Dr. Ray M. Bowen  
President  
Texas A&M University  

Dear President Bowen:

I am pleased to report to you that at its regular meeting held January 12, 1998, the Faculty Senate endorsed the 1998-2000 Strategic Plan by approving the attached resolution. As you will be able to tell from reading the resolution, the Faculty Senate continues to offer its talents to assist in the planning processes of the university.

I am enclosing a copy of the resolution for your information.

Sincerely,

Wayne E. Wylie  
Speaker, 1997-98

Enclosure

pc: Dr. Ronald G. Douglas, Executive Vice President & Provost  
    Dr. Walter Wendler, Executive Assistant to the President
THE FACULTY SENATE
RESOLUTION

Whereas, the 1994 NSB-GUIRR (National Science Board and Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable) Final Implementation Report of the Campus-Based Discussions at Texas A&M University on Stresses on Research and Education at Colleges and Universities was accepted by both the Faculty Senate and the President of the University; and

Whereas, this report calls for the creation of a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee by the Provost and the Faculty Senate Speaker, composed of one faculty member from each college and chaired by the Speaker of the Faculty Senate; and

Whereas, the NSB-GUIRR report calls for the President to provide the Advisory Committee with an annual written report on the progress toward achievement of strategic goals; and

Whereas, the NSB-GUIRR report calls for the Provost to provide the Advisory Committee with a draft of the University's strategic plan for comments and suggested revisions before it is finalized;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Faculty Senate reaffirms the recommendations of the 1994 NSB-GUIRR Final Implementation Report by calling for the creation of a new standing committee of the University, called the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, in accord with the NSB-GUIRR recommendations; and

Be It Resolved, that the President and Provost should involve the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee early in the next cycle of strategic planning; and

Be It Resolved, that the President should revise and lengthen the strategic planning schedule to allow time for increased input and to allow for feedback and revisions prior to finalizing the plan; and

Be It Resolved, that the Faculty Senate endorses the 1998-2002 Strategic Plan as an imperfect but workable document; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Faculty Senate looks forward to working with the Administration in helping to carry out the goals of the University, as identified in the strategic planning process, including the formation of task forces for the definition and implementation of intercollegiate initiatives.

(Approved by the Faculty Senate January 12, 1998 FS.15.080)
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

DECEMBER 1, 1997

ONE PRINCIPLE
TWELVE IDEAS
Greetings:

We are pleased to present this strategic overview outlining our plans for the next four years. Although University progress rests on the efforts of all our divisions, the emphasis here is on academic themes. The strategic plan is the result of a great effort from faculty and staff in every part of Texas A&M University. This plan tells a portion of the story. The college, division, and other unit plans from around the campus paint a more detailed picture of where the University needs to go. The strategic plans are accessible under "Administration" on the University's home page (http://www.tamu.edu). These plans should be of interest to readers who desire a more in-depth look at what the colleges, the various offices, and the different organizations on campus are doing and where they are going.

A very gratifying aspect of this process has been the consistency with which the various plans recognize the importance of providing educational opportunity to students in many ways, in diverse circumstances, and at every level. This plan and the accompanying unit plans demonstrate that we are an organization that attends to this fundamental mission of the University. Coincidentally, the plans show a sensitivity to our role in providing a full experience for students, faculty, and staff at Texas A&M University. It is evident that the classroom and laboratory experience is important—foremost—but the "other education" that helps build the legend of Texas A&M University is embedded in almost every aspect of this plan.

We trust that you find the document useful in understanding our goals for the next four years.

Sincerely,

Ray M. Bowen  
President

Ronald G. Douglas  
Executive Vice President and Provost
THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Texas A&M University exists to:

- Provide excellence in educational opportunity to our students through the generation and dissemination of knowledge, innovative insights, ideas, and skills.

- Forge an environment of collective and individual responsibility and accountability to fulfill our obligations as a publicly supported institution of higher learning.

- Demonstrate an appreciation for our land grant heritage through our actions and our commitment to achieve the missions of land, sea, and space grant designations in their fullest contemporary interpretations.

- Foster an intellectually challenging yet supportive environment for students, faculty, and staff by insisting on quality in all that they undertake.

- Aggressively encourage intellectual vitality in faculty, students, and staff by seeking people from a representative array of cultural, ethnic, social, geographic, and economic backgrounds.

- Rigorously assess programs and allocate resources in ways that recognize, and are responsive to, our strengths and weaknesses.

- Provide responsive leadership for higher education in the state, and for The Texas A&M University System, to fulfill our duty as the first public institution of higher learning in Texas.

- Actively promote the concept that the institution's concern extends to the whole individual, and to help students develop leadership skills and a moral and ethical perspective of the world.

The guiding principle: By pursuing these actions students at Texas A&M University will have excellence in educational opportunity and be well prepared for enduring learning and the several pursuits and professions of life.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan is focused on the academic missions of Texas A&M University. The plan is guided by a simple principle: Texas A&M University's purpose for being is to provide excellence in educational opportunity for students so that they will be well prepared for enduring learning and the several pursuits and professions of life. A number of goals support this principle:

FUNDAMENTALS

Fundamental commitments are those that impact all facets of institutional life. They are important near and long term and provide the foundation for quality. Without attention to these goals, Texas A&M University cannot offer strong educational opportunity.

- The Strong College Model of University Leadership
  Foster a form of leadership, governance, and management that recognizes the colleges as the central organizational units of the campus. This view vests appropriate authority and responsibility in the colleges, where educational opportunity resides in classrooms, laboratories, and offices.

- Information Processing, Development, and Management - Communication
  Significantly increase our capabilities for, and expertise in, all forms of electronic information processing and communication, thus supporting our ability to provide educational opportunity.

- The Spine of the University - The Library
  Foster the quality of, and access to, intellectual resources and elevate the contribution of the library to scholarship on campus. This commitment supports our ability to provide educational opportunity.

- Vitality Through Diversity
  Aggressively seek, and warmly welcome, the fullest representation of the people of Texas and the world to be diverse, based on the belief that diversity produces vitality, and intellectual vitality produces educational opportunity.

SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship represents the focus of the intellectual life of the University. New knowledge, new insights, and the best of discovery and application of ideas provide the foundation of University life for faculty and students. A strong intellectual life for faculty will result in increased educational opportunity for the University's students, a better quality of life for Texans, and rich contributions for future generations.

- A Challenging and Rewarding Work Life for Faculty
  Nurture and cultivate a work life for faculty that allows and encourages the highest forms of teaching, creative and scholarly activity, and service. This will increase our ability to provide educational opportunity.
• The Aspiring Mind - The Graduate Student
  Minister to graduate students at the University and assist in inducting them into the community of scholars. This is the basis of educational opportunity for graduate study.

• Interdisciplinary Scholarship Through Teamwork
  Promote, administer, and fund interdisciplinary scholarship, research, creative activity, and teaching that address complex issues facing our state, nation, and world. This will provide cogent educational opportunity to our students.

OUR CULTURE

The commitment to providing educational opportunity rests on a harmony of faculty, student, and staff aspirations. These aspirations must be cultivated and aligned to create the best educational opportunity for our students.

• Campus Life for Students
  Heighten Texas A&M University’s status as a powerful learning center that provides a high-quality student environment in which undergraduate and graduate students immerse themselves in all forms of educational opportunity.

• Curriculum and Resources
  Provide and support the best study settings for students, using human and material resources to foster a responsive learning environment that will enable students to capture educational opportunity.

• Staff Support for Academic Excellence
  Create a work environment for all staff that promotes quality, encourages resourcefulness, recognizes excellence, and provides for growth in responsibility, thus increasing the forms of educational opportunity available to students.

• Extending Our Reach - Texas and the World
  Enhance the University’s reputation in the state for service to Texans through outreach and attention to the needs of learners at all levels, especially as this supports the concept of providing educational opportunity.

