardship and Partner Engagement:*** We will be the exemplar of responsible stewardship of resources, driven by transparent, effective planning and decision making. We will develop mutually beneficial partnerships and strategic alliances with external constituents that involve the creation, dissemination and translation of academic knowledge. We will:

- *Be accountable for those resources entrusted to us*
- *Improve the return on funds invested by the state and benefactors*
- *Maintain the public trust*
- *Sustain and enhance the environment*
- *Foster continuous improvement*
- *Increase strategic alliances with K-12, community colleges, non-profit and for-profit partners, especially in urban areas*
- *Expand distance and continuing education*
- *Expand scholarly engagement with urban and emerging population centers*

Central to our capacity to effectively advance these opportunities for the public good we are continuing to strengthen our “*Foundations for Excellence*” including the

- (1) **Development and Diversification of Financial Resources,**
- (2) **Maintenance and Enhancement of the Institutional Infrastructure,**
- (3) **Support and Development of Staff, and**
- (4) **Amplification of Faculty Excellence.**

The refreshed Imperatives, Precepts, and Pathways to the Precepts outline critical approaches to address these opportunities.

As an institution, we have accomplished much, but we must not become complacent and allow the challenges of dramatic and complex change to thwart our vision. We should be improving continuously if we are to effectively serve our students, the State of Texas, the nation, and the world.

Our Core Values

Texas A&M University's distinctiveness in developing leaders of character dedicated to serving the greater good can be defined by the University's six core values.

<i>Excellence</i>	<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Leadership</i>
<i>Loyalty</i>	<i>Respect</i>	<i>Selfless Service</i>

The original Vision 2020 set forth guiding principles that support and further elucidate these values which are reaffirmed by the Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review Task Force.

Excellence

We will seek excellence in everything we do. We will define excellence by national and global standards, and objective standards of achievement and/or contribution. We will measure ourselves by those standards and we will reach out to colleagues in academia, government, industry and non-profit organization to understand how we can learn, benefit, and contribute to the public good.

Integrity

We will conduct all of our activities with the highest standards of integrity, openness, and accountability. Aggies live and work by the Aggie Code of Honor. We will apply only the highest standards in all decisions.

Leadership

We will value and build character and leadership in our students, faculty and staff. We will accept only the highest standards for the governance and leadership of the institution.

Loyalty

We recognize and hold the public trust sacred. We are absolutely and unequivocally dedicated to the search for truth, freedom of inquiry, and contribution to state, society and world.

Respect

We will welcome all people and do our best to prepare them for purposeful and productive lives. We will attract a richly diverse student body, faculty, and staff. We will treat all members of our university community with respect. We will foster an atmosphere of openness, understanding, and engage in civil dialogues among our students, faculty, staff, former students, and parents. We will increase opportunities for women and members of marginalized groups in our faculty, staff, and administration.

Selfless Service

We will manage ourselves effectively and with wisdom and the understanding that human and intellectual capital are our greatest assets in contributing to the public good. We will practice effective stewardship in making decisions, allocations and re-allocations to sustain excellence. We will foster servant leadership.

Our Mission

Our University mission also has been clarified and affirmed.

Texas A&M is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility, and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic, and geographic groups, women and men alike, as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the twenty-first century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

Our Vision

In 2020, Texas A&M University will be recognized as one of the ten best public universities in the nation. A Culture of Excellence that is focused on ***Serving the Public Good*** will continue as the hallmark of Texas A&M. Our energy and boldness will distinguish us, guide our decision-making, and empower us to continue to improve. Our vision for 2020 reflects a steadfast determination to build on strengths, eliminate weaknesses, seek opportunities, and face threats creatively and energetically. We will extend and utilize our culture of excellence to meet the evolving educational and societal

needs of the state, nation and world. The Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review refreshed Imperatives, Precepts and Pathways to the Precepts supported by recent institutional planning will direct our priorities and efforts in achieving our aspirational vision.

Creating A Culture of Excellence–Refreshed Imperatives

The original Vision 2020 processes produced hundreds of ideas supporting our aspirational goal. The guiding principles, precepts, focused goals and measures were summarized in twelve overarching ideas referred to as the twelve imperatives. The Vision 2020 Mid-Term Review assessed each Imperative, identified accomplishments and refreshed the Imperatives in light of current and anticipated future contexts.

