During December and January, there was considerable noise in the press about Texas A&M University choosing not to use race-based admissions of students. The excitement obscured our very substantial commitment to diversity, as reflected by our recent hiring of Dr. James A. Anderson. He is a nationally recognized authority on diversity, and he was hired to fill our new position of Vice-President and Associate Provost for Institutional Assessment and Diversity. Dr. Anderson immediately recognized that our diversity problem at the moment is not too few minority applicants, or too few being admitted, but too few actually coming to TAMU. Under his strong leadership we have begun one-on-one meetings between University personnel and minority high school students who have applied to TAMU. We are sending letters of acceptance as quickly as the decision is made, and many of those letters include offers of scholarships. These scholarships are "stackable" in that other scholarships can also be had without affecting these. We have set aside 8 million dollars to fund 2200 new need-based scholarships with values up to $5,000. We have hopes that minority attendance at TAMU will rise significantly. [In the long run, we will also have to increase minority applications and admits, but we hope the measures already taken will have a positive effect on these numbers as well. The news that we care and are paying attention to individuals will spread.]

Following up on our President's Faculty Reinvestment Plan, a part of the University's Vision 2020 plan, we are beginning the process of hiring 447 additional faculty during 4 years by hiring more than 100 new faculty this spring, to begin working in the fall. The State Legislature provided us with funds for the first year salaries of this year's new hires. However, to fund them in the long-term, we have been forced to announce an increase of tuition of $19.50 per credit hour for next fall.

Since the proposed tuition increase is not in place yet, we have seen no effect from it. While the students are not happy about it, they have not been marching in the streets with signs. One reason for that may be that scholarships are available for those who cannot afford the increase of tuition. Assuming the increase will occur, there will be little effect on enrollment, since our applications usually number about 20,000 per year, more than 17,000 completed. We admit about 10,900 each year, and about 6500 actually come. Since most of the 17,000 are qualified to attend A&M, the most likely measurable effect of the tuition increase will be a decrease in the number of completed applications.

Recently there was some controversy about Texas A&M University's Legacy program. This gave a few extra points to those applicants who had family members graduated from the university. President Gates ended the controversy when he ended the Legacy program in January.
Following up on the discussion in our previous Roundup Report about the Honor Council office, we have now hired Dr. Nicole Bradford as the Director of the Honor Council. Our plan is to have the Honor Council running by Fall of this year.

The Texas A&M University Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was installed in ceremonies held last Tuesday, February 17. Our first granting of Phi Beta Kappa keys will be given to students in ceremonies to be held this coming May.

Our Senate has just approved a change in its bylaws which has the effect of changing our officer structure from the current Speaker and Deputy Speaker, both elected each year, to a Speaker and Speaker-Elect, the Speaker-Elect of the previous year becoming the Speaker and the new Speaker-Elect being elected.

Our Senate Executive Committee and Legislative Affairs Subcommittee recently met with Senator Ogden and Representative Brown, with the aim of building bridges to the Legislature. We intend to meet with both again, and we are considering inviting certain other legislators and staff members of legislators to visit with us, with the same aim.

Working with Speakers and Senate Presidents from the other eight Texas A&M System universities, we have set up a System Faculty Council which meets three times per year, once with the Chancellor of the System. Our first meeting occurred on January 16 in College Station; expenses were covered by the System Chancellor's office. We had a very productive meeting with Interim Chancellor Cocanougher that day.