  Enhance Texas A&M University’s reputation in the nation and world, strengthening the University’s ability to provide educational opportunity.

  Actively participate in the globalization of knowledge and in learning and assisting students, faculty, and staff in relating to the shrinking world, thus providing sound and realistic educational opportunity.

• Private Giving - Public Learning
  Support the concept that the best higher education in Texas generally, and at Texas A&M University specifically, is a shared enterprise relying on both public and private resources to provide educational opportunity to students.
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Texas A&M University has been in existence for more than 120 years. While there has been significant growth over the entire course of that history, the growth in the last 35 years has been remarkable. The Aspirations Study of 1962 highlighted where the University should be on its 100th birthday, October 4, 1976. Participation in the Corps of Cadets was to be noncompulsory. Women were to be admitted on an equal basis. The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas would become Texas A&M University, student admission would become more competitive, and faculty would be granted tenure and promoted through rigorous review processes. New Colleges of Science, Liberal Arts, Business Administration, Geosciences, and Architecture and Environmental Design would be brought to life. While undergraduate education was the mainstay, graduate study would carry us to the next level, allow the recruitment of the most highly qualified faculty, and position the institution for greater changes in the coming decades. The graduate school became the graduate college. All of this led to a new sense of purpose at Texas A&M University.

In the 1970s a number of centers and research institutes were created. The value of research and its contribution to the University became apparent in the actions of the institution. Increased admissions standards and a growing population of college bound high school graduates created a boom in enrollment that led to a period of unprecedented growth. An era of building was begun that recognized the importance of good facilities to attract the best faculty and students. The student enrollment nearly doubled in a very short period of time. Research funding was highlighted, but other funding sources were required. The Texas A&M University Development Foundation began to generate the capital that was necessary to support the quality envisioned in the early 1970s.

The 1980s and 1990s brought a stronger, more robust view of faculty. Globalization of the economy would impact life at the University. Study centers in Mexico and Italy were started. The Capturing the Spirit Campaign, numerous new facilities, a strengthened commitment to faculty work life, an understanding of the importance of electronic information processing, and selection of Texas A&M University as the home of the George Bush Presidential Library and the Bush School of Government and Public Service have impacted the institution.

During the past three decades, the concept of providing educational opportunity to students has been paramount at the institution and that will continue. We will build on this tradition and adhere to the guiding principle that our students will be well prepared for a productive life’s work.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This plan resonates with the strategic plans developed by each of the academic colleges on the campus. Attention to the academic direction of the University strengthens the power and importance of the plans of divisions and offices. Every plan produced, at every level, acknowledges educational opportunity for our students as our raison d’etre. In order to appreciate fully the extent of planning that occurred at the college level, the college plans should be reviewed. In order to appreciate the extent of the commitment to academic purposes, the division, department, and program office plans should be studied. The general direction for the campus comes from the President and Provost, through a participatory planning process. The fuel to move the campus comes from the faculty, the staff, and the students, organized in and through the colleges.
THE ENVIRONMENT

Many forces materially affect the role, scope, and mission of Texas A&M University. Expectations of faculty and students, the public and legislature, our former students, and future employers color what the University is. These expectations continue to rise; Texas A&M University is expected to do more with less. "Business as usual" will not suffice. The populations that the University serve are growing in number and variety. Our students want marketable skills, as well as the challenge of study for the joy that it provides. The shape and extent of research funding is changing. Research leads to new knowledge, and new knowledge creates opportunity. The technology of the workplace and the technology of education are changing at unprecedented rates, and Texas A&M University must keep up with that change. The University must lead it by seeking the best faculty. As our stature continues its upward trend, our faculty are more sought after, and the means to challenge and retain them must be found. The University is expected to play a role in economic development in the community in which it exists, in the state, the nation, and the world. This has become an unstated part of our charter. We rely more and more on electronically supported instruction for our residential students and to the growing number of those to whom we will be reaching out to provide specialized educational opportunity. Costs for higher education continue to rise and the environment demands that we are increasingly accountable and efficacious in our utilization of resources. Our staff, who support our ability to provide educational opportunity, are not appropriately compensated for the role they play. Our local communities’ growth and employment potential make it more difficult to retain the best. This is the maelstrom of external and internal forces to which Texas A&M University must respond. Our world is competitive, the environment challenging, and growth and change are required.

There is a tradition of excellence at Texas A&M University. Colleges on campus are recognized for their breadth and quality, and many programs are highly ranked through various reviews. Examples are too numerous to elaborate. The commitment to student leadership experiences and “the other education” is legendary. There exists a strength of purpose relative to teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Research programs in some disciplines are the best of their kind and internationally recognized. Service and outreach efforts in Texas, the nation, and in several cases, the world are highly regarded. The college and unit plans substantiate the existence of excellent ongoing programs. This too is part of our environment.

QUALITY

The purpose of planning is to define goals that will assist in increasing the quality of educational opportunity provided for students. In so doing we increase the quality of study and work environments for students, faculty, and staff. In addition, we increase the quality of scholarly activity and research carried out. Funding must increase as it provides access to quality. The availability of intellectual resources must grow because that provides quality. Texas A&M University’s purpose is quality in all that we do. The difficulty lies in defining and assessing quality. The problem in identifying quality is that it is often thought to be an imprecise construct, not easily understood. The construct is very precise, however, but does not allow easy characterization in words and numbers. Therefore, in both the general discussion of goals and the empirical targets that are presented as a means to assess attainment of goals it should be understood that no single indicator will ever clearly portray quality. For example, in discussing research expenditures—a measure that Texas A&M University fares well in—it should never be misinterpreted to mean that Texas A&M University research is of high quality just because the
institution does so much of it. Rather, given this kind of output, the chances for achieving quality research results will probably go up, but only other indicators of research prowess will demonstrate that. The number of publications by faculty and students in prestigious journals is one such indicator, one dimension of quality. Others could be cited. Quality as it is defined for this plan is always a multidimensional construct and never fully captured by one indicator. In reading the plan and the goals that are being set, recognize this view. Any other perspective will not produce a fair interpretation of where the University is or needs to be. Rather, there must be a holistic reading of the document, and the goals and targets, in order to gain an understanding of the purpose of the University—to produce quality educational opportunity.

FUNDAMENTALS

Fundamental commitments are those that impact all facets of institutional life. They are important near and long term and provide the foundation for quality. Without attention to these goals, Texas A&M University cannot offer strong educational opportunity.

THE STRONG COLLEGE MODEL OF UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Goal: Foster a form of leadership, governance, and management that recognizes the colleges as the central organizational units of the campus. This view vests appropriate authority and responsibility in the colleges, where educational opportunity resides in classrooms, laboratories, and offices.

Good universities are well led, managed by capable and visionary people who attend to the needs of faculty and students. Great universities recognize that strength in academic programs exists when the organizational unit is the academic college to which faculty, students, and staff belong. Colleges represent disciplinary excellence, they work together for common goals, and they hold scholarship and attention to learners and scholars as paramount. Colleges allocate resources towards excellence at the local level. It is here that deans and department heads, working with, in and through faculty, guide the intellectual life of the University. In the best circumstances, the colleges are slightly autonomous, but working towards common university goals. The colleges, by definition, are a federation; the university, a union.

Strong college leadership, governance, and management will be the goal of the University during the next four years. The role of the University administration will be to develop general direction, knowing that the leadership of the deans will be required to reach the University’s highest aspirations. Success in the coming decades will come from the foundation established during this planning period. The strength of the colleges will determine the strength of Texas A&M University because the colleges are where the work gets done.