Imperative 1: Elevate our Faculty, and Their Teaching, Research and Scholarship

The world today is knowledge-based and constantly changing. In such a world, a great university is a creator, organizer, preserver, transmitter and applier of knowledge. The foundation of these functions is an excellent faculty in adequate numbers. We must continue to review and strengthen hiring, tenure and promotion policies, enhance compensation, support innovative scholarship, and transform our administrative culture. We cannot achieve our goal without a nationally recognized diverse faculty with a passion for teaching and an academic environment that values and rewards innovation, great ideas, and the search for new knowledge. We must continue to increase the size of our faculty and we must attract and retain top scholars.

Imperative 2: Strengthen our Graduate Programs

We must create or shift our thinking about the role of graduate education to attain the level of excellence we desire. Ensuring that graduate programs are at the forefront of knowledge and rigorous in their expectations provides the challenging learning and research environment in which outstanding graduate programs thrive. We must create a dynamic, exciting, discovery-driven intellectual environment that will attract and stimulate the best faculty and draw superior graduate students, comparable to those in the nation's best graduate programs.

Imperative 3: Enhance the Undergraduate Experience

A 21st century vision of excellence in undergraduate education at Texas A&M builds on the University's land grant heritage, its role as a comprehensive research university and its distinctive approach to student leadership development to offer high-impact educational experiences that are recognized nationally for their ability to produce successful graduates prepared to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage responsibly as citizens in a diverse global environment.

The fusion of the Aggie core values (leadership, excellence, integrity, respect, loyalty and selfless service) with the baccalaureate learning outcomes should continue to produce leaders of character who are highly sought after to lead in our economic and social well-being. Putting education first, Texas A&M must foster a community of learners that is supported by a high-quality residential experience that educates and develops the whole student through both curricular and co-curricular experiences.

Imperative 4: Build the Letters, Arts and Sciences Core

Texas A&M's Vision 2020 goal of becoming a consensus top-10 university by the year 2020 will require demonstrable strength in the letters, arts and sciences. Progress has been made in a number of areas and on a number of dimensions, but redoubling the commitment and the effort devoted to Imperative 4 is critical for the University's success in the coming decade.

High-impact faculty and graduate programs in the letters, arts and sciences produce new knowledge and understanding of our world. This new knowledge also greatly enhances the quality of undergraduate education by introducing students to the history and achievements of humankind, approaches to understanding the world and the universe, and critical and analytical skills that serve for a lifetime. The quality of instruction and educational programs depends directly on the quality and diversity of the faculty. Texas A&M, accordingly, must commit to initiatives that increase the number of nationally and internationally prominent faculty and expand the number of nationally ranked academic programs in the letters, arts, and sciences.

Imperative 5: Build on the Tradition of Professional Education

At the heart of Vision 2020 is a goal of strengthening our professional programs at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels. Those involved with our professional programs must recognize the need to prepare graduates broadly to contribute to a complex and rapidly changing state, national and global society. Professional programs are, for the current purpose, defined as curricula leading to degrees accredited by agencies responsible for professional licensure and/or professional certification. Among metrics used to measure eminence of professional programs are performance on standard and professional examinations.

Imperative 6: Diversify and Globalize the A&M Community

The time has passed when separation of the Texas A&M campus from neighboring communities served a compelling utilitarian function. Information, communication, and technology have produced a highly-connected workforce and society, both globally and locally. An organization's ability to survive and succeed is increasingly linked to the development of a more pluralistic, diverse and globally aware populace. It is essential that the faculty, students, staff and larger campus community embrace a cosmopolitan environment. The University's core values, while giving us guidance and distinctiveness to serve the greater good, also give us a foundation upon which to interact with all people. Texas A&M must accelerate its efforts to attract, nurture and sustain a more racially, ethnically, socially, culturally and geographically diverse faculty, staff and student body.

Imperative 7: Increase Access to Knowledge Resources

The intellectual assets represented by the Texas A&M University Libraries must continue to grow and develop to fulfill the mandate of Vision 2020. There has been more change in the storage, access, and distribution of knowledge resources in the last two decades than in the 550 years since the invention of movable type. In the last 10 to 15 years, the Texas A&M University Libraries have achieved parity with many of its academic peers.

However, to maintain its progress and forge new ground in pursuit of Vision 2020 goals, continued significant investment of resources in the libraries is critical.

