Texas A&M University is a research-intensive university. As of fall 2006, it had approximately 45,550 students, of whom 8,282 were graduate students, and 509 were students specializing in professions. The total includes the 173 undergraduate students in our Qatar branch. Using data from 2005, and quoting from the November 2006 minutes of the Faculty Senate, "The [2005] class is essentially even in sex distribution, includes 18% minorities, has an average SAT score >1,200, includes [approximately] 600 National Merit Scholars and 26-28% are first-generation college students. Average class size for freshmen is 41.5 and drops somewhat for upper division students." The current student to FTE faculty ratio is 20:1 using State definitions or 18.3:1 by Coordinating Board guidelines.

The University Studies degree, passed last fall by the Faculty Senate, is being implemented quickly and will be in place by this coming fall semester.

In addition to renovation projects going on around campus, most notably of the YMCA Building, we have approximately $379,000,000 of new construction of academic buildings under way. These buildings include the following, each listed with its approximate cost:

- Liberal Arts and Humanities Building ($ 40,000,000)
- Emerging Technology & Economic Development Buildings ($100,000,000)
- Mitchell Institute and Physics Building ($ 63,000,000)
- Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Building ($ 8,000,000)
- Life Sciences Building ($ 95,000,000)
- Texas Institute for Genomic Research Building ($ 15,000,000)
- Texas Institute for Preclinical Studies Building ($ 40,000,000)
- Veterinary Medicine Research Tower ($ 18,000,000)

Our faculty senators are elected by the faculty in their colleges, with a minimum of 2 faculty senators from each college and additional ones in accordance with the number of faculty in the college. At present, our Senate bylaws require us to elect 1 senator for each 24 faculty members, but our constitution limits the Faculty Senate to 100
senators. Because of the recent addition of over 300 new faculty lines, our next election would bring the Senate to more than 100 members if the bylaws were unchanged. This week we revised the bylaws to bring them into consonance with the constitution.

The Senate is led by the Speaker, who is supported by the full-time Administrative Assistant to the Senate, the Speaker-Elect, the Secretary/Treasurer, and 6 Executive Committee members elected at large, with a maximum of two senators from any one college on the Executive Committee (including the officers). The work of the Executive Committee in turn is supported by the work of several standing Senate and University committees. We have monthly meetings of the full Senate and two meetings per month of the Executive Committee.

Last October, our Senate passed new rules for faculty participation in the selection, evaluation, and retention of deans and department heads. This is a continuation of an effort that has been going on for several years. In the meantime, we have existing rules for faculty participation that have worked with only a few problems. The recently passed rules were signed by President Gates just before he left office.

As is probably very well known, we lost our President, Robert Gates, to the national government when he was appointed Secretary of Defense late last year. Dr. Eddie Joe Davis has been appointed as Interim President; he has already spoken to our Senate and has outlined the actions he plans to take to further expansion already undertaken by President Gates. The changeover to his administration has gone smoothly so far, and we do not anticipate problems.

The Speaker of our Senate, Prof. Douglas Slack, has been appointed Chair of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee, and one-third of the committee are faculty members. We are carrying out a national search for our new President.

In response to the recently passed Texas State law, we have revised many of our degree programs to reduce them to 120 credit hours. More degree programs will be changed in the near future.