Texas A&M University’s history reveals a commitment to teamwork among the colleges. This tradition needs to be continued to address the complex and fast changing environments its students will inhabit after graduation. For teamwork to reach its fullest potential, excellence in the individual colleges, as well as decisive and visionary leadership of the deans, is required.
Target 2002: Encourage and strengthen the commitment to the concept of academic federation and academic excellence through strong colleges.

INFORMATION PROCESSING, DEVELOPMENT, AND MANAGEMENT

Goal: Significantly increase our capabilities for, and expertise in, all forms of electronic information processing and communication, thus supporting our ability to provide educational opportunity.

Excellent universities will be judged so by their power to communicate. Communication with and among students and faculty, communication with industry and business leaders, communication with former students and lifelong learners as well as communication with the general public and political leaders are all important.

The University will provide state-of-the-art, fast, accessible, and powerful electronic communications capabilities to and from all of the people it serves. Telecommunications will be used to improve the offerings of classes to undergraduate and graduate students. The trends are clear. Texas A&M University has successfully improved access to computing and will continue this growth so that the fullest range of information resources is available to all participants in the educational process.

Target 2002: Increase overall campus investment in computing from $50.0 million per year to $60.0 million per year.

THE SPINE OF THE UNIVERSITY - THE LIBRARY

Goal: Foster the quality of, and access to, intellectual resources and elevate the contribution of the library to scholarship on campus. This commitment supports our ability to provide educational opportunity.

The national and international stature of Texas A&M University should continue to grow if its programs are successful. There are a number of strategies at work that will allow and encourage this end. Primary among them is a continued commitment to the quality of library resources available to faculty, students, and staff of the institution. Our library needs significant upgrading to be a serious contributor to academic excellence at the level the University aspires to achieve. Intellectual resources are a key ingredient in making Texas A&M University better. These resources include books and serials, databases, and other electronic and traditional sources of knowledge and insight.

Library acquisitions must be addressed. In the next four years increased spending for the library is anticipated, and this spending will provide greater access to materials, insights, ideas, and information enabling faculty and students to carry their goals to the highest level.

Target 2002: Increase investment in library acquisitions, traditional and electronic, to the level of the top 10 universities so that our overall standing in national rankings is in the top 35.
VITALITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

Goal: Aggressively seek, and warmly welcome, the fullest representation of the people of Texas and the world to be diverse, based on the belief that diversity produces vitality and intellectual vitality produces educational opportunity.

The vitality of the workplace, the manner in which we encourage people from diverse backgrounds into it, and the way that different views affect, and are affected by, ethnic and cultural background are important to the intellectual health of the University. It can be shown that throughout history many of the greatest advances have come from providing a different view of the world through a change in the social constructs that define the insiders and the outsiders. A university's goal is not to hold onto one social construct, but to welcome different points of view as fuel for discussion that leads to progress and educational opportunity.

The populations that Texas A&M University reaches out to are changing. The University has not fully captured the power inherent in the different views provided by people from different backgrounds. The challenges it faces in fostering educational opportunity through creating a diverse place to work and study are growing. Texas A&M University will not be thwarted by current challenges. The University will marshal its collected resources to enable as great a representation of the populations that we serve as is practicable.

Target 2002: Increase by 20 percent the underrepresented populations among our faculty, students, and staff.

SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship represents the focus of the intellectual life of the University. New knowledge, new insights, the best of discovery and application of ideas provide the foundation of University life for faculty members and students. A strong intellectual life will result in increased educational opportunity.

A CHALLENGING AND REWARDING WORK LIFE FOR FACULTY

Goal: Nurture and cultivate a work life for faculty that allows and encourages the highest forms of teaching, creative and scholarly activity, and service. This will increase our ability to provide educational opportunity.

The evolution of the highest quality of student life will not be achieved without a commitment to a high quality of faculty life. A number of factors increase the sense of well being of faculty on the campus. Access to the best intellectual resources help faculty achieve the best results. Contemporary work environments supported by electronic computing and information availability create a better quality of faculty life. Careful evaluation and annual review processes lead to increased desire for performance and commitment to excellence. Sensitive leadership and responsiveness to the needs of individual faculty members contribute to a high quality of faculty life. A fair compensation system and means to reward excellence consistent with peer institutions are material aspects of a healthy faculty work environment. Reasonable and equitable distribution of teaching, research, and service assignments to all faculty should be achieved. Full participation in the governance and direction of the institution will increase the sense of efficacy.
As with quality of student life, it is imperative that no single indicator of excellence in the work life of faculty members be taken in isolation. High salaries with inadequate other support will not build the best educational opportunity for our students. Good electronic communications systems are not a substitute for effective interpersonal communication. The aim is to create a work environment for faculty that is supportive of the highest creative and intellectual work to benefit the student, the institution, and themselves.

**Target 2002:** Attract and retain excellent faculty and create parity between Texas A&M University faculty salary structures and those of its national peer institutions.

**THE ASPIRING MIND - THE GRADUATE STUDENT**

**Goal:** Minister to graduate students at the University and assist in inducting them into the community of scholars. This is the foundation of educational opportunity for graduate study.

Enhanced ability to attract and retain graduate students and provide the framework in which they can complete their studies as full participants in the community of scholars is essential for healthy growth in graduate programs. Many forces affect our ability to attract the brightest graduate students. Stipends, insurance benefits, tuition waivers, and other forms of financial support are important to effective results. However, if the University’s response to the challenge stops there, a key ingredient to graduate student life is lost. Graduate students come to the University, in almost all cases, to become members of the academic community, if only for a brief period of time. Avenues must be found to involve graduate students more in the creative enterprise of higher education, to make them a contributing component to the life of the University. Limiting graduate students to teaching additional sections of lower division course work, while good for the institution in many respects, may be shortsighted in the long-term evolution of graduate programs. Incorporating the work of graduate students into the mainstream work of the University will ensure a more energetic, high quality engagement with the faculty and pursuits of the institution. These concepts apply to students at the master’s and doctoral levels.

**Target 2002:** Increase graduate student support to be consistent with the norms at national peer institutions.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP THROUGH TEAMWORK**

**Goal:** Promote, administer, and fund interdisciplinary scholarship, research, creative activity, and teaching that address complex issues facing our state, nation, and world. This will provide cogent educational opportunity to our students.

Six interdisciplinary initiatives are highlighted. These are based on college and unit plans. While there are a significant number of additional interdisciplinary programs under way at the University in teaching and research, the identification of these six is intended to strengthen support for the important concept of interdisciplinary scholarship. The value of working across college and departmental boundaries will be emphasized in the immediate and more distant future.
Two High-Priority Initiatives Will Receive Immediate Attention:

Life Sciences - The biological/life/medical sciences initiative addresses research related to the most basic questions of life, from the cellular through the organism, to individuals, and human settlements. Many faculty have outstanding credentials in one or more areas related to this effort, and additional resources will be allocated to those. New resources will be allocated to units where interest and capability are present, but as yet not realized. Creating greater synergy in the life sciences across the University and encouraging a more holistic view toward the widespread strength that already exists is one goal of this effort.

Telecommunications - Telecommunications and information processing have two primary dimensions in Texas A&M University’s education and research programs: Research into the ways to become more effective and efficient in cost and speed in processing information, and, second, the application of technology and new processes to link information sources and destinations. Strengthening of university, college, and library collaboration utilizing ongoing activities will positively affect telecommunications capability. Coupled with internal collaboration will be an effort to work closely with business, industry, and government to develop new academic programs that are responsive to evolving needs.

Two Ongoing Initiatives Will Continue to Be Developed:

The Bush School - The Bush School and the study of public service should have a profound impact on the campus and contribute to the traditional land grant mission of Texas A&M University in new ways. Initial programs tie some colleges to the academic program leading to the Master of Public Administration degree. Increased opportunities for other faculty from additional colleges to participate in Bush School projects will be developed.