The role of information technology becomes more important to faculty, students, staff and administrators as both knowledge and information continue to multiply. The best universities will always be at the forefront of advances in information technology. Premiere institutions will lead the ways in which information is transferred and used. Texas A&M will be a leader in the application and development of information technology that improves on-site and off-site instructional approaches, provides access to intellectual resources, increases the delivery of services to students and faculty and facilitates excellence in all facets of institutional life.

Imperative 8: Enrich Our Campus

The quality of the built environment plays a central role in *Creating a Culture of Excellence* and directly influences the ability of faculty, staff and students in achieving success. The residential experience of our students is critical to their development and their institutional loyalty. Texas A&M's facilities and sustainable practices must reflect the excellence of its programs and the people that engage in teaching, research, and service.

Imperative 9: Build Community and Metropolitan Connections

Developing community connections and partnerships is essential for universities, especially those with a land-grant mandate. Outreach and meaningful connection to communities are at the center of the teaching, research, and service philosophy upon which Texas A&M was founded. Building on the historical strengths of the extension model, Texas A&M will enhance its efforts to engage the urban regions of the state and to assist Texas communities in addressing local economic, social, environmental and educational needs. To ensure that the work of our University is relevant to current and future generations of Texans, we must seek mutually beneficial engagement and partnerships to advance the human condition throughout the state.

Imperative 10: Demand Enlightened Governance and Leadership

Great universities have a clearly articulated vision, a stimulating intellectual environment populated by great faculty, staff, students, and resources adequate to support quality offerings. One other characteristic often contributes to greatness: enlightened leadership.

Clear, cooperative relationships between the University, The Texas A&M University System (A&M System) and the Board of Regents, which oversees the administration and sets policy direction for the A&M System's nine universities, seven state agencies and health science center, must be the norm. To achieve our aspirations, strong, enlightened, stable and forward-thinking leadership focused on academic quality is essential. We have made progress, but we must remain zealous. Regents must continue to take the policy high ground.

The A&M System administration must acknowledge and nurture the University's role as a comprehensive research university with national peers. The University administration must be steadfast in its demand for quality in every decision.

There must be continued recognition of the importance of shared university governance as a reflection of the mutual commitment and mutual respect among the members of the university community that is characteristic of all great universities. Governance by individuals in administrative posts and in the Faculty Senate should be thoughtful, forward-looking and oriented towards producing long-range, high-quality results.

The University administration must make decisions through a process characterized by openness and appropriate faculty and staff participation. Our responsibility to the A&M System as its flagship must be evidenced in all decision-making. Academic progress is fragile. Enlightened, shared governance and leadership are elemental to its achievement.

Imperative 11: Attain Resource Parity with the Best Public Universities

The combination of rapid population growth, demand for government services and difficult economic times has placed a strain on the Texas treasury in recent years. A good and widely dispersed university System has provided access to the state's growing college-aged population. Access alone is no longer enough. Texas must have a few universities that offer opportunities equal to those at the best public universities, while taking complementary steps to maintain access. Competitive peer states have long recognized the economic necessity of comprehensive research universities in meeting the knowledge demands of an information society. States with the best universities are currently investing more funding per student than Texas is investing in Texas A&M.

Texas A&M and the University of Texas at Austin are ideally positioned to achieve recognition as top national institutions because of the state's historical, constitutional commitment to finance them. These institutions should be supported in a way consistent with our national competition. They must be provided the flexibility and exercise the wisdom and courage to price their offerings more in line with their value, while taking complementary steps to maintain access. Finally, they must use their historical strength to generate more private capital. Texas A&M must attain resource parity with the best public institutions to better serve Texas.

Imperative 12: Meet Our Commitment to Texas

Texas A&M is a public, land-, sea- and space-grant institution, is committed to preparing educated problem-solvers to lead the state and the nation. Texas A&M's aspiration to be among the best public universities in the country resonates with this historical mandate. The diverse population of Texas should have access to the best public education in America without having to leave the state. To further fulfill our mission, Texas A&M should engage in partnership with communities, industry, non-profit organizations and government entities to help solve the most difficult societal problems while honoring its heritage of enhancing economic and social well-being. Increased focus on excellence while maintaining relevance and access will allow Texas A&M to meet its commitment to Texas.