Race and Ethnic Studies - The Race and Ethnic Studies Institute fosters efforts across Texas A&M University to make scholarly contributions leading to greater understanding among the diverse peoples of the nation and the world. This understanding is essential as Texas prepares itself for the global economic environment of the next century. Continued growth and development of the Institute will be encouraged through interdisciplinary scholarship that relates racial and ethnic, as well as cultural, social, and geographic, factors to the various fields of study.

Two New Initiatives Are in The Early Planning Stages:

Sustainability - Sustainable development in every manifestation will become more important to the growth of Texas business and industry in the coming decades as well as to various aspects of commerce nationally. The concept of sustainability is broad. Goals for the initiative include linking economic, environmental and social activities in a comprehensive framework for sustainability, designing sustainable communities, assessing the impact of sustainability on public policy, and studying the science and technology of sustainable development.

The Arts - The arts, defined as the creation and appreciation of artifacts and artistic processes, offer a clear and distinct message that Texas A&M University is indeed a true university. The presence of such educational opportunity for students and faculty is needed to bring about the full development of Texas A&M University as a premier university. The challenge for arts programs at our institution is to build on the strengths of existing offerings and people, not merely to emulate arts programs at other universities.
The actions identified above and the numerous others available in the strategic plans of every unit suggest that the tradition of teamwork resident at the University can be profitably applied to scholarship and knowledge generation activities and further carried into graduate and undergraduate classrooms.

**Target 2002:** Increase research expenditures from $367 million per year to $420 million per year, of which $15 million will be focused on the interdisciplinary initiatives identified above.

**OUR CULTURE**

The commitment to providing educational opportunity rests on a harmony of faculty, student, and staff aspirations. These aspirations must be cultivated to create the best educational opportunity for our students.

**CAMPUS LIFE FOR STUDENTS**

Goal: Heighten Texas A&M University’s status as a powerful learning center that provides a high-quality student environment in which undergraduate and graduate students immerse themselves in all forms of educational opportunity.

A high quality of life for students is a clear demonstration of Texas A&M University’s commitment to educational opportunity. A number of factors have an impact on the quality of student life. Providing good telecommunication capability will allow students to attain the best insight for their studies. An excellent library will enhance the intellectual resources to which the student has access. Besides the academic dimension, the University seeks to provide widespread and varied leadership and social opportunities for students to complete their educational experiences. The combination of academic and extracurricular activities will provide an opportunity for students to develop a moral and ethical perspective of the world.

One of the chief determinants of the quality of student life is the degree of interaction between faculty and students. Communion of faculty and students is the core of learning. Towards that end, an effort will be mounted to increase the quality, frequency and regularity of student-faculty interaction through advising and other means. Presently, advising is an under-rewarded aspect of faculty work. Means must be found to give it full recognition for the profound impact it has on the student experience at Texas A&M University.

**Target 2002:** Include advising as a primary academic responsibility of all faculty members, and value advising and student interaction in all settings as a critical component of faculty life.

**CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES**

Goal: Provide and support the best study settings for students, using human and material resources to foster responsive learning environments that will enable students to capture educational opportunity.
Texas A&M University will only reach its fullest potential through excellence in research and graduate programs. Achieving this directly impacts the quality of life available to faculty. However, at the foundation of every good academic community is a well balanced, effective undergraduate program. The goal of the University is to guarantee and increase the quality of undergraduate programs in all disciplines. However, because the desirability of the institution continues to grow, it is difficult to maintain excellence in undergraduate study without increasing resources for teaching. Adding complexity to the challenge in providing that is the fact that not all undergraduate programs are under the same pressures. Some are taxed to the point of not providing good educational opportunity; others could accept more students.

Means must be found to allocate more equitably the resources to the various curricula if Texas A&M University is to increase the quality of all programs. In addition, greater recognition of the importance for excellence in the conduct of academic programs should be provided. To ensure that, accomplishments of faculty working together to provide the best educational opportunity to undergraduate students will be better highlighted. A series of academic program reviews will be initiated during spring 1998 for graduate and undergraduate programs.

**Target 2002:** Manage enrollment to bring into better balance income generation and budget allocations, taking excellence into account. Our target is to maintain undergraduate enrollment at present levels and increase graduate enrollment by 20 percent.

**STAFF SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

**Goal:** Create a work environment for all staff that promotes quality, encourages resourcefulness, recognizes excellence, and provides for growth in responsibility, thus increasing the forms of educational opportunity available to students.

The thousands of staff at Texas A&M University provide necessary assistance to the University in creating an environment that supports educational opportunity. This work is critical to faculty and students. Classified and non-classified staff, custodial workers, landscape and grounds maintenance, campus police, and many others, play a role in making Texas A&M University a great place to study. Appropriate compensation for work performed is central to a quality workplace for staff, but it is not the only consideration that recognizes the day-to-day functioning of the University. Professional respect; concern for the welfare of the institution; recognition of the importance of staff roles; and decent, open work settings all add to the quality of environment for staff who contribute to the central mission of Texas A&M University.

**Target 2002:** Given that 91 percent of the state job classifications have higher starting salaries than their Texas A&M University counterparts, to increase starting pay levels for staff to be consistent with other state agencies and the local employment market.

**EXTENDING OUR REACH - TEXAS AND THE WORLD**

**Goal:** Enhance the University’s reputation in the state for service to Texans through outreach and attention to the needs of learners at all levels, especially as this supports the concept of providing educational opportunity.
Texas A&M University’s reputation in the nation and the world is critical to its future, but the University’s reputation in Texas is equally important. Strategies are needed to improve outreach programs and allow access to the University by a greater number of Texans. The number of certificate programs, special opportunities for post-baccalaureate study, and continuing education all contribute to our service to Texans. With the state as a proving ground for innovative educational programs, the institution’s ability to reach out to the nation and the world will be increased.

**Target 2002:** Increase outreach through formal continuing and special education offerings from present level of 256 programs serving 11,015 learners by 15 percent.

**Goal:** Enhance Texas A&M University’s reputation in the nation and world, strengthening the University’s ability to provide educational opportunity.

Texas A&M University has transformed itself into a premier research University over the past few decades. Recognition such as membership in the American Association of Universities and a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, as well as a larger institutional role in professional and governmental bodies, is slowly being achieved. Broader educational opportunities for students and faculty rest on progress here.

**Target 2002:** Obtain a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and membership in the American Association of Universities.

**Goal:** Actively participate in the globalization of knowledge and in learning and assisting students, faculty, and staff in relating to the shrinking world, thus providing sound and realistic educational opportunity.

International dimensions of scholarship for faculty and study for students become more important to the life of any institution as American enterprise extends its reach off shore. The international programs of Texas A&M University provide needed opportunity for students and faculty to expand.

**Target 2002:** Less than 20 percent of the graduating students at Texas A&M University have foreign study experience. By 2002, 25 percent of the graduating students should have such experience.

### PRIVATE GIVING - PUBLIC LEARNING

**Goal:** Support the concept that the best higher education in Texas generally, and at Texas A&M University specifically, is a shared enterprise relying on both public and private resources to provide educational opportunity to students.

Extramural funds provide increased educational opportunity for faculty and students. The momentum of the Capturing the Spirit Campaign should be sustained as the University moves ahead to the 21st century. The fund-raising progress in the past six years has been remarkable. The Texas A&M Foundation has assisted in creating a fund-raising culture that values the same themes as the general University population. This success is truly remarkable. Every college plan recognizes the importance of extramural funds and the sharp advantage these funds create in
hiring and retaining the best faculty, recruiting outstanding students, and rewarding quality performance in people and programs. In the next five years, the cultivation and development of private resources for the institution will continue.

**Target 2002:** Increase by 15 percent the overall number of endowed chairs, endowed professorships, graduate student fellowships, and undergraduate scholarships.

**NEXT STEPS**

The plan gives an overview of general directions for the University. During the winter of 1997-1998 a series of task forces will be established to create “target plans” for attaining identified goals over the next four years. The task forces will largely consist of faculty and include administrators, staff and students working in teams. The charge to each task force will be to define tactics that will lead to the achievement of individual goals while being responsive to the general strategies set by the plan. The view is that planning is an ongoing process, with detail and precision constantly emerging but never completed.

The plan was developed through a bottom up and top down process. So too should be the process for creating a framework and tactics that will allow us to achieve our goals. While this plan emanates from the offices of the President and the Provost, it is extracted from the college, unit, and division plans across the campus. This is an academic plan. Ours is first and always an academic institution, with academic values, and academic purposes. All else that happens here happens to support academic intents. As verified in every aspect of our plan, our primary purpose, that towards which all attention is directed, is to provide our students excellence in educational opportunity and prepare them well for enduring learning and the several pursuits and professions of life.

To access the strategic plans electronically, select “Administration” on the University’s home page at the following address: http://www.tamu.edu
September 30, 1997

MEMORANDUM

TO: University Community

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan – Concluding Steps

About a month ago, I distributed a draft strategic plan asking for comments and reactions from our University community. I want to thank the many people and groups who responded, especially various committees of The Faculty Senate. Our challenge now is to utilize this information in rewriting and concluding the strategic planning process. Let me outline what I have decided in consultation with the executive planning group, which consists of the deans, vice presidents, and president.

First, Walter Wendler, Executive Assistant to the President, will take charge of rewriting and making revisions. Initially, he will reorganize and reframe the existing draft which takes into account the various comments.

Second, I am appointing a small, six-person consulting committee to work with Walter to act as a sounding board and to ensure that the final plan he proposes reflects and supports the earlier college and division plans. Before concluding, a final review of the rewritten draft will be made by the executive planning committee.

The consulting committee consists of Wayne Wylie, current Speaker, The Faculty Senate; Steve Oberhelman and Pierce Cantrell, former Speakers, The Faculty Senate; Benton Cocanougher, Dean, Lowry Mays College and Graduate School of Business; Jane Close Conoley, Dean, College of Education; and David Prior, Dean, College of Geosciences and Maritime Studies.

Although details of the final draft are still to come, I expect the plan to identify about 10 university-wide initiatives or areas for emphasis, but leave operational planning to future task forces and action to existing administrative and governance structures. Such activities will build on the college developments, which will continue to be central to the University.

Ronald G. Douglas  
Executive Vice President and Provost

RGD:njm  
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OCT 06 1997
THE FACULTY SENATE

September 15, 1997

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Ronald G. Douglas
    Executive Vice President & Provost

FROM: Wayne E. Wylie, Speaker
    The Faculty Senate

SUBJECT: TAMU Strategic Plan

The Faculty Senate has reviewed the draft version of the Texas A&M University Strategic Plan which you submitted to us on August 15, 1997. This review has been thorough and involved the entire Senate body. Specifically, six of the Senate’s standing committees called special meetings to discuss the plan. Those committees include the Senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, Budget Information Committee, Bylaws Committee, Personnel and Welfare Committee, Planning Committee, and Research Committee. These committees filed independent reports which are attached to this memorandum. Additionally, independent comments generated at the September 8, 1997 Senate meeting are attached.

The present draft of the Strategic Plan contains a variety of good ideas. However, it is apparent from the committee reports that substantial work remains to be done if the Plan is to be an effective tool for guiding the diverse component parts of this University. We are particularly concerned that the present Plan is too long for a Strategic Plan and does not represent a shared vision for the University. There appears to be a potentially serious mismatch between the needs of the University as perceived by its faculty, colleges, and divisions and as stated by its administration in this Plan.

Therefore, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate recommends that a joint faculty-administration committee be constituted to rewrite this draft. This committee should be in the spirit of the NSB/GUIRR Implementation Report, which recommended the creation of a Faculty Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (Recommendations 1 & 2). In that rewrite, the attached comments, which the Executive Committee endorses, should be given serious consideration.

The Executive Committee notes that the NSB/GUIRR report also recommends that the time frame for the strategic planning process be lengthened to allow time for increased input, feedback, and
revisions prior to finalization. Also, the Final Report of the Task Force on the Multiple Missions of Texas A&M University (1991) offers in its Recommendation 21 some very logical steps for assuring a good match between the missions of the University and those of its Colleges as they change over time to meet governmental mandates, national thrusts, or changes in scholarly professional fields.

Thank you for providing the Faculty Senate opportunity to comment on the plan. However, in years to come, strategic planning should involve the Senate at a much earlier stage in the process.

pc: Ray Bowen, President, Texas A&M University
    William Perry, Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties
    Lee Blank, Assistant Provost for Continuous Improvement
    Edward Hiler, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
    Ward Wells, Interim Dean, College of Architecture
    Benton Cocalishe, Dean, Lowry Mays College & Graduate School of Business
    Jane Conoley, Dean, College of Education
    Roland Hayden, Dean, Dwight Look College of Engineering
    David Prior, Dean, College of Geosciences
    Woodrow Jones, Jr., Dean, College of Liberal Arts
    Michael Friedland, Dean, College of Medicine
    Richard Ewing, Dean, College of Science
    Robert Playter, Interim Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
    Fred Heath, Dean & Director, University Sterling C. Evans Library
THE FACULTY SENATE

COMMENTS OF THE FACULTY SENATE ON THE DRAFT VERSION OF THE TAMU STRATEGIC PLAN

SUBMITTED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

SEPTEMBER 15, 1997
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ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Comments Made by the Academic Affairs Committee Concerning the Texas A&M University Strategic Plan, September 5, 1997

General Comments:

1. On the University Mission statement, I do not know what "welcomes all people and prepares them for success," "builds character," and "respects its history and its traditions" have to do with a university. Nor do I understand on page 5 #20 what team-orientation work habits" have to do with a university.

2. On page 7 #30 we are said to be "top-5 and top-10" but on page 9 #1 we want to move "...to the next level." I do not believe we are top-5 so I suppose we can improve, but the statements in the draft are ridiculous. By most widely accepted rating of research universities (NRC ratings) TAMU is nowhere near top-10.

3. Faculty recruitment and retention needs to be addressed in a more focused manner in this document, to include a single section with plans for recruitment and retention. This should address such objectives as recruiting NAS members and Nobel laureates, competitive salaries to retain the best faculty, and faculty development opportunities for all faculty. Most of these issues are scattered throughout the plan, but faculty development is not addressed.

4. The wording is awkward in many places including on page 3 from lines 27 to 37. The document contains numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, and syntax.

5. On the back page I think the aspirations should be stated as present tense, that is:
   - provide rather than provides
   - conduct rather than conducts
   - treat rather than treats
   - employ rather than employs
   - protect rather than protects
   - utilize rather than utilizes
   - apply rather than applies
   - provide rather than provides
   - attract rather than attracts
   - offer rather than offers
   - strengthen rather than strengthens
   - give rather than gives
   - foster rather than fosters and
   - have rather than has

We don't aspire to provides, we aspire to provide, etc.
The only one which does not need to be changed — Teach undergraduate students with its best and most experienced teachers. Notice it is not — teaches.

6. The University Mission statement is very unexciting. Also, A&M is a land, sea and space-grant university, not just a land-grant university. What "challenging leadership opportunities" do we offer to students?

7. The mission statement (inside front cover) is rather bland. Here or somewhere early in the document, the idea should be stated that our primary mission is provide excellent educational and training opportunities for students. This idea is very well articulated in the section (pp. 44-45) on the division of student affairs. In addition, our service mission to the State can be incorporated. The following is another way to state the mission (adapted from the College of Veterinary Medicine Strategic Plan):

Texas A&M University, in its role as a comprehensive land, sea, and space grant university, pledges to:

* help students develop the knowledge, skills, and professional values needed to assume responsibility in society,

* develop and disseminate knowledge that both meets and anticipates the evolving needs of society, and

* serve as a repository and source of information and new advances for off-campus consumers.

8. Some comments have also been made concerning a lack of statements about A&M's relationship to the local communities: Bryan, College Station and Brazos County. The University should also be sensitive to its impact in terms of transportation problems (traffic) and to the general quality of life. This was reinforced by comments about cultural (arts) influences of the Univ. on the community.

9. The Table (Tuition and Fees) on page 6 seems to contain a different national ranking than the text (12 in the Table vs. 35 in the text), and is therefore confusing.

AAC Concerns:

1. The most noticeable thing about the Strategic Plan with respect to the AAC is how little there is in the plan which affects the AAC. Certainly as each of the interdisciplinary programs, courses and degree plans is formulated, the AAC will want to look at the program or degree plan and give our approval. That goes without saying. But the issues we talk about most are hardly touched upon in the report.

2. My only comment on the plan that is relevant to AAC concerns "commitment to our students" on
It contains lots of talk about hardware and formal programs but very little about faculty/student ratios, sizes of intro sections, availability of core courses—things that would really make undergraduate education at A&M better for all students and faculty. I think there is a "bricks and mortar," technology, hardware bias that runs throughout the plan. I tend to think people are what makes a university great.

3. We need to guarantee that we have enough resources to cover the core courses for our own students. These include English, foreign languages, political science, math, speech, etc. At present we are sending too many students to Blinn and other community colleges to get the basic courses we should be providing. We are losing tuition and subvention funds for these courses. And with the cap on student credit hours, this is where we need to earn our money.

4. The University needs to try to convince the legislature that the current policy (law) of granting transfer credit for all courses with the same course number is blatantly wrong. The legislature needs to recognize that the quality of courses taught at the typical community college does not compare to those taught at UT and A&M. The legislature needs to recognize that UT and A&M are the Flagship Universities, that Univ of Houston and Texas Tex and maybe UT Arlington and a few others are in the next tier, and that the others are far below. California has such a system of recognizing the differing quality of its state universities. Students who have taken courses at the lesser schools have a great deal of difficulty in the subsequent courses at A&M. Further the curriculum changes and no longer matches that at the other schools. Each school must have the right to decide which courses can be transferred and which cannot.

5. Also, I did not see much on teaching innovation. I saw a lot on distance learning, but nothing on the implementation of "effective" teaching "techniques." I know we (engineering) are doing a lot with the Foundation Coalition and, at least, the engineering section has one bullet on teaching innovation and the future of the engineering curricula. What about other colleges?

6. There seemed to be little emphasis on improving current strengths of the colleges as opposed to following the perceived current trends in higher education. For example, in the college of science the section on "core biological/chemical research" was placed after "K through 12 education". Does this actually reflect the ranking of priorities in our college? Also, math, statistics and physics are part of the college, but I see no mention of these departments.

7. The document places less emphasis on the colleges that actually teach students than on other aspects of the university such as "International programs."

8. The Strategic Plan does not specify improved rankings of graduate programs in the next National Research Council survey of research doctoral programs. It calls for improving graduate programs but lacks the courage to specify an objective measure of progress. P. 39, lines 1-7 should be strengthened to specifically mention improving our NRC rankings.

9. Some people are concerned that the Plan does not define any goals about faculty/student ratios.
or upper limits to section sizes. I think there is a fear that sections will be allowed to grow ever larger, to the detriment of the personal interactions needed for good education/mentoring.

10. The issue of undergraduate enrollment management was addressed throughout the plan in an ambiguous and inconsistent manner. It should be clearly stated whether or not the Plan calls for an increase or a decrease in undergraduate enrollment. The Plan does call for "maintaining the same level of course enrollments..." in order not to suffer a revenue loss (p. 48, l. 5). Other questions raised by the Plan regarding undergraduate enrollment management but not adequately addressed are as follows: Should selected programs be targeted for reduction in order to try to make smaller programs grow? Is there a conflict between growth in undergraduate vs. graduate enrollment? If these are the issues, they should be approached in an explicit and consistent manner in the Strategic Plan. These two questions are further discussed below.

a. Should selected programs be targeted for reduction in order to try to make smaller programs grow?

On page 9 (Enrollment management), it is stated that "...internal balances in the number of majors in a relatively small number of degree programs present the need for new cooperative enrollment limitation practices. On the other hand, there is the desire to allow students to select majors for which they are qualified or move between them as they seek the best degree for their professional aspirations" (italics mine). I would argue that "need" and "desire" should be switched. There is no need for new cooperative enrollment limitation practices, though there is the desire on the part of some shrinking programs to have access to students in growing programs they view as competitors. On the other hand, there is a need for students to be able to choose the major that would best serve them. Later in the document, "access to degree programs" for undergraduates is listed as a "longstanding strategic element" for "maintaining an outstanding undergraduate program" (p. 11, ll. 12-21). We can't really have it both ways: enrollment limitation practices will limit access to degree programs.

Once again on page 27 (not to mention again on p. 25, l. 6, and p. 50, ll. 24-26), the Strategic Plan calls for selective enrollment management in undergraduate programs, but in the same superficial manner as before. If cooperative enrollment management is a genuine issue, it needs to be addressed in specific terms that are in harmony with other objectives of the Strategic Plan. Clearly some undergraduate programs are shrinking or are historically small. Others are growing. The Plan should propose to examine the reasons for this, not to prescribe an unstudied "solution" in the form of "cooperative enrollment limitation practices." Among the reasons for different levels of enrollment in comparable programs may be quality of academic and advising support provided to students and perceived job or career opportunities upon graduation, as well as quality of course offerings. If the expanding programs are not serving their students well, i.e., classes are too large, or there is an oversupply of graduates for the job market, then enrollment management for that program would make sense. However, if the idea of enrollment management is really a new Robin Hood game motivated by the jealously of shrinking programs, then it makes little sense. Restricting the students from enrollment in the more attractive programs will not necessarily drive them to the less attractive
ones, but may in fact drive them to a different university.

b. Is there a conflict between growth in undergraduate vs. graduate enrollment? The paragraph at the bottom of page 9 states that requests (by whom?) to increase undergraduate enrollment are met with rebuttals (from whom?) that University resources are inadequate to both increase the undergraduate student body and maintain graduate programs. This is a dangerous statement that may very well backfire. It is illogical in the context of the proposed recruitment of more graduate students (p. 26, bottom; p. 48, line 8; p. 50, l. 21; and others). Furthermore, at the next legislative session, the Strategic Plan states that more emphasis will be placed on research and graduate education to parallel this year’s focus on undergraduate education. If graduate enrollment grows, must undergraduate enrollment shrink?

11. I do not like the frequent comments about distance learning, because I believe the evidence is that it is even worse education than present day large lecture education. It seem innocuous enough except for the comment on page 1 about "stringent economics" immediately following it. On page 13 #24 we are told that through distance education we will turn the learner's domicile into a classroom. Right!!

12. On page 2 #30, the Evan General Library is said to me nationally rated as though it is highly rated. We learn on page 10# 6 that we are about half way down the ratings.

On page 23 the goal of getting TAMU libraries up to the top-25 is less important than the improvement in facilities, services etc of the library. Ranking will come as the Library improves. I like the idea of the libraries being highlighted however. I have a number of minor thoughts but these apply to inter college activities and need not be pursued at this time.

13. Also on page 9 #24-28, we have the on one hand and on the other discussion about internal imbalances that means nothing.

14. The four "Over-Arching Themes Areas" on page 16 should have something for everyone and nothing for anyone. As someone associated with the Bush School against his will, I resent all the nonsense about a current undergraduate degree in international studies. Political science has nothing to do with this program, but our international courses are packed with majors, so much so that we have to offer extremely large sections. No one goes from this into diplomacy, just into a BS or BA in political science looking for a job.

Academic Affairs Committee's Comments Sent to Other Committees:

Personnel and Welfare Committee:
1. I would like to see a stronger statement on diversity in this document. Do we (TAMU) value diversity? Do we have a plan to recruit more African-American and Latino professors? How many? What is our target?

2. P51 - I think it would be appropriate to include a bullet on safety such as: Safety of our student and staff Surely this is more important than parking which is included.

3. In the section about faculty pay levels and raises, it is appropriate for us to be compared to other universities as far as faculty pay scales, but the issue of general faculty morale and sense of reward for hard work should also be emphasized as a justification for further developments in pay.

4. Some minor points such as on page 25 I would move Faculty salaries and collaboration with Texas peers up on the list somewhat.

Sent to Research Committee

1. The Strategic Plan (I read the entire document) does not target increased membership in National Academies, or other clear and objective measures of first-rank scholarship, as an objective.

For example, it does not specify improved rankings of graduate programs in the next National Research Council survey of research doctoral programs. It calls for improving graduate programs but lacks the courage to specify an objective measure of progress. P. 39, lines 1-7 should be strengthened to specifically mention improving our NRC rankings.

It should be relatively straightforward to count membership in NAS, NAE and NIM and use this as a measure of our progress in terms of developing faculty as leaders in scholarship. There are not many TAMU members now, so increasing the number should not be overly difficult. P. 41 lines 5-21 should be revised to include increasing the number of faculty in NAS, NAE and NIM as an objective.

The above are representative of several perfectly straightforward objective measures of the relative QUALITY of scholarship at a research university, and this Plan avoids targeting such. The Plan does, for example, suggest that a Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa would be desirable, but it omits other SPECIFIC goals that should also be included.

**BUDGET INFORMATION COMMITTEE**

The committee is pleased with the effort the administration has made to engage faculty members at all level in this planning process. However, we are not pleased with the report on the plan as it currently exists. A general question by the committee was to try and understand who the perceived audience was to be. This may have changed the evaluation of the plan significantly.

The reasons for the concerns are numerous, but I will attempt to focus on the ones that are
specific to the budget issues. The concerns are as follows:

- this plan is too long
- it is difficult to extract the “strategic” goals from this plan
- it has to be assumed the everything in the plan has a funding priority, meaning those things not on the plan have no (or at least less) priority
- if the above is true, then interdisciplinary, international, and outreach activities are too high in priority compared with building excellence in many of our existing programs
- the authors do not appear to have a realistic understanding about the funding environment for external grants, and thus the dependency on indirect funds which program should depend on. (The committee felt that this source was doing to become more difficult to tap into, rather than more abundant or level.)
- the plan does not address problems in the current faculty/student ratios in many places on campus
- the plan does not make it clear that funding to teach core courses will be a priority
- there is no vision on how we will spend our resources (time, money, energy) to become something better.
- the “over-arching” themes in the plan do not focus clearly on our strengths--or at least it does not appear to faculty that there has been enough discussion on this
- the area of distance learning has not been discussed broadly enough to be such a prime focus in the plan, especially considering the money and energy it takes to do it well
- most importantly, funding attention is too focused on bricks and mortar rather than people (especially the development of people who are here).

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

We didn't find anything that related to our charge except the complete absence of anything dealing with faculty governance.

PERSONNEL AND WELFARE COMMITTEE


The Personnel and Welfare committee reviewed the document for issues directly related to the concern of the committee. As a result of our meeting and conversations, we have the following comments to contribute.

I. The document should promote the well being of the Faculty in a less ambiguous way by addressing the following issues.
Faculty Senate Comments

A. Faculty salaries are a recognizable source of low morale on this campus. The Strategic Plan states that average salaries lag 9% behind those at our peer institutions. Faculty salary levels are used to rank the University in ratings lists such as that published recently by US News and World Report. A 2% raise was about the norm for this year, a year in which the state budget showed an excess. Although the plan does comment on this situation and cites the new funds available for increases, there is little commitment of a specific sort to overcoming the existing gap, no clearly defined time schedule, no mention of general raises as opposed to merit raises, no evident concern for salary compression, and no review of the way in which teaching and service contribute to salary increases. Further, Faculty at the Galveston Campus are on an entirely different pay scale and feel keenly disadvantaged by what they see as an unfair situation.

B. In the plan there is specific mention of providing new faculty chairs in some departments, but no mention of increasing the number of faculty for departments that have suffered reductions in faculty and are struggling to teach all their students because of staff shortages. There is also no consideration of offering more summer courses, a change that would improve faculty salaries as well as the likelihood of students' graduating within 4 years.

C. Faculty leave and development opportunities are provided by the Dean of Faculties' office, but increased opportunities would be very welcome. We also urge a commitment to increased development opportunities and improved salary levels for staff members; their pay levels are below those at our peer institutions, and they must be included in efforts to improve the university.

D. Higher education is not skilled at mentoring new faculty, and this University is no exception to the problem. New faculty are avidly recruited but many are left to flounder without help with teaching, proposal writing, tenure criteria, and career decisions of all types. Many campus offices fail to recognize that one of their missions should be to help the faculty do their jobs. Texas A&M is becoming user friendly for its students; it could be much more so for its faculty.

II. Diversity issues are discussed in the strategic plan, but are scattered throughout, and there is no section dedicated to the subject. The deans' plans to improve diversity are not mentioned here. Some college plans address diversity in detail; it would be an improvement to include this subject in a set of university-wide themes to be emphasized and supported across the campus. Care should be taken to refer to both race and ethnic differences, and mention of gender issues should be included. Explicit support for the equitable treatment of all employees regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or religion should not be left to be read between the lines of this plan.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee of the Faculty Senate met on Monday, September 1, 1997, to discuss the draft of the Strategic Plan at considerable length. We found the document to be better than average for such works, including many more specific goals than usual, but it leaves room for improvement. Our findings and suggestions follow.
1. Many of our other comments may be caused because it is not clear what audience is intended for this document. A statement of the intended audience of the plan is needed. Once that audience is clearly defined, it may be possible to delete material not appropriate to that audience. For example, the history of the University may not be needed. Is the audience the stakeholders defined at the beginning of the document, or is it the Legislature, or people here at Texas A&M University?

2. Overall, this 52 page document is more a tactical plan than a strategic one. It would be a good idea to provide a short paper of about 5 to 10 pages in which the common themes of the plan - the overarching biological/life/medical sciences, the Bush School and allied areas, telecommunications/information, library resources, as well as others that are not listed as overarching, such as distance education, other technological development, improving faculty salaries, etc. - would be set out clearly, each with a supporting priority and estimate of cost. A second, tactical, document accompanying the strategic plan could then be published, giving the sort of detail found in the present plan. The promised executive summary would not serve as the needed separate Strategic Plan, first because the result would not clearly show the separation into two plans, one strategic and the other tactical, and second because any reasonable executive summary would be too short to serve as a complete Strategic Plan.

3. In view of the many goals described in this strategic plan which are not included in the overarching ones listed in Section 4.1, Section 4.1 by itself cannot be considered to be the desired short strategic plan.

4. Too many of the goals are not clearly stated, so that success would be difficult to measure. We need specific targets. Further, in the part of this document that would be the tactical paper, there are several examples in which a problem is noted but no plan for improvement is offered. For example, the inadequate level of faculty compensation is noted, but there is no indication of how the necessary additional funds will be found. Of course, it is important to remember that setting a goal can spark opposition and impose limits to success.

5. We are concerned that there seems to be a lot of teaching, administration, and service described in the document, but much less about research, except incidentally. Where is the academic meat? Is this strategic plan signaling a change in the planned character of the University? As it is, the plan seems out of balance for a major research university.

6. On a more specific scale, there appears to be a tendency in this plan to expect technology to reduce our intense use of human resources, without regard to the absence of evidence that technology can replace the one-on-one teaching that has been our paradigm for so long. It is probable that this document overstates the likely effectiveness of technology in this area, and it certainly understates the human infrastructure needed to maintain the technology and work with students over it. Technology-driven courses are often more work than face-to-face ones due to the e-mail glut one receives. Technology should enhance, not replace, teachers, and it is important for the Strategic Plan to make this point so that readers do not misconstrue it.
7. For the Strategic Plan, the terms "distance learning" and "distance education" are not defined. For the tactical plan we would like to see the following questions addressed: Who teaches distance learning classes? What rewards will they get for the creative work involved? How are standards to be set in distance education courses? For example, how are tests to be conducted without cheating? Billing individuals who sign on without registering for the distance-learning course could prove very difficult. We are concerned that evidence so far is that we routinely underestimate the time cost to the faculty member teaching a distance education course.

8. It was observed that there is a problem with degree programs without faculty. International Studies, for example, is likely to die without a supporting faculty. If expansion of such programs is contemplated, that difficulty should be addressed.

9. The growth in real size of the administration of the University is of concern to us, and it is not addressed in this plan. We would hope that the Strategic Plan would articulate the faculty's vision for the University. Within the confines of this vision, we believe the administration is already too large, and the goal of cutting the growth of the administration (or at least keeping it in the same proportion to faculty additions) should appear in this plan.

10. A serious problem, internal campus transportation, especially for students and faculty going between classes, is not addressed in this plan. As the campus continues to grow, the current solutions put in place by our hard-working staff will not continue to suffice. Since a long-term solution to this problem requires very long-term planning, it certainly needs to be included in the Strategic Plan.

11. We know it is a fraud for us to claim that we can do for a class of 190 students what we do for a class of 30. Thus among the strategic goals should be one calling for reduction of the larger class sizes.

Although we have dwelt on problems with the Strategic Plan as it exists now, we want to end on the happier note that there is much to like about it. Two particular features that were both unexpected and pleasant were:

12. We are very happy to see the call for the University's retention of indirect costs, much of which now goes to the State. But we would like to see that call made even more strongly.

13. On page 23, the goal of getting TAMU libraries up to the top-25 is good but is less important than the improvement in facilities, services, etc. of the libraries. Ranking will come as the libraries improve. However, we are pleased to see the libraries being highlighted.

The vision for what we (individually and institutionally) as a faculty are to do originates at the faculty (not the administrative) level. The role of the administration is to articulate and support the achievement of that vision - to remind us and notify others as an on-going process. Of course, the administration will make choices about what is appropriate for inclusion and support in the
institutional vision - that is, what seems to be achievable in light of financial, intellectual and political resources - as that is their role and one the faculty is ill-equipped for. This dichotomy of function would call for a much longer development process for a strategic plan, in which the faculty would first develop and debate the goals of the University. We would like to see this longer-term process followed, instead of truly involving the faculty only at the end of the process.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE TAMU DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

Ten members of the Research Committee of the TAMU Faculty Senate met Thursday, August 28 from 3:00 to 5:00 to discuss the TAMU Draft Strategic Plan.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to Provost Douglas for his efforts to involve the Faculty and the Faculty Senate in the development and evolution of this Strategic Plan. The Committee expresses its appreciation to Speaker Wylie for the opportunity to comment on the research aspects of this document.

OVERVIEW

The Committee urges that the strategic plan include a critical evaluation of our strengths and weaknesses. It should be organized around a plan which describes mechanisms to preserve the strengths in the core university, remedy the weaknesses, and add to the body of the university. For example, the university lacks a coherent mechanism to change itself; it lacks a mechanism to identify needs and select the most pressing and important for future change. How can unneeded departments die or wither away, how can new departments be born? How can limited funds be directed to new programs, given internal politics and vested interests? Which piece of research infrastructure should be funded and which not?

THE TARGET GOALS ARE APPROPRIATE

Our comments on the principal target goals of the strategic plan are listed below. (We believe that these are goals, not over-arching themes.)

1. Biological/Life/Medical Sciences. The Committee believes this will be an area of great future interest to Americans and will be an area of growing research support from federal and other funds. One suggestion was to broaden the scope to read "Biological/Life/Medical/Health Sciences". This would have the advantage of more specifically including research in such areas as ecology, genetics, toxicology, nutrition, and exercise physiology (which would permit a tie-in with the athletic section). Inclusion of genetics, toxicology, and nutrition would permit brief entries from the Programs in Genetics, Toxicology, and Nutrition and perhaps others.
The future administrative structure for the Health Sciences Center is presently in a state of flux, so it is difficult to be as specific as would be desirable. The plan should acknowledge this, and then detail the relationship between the other TAMU Strategic Plan efforts and the Health Sciences Center in the area of human medicine as explicitly as possible, or at least include a statement that the Health Sciences Center looks forward to participating in many cooperative projects, regardless of the final administrative decisions.

2. Bush School and the MPA Degree. The Committee feels that the relationship of the Bush School to the University Colleges and Departments should to be better defined. The Committee feels that it is somewhat out of their area of responsibility to comment extensively on the plans for the Bush School, but there is a sense of unease in the Committee. This may be due to uncertainty as to whether the Bush School should be regarded as a university-wide asset, or as part of the program of the College of Liberal Arts. By analogy to the Institute of Bioscience and Technology (IBT) in Houston, the Bush School, like the IBT, will certainly become a major scholarly asset to TAMU, but problems, as yet unsolved, of departmental affiliation, tenure, participation in graduate education, resource reallocation, and so forth have become evident in the relationship between the IBT and Texas A&M. TAMU should use this experience as a case study to avoid encountering similar problems with the Bush School. The Committee hopes and believes that the Bush school will become an important institution like the Hoover Institute, staffed by outstanding and distinguished scholars as Fellows of the Bush School. This part of the Strategic Plan should be developed in a more scholarly way, perhaps drawing on the development of the Hoover Institute as a potential model. Faculty familiar with Stanford confirm that the nationally and internationally recognized Hoover Institute enhances the world-wide reputation of Stanford University. Under the direction of a highly regarded scholar, the Bush school could undertake innovative programs, such as an international invitational program emphasizing Pacific Rim, Mideastern, or Latin and South American countries.

3. Telecommunications/Information Technology. The Committee believes that this is an important infrastructure that is crucial to the development of research programs, as well as many other university programs. We note that in the FY 1998 Budget, $300,000 is earmarked for a Telecommunications Academy and $150,000 for Distance Education. These activities could be described in greater detail in the Strategic Plan.

4. Library Resources. The Committee wishes to state in the most emphatic possible terms that it is absolutely imperative that the library resources at TAMU be greatly upgraded. Many faculty felt this need is at the top of the list. By this the faculty do not mean adding another wing to the building.

Items 3 and 4 clearly are closely related, for example with respect to on-line journals, on-line databases and so forth. The Committee feels that the interrelated aspects of telecommunications and library resources are not developed in sufficient detail. A better library aided by communications technology will benefit all at the university--faculty, students and researchers, alike--and should have the highest priority in this strategic plan. It may be that telecommunications and the library are considered separate items because of the difficulty of reconciling the traditionally different emphasis of information-driven and hardware-driven approaches. But what is a Strategic Plan for, if not to
propose effective solutions.

LACK OF COORDINATION WITH COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLANS

The Committee feels that the second part of the document (Summaries of College Strategic Plans) is not well coordinated with the first part of the document, which leads up to and describes the theme areas. For example, one would expect the College of Science to play a central role in biological/life/medical sciences; yet this College hopes to improve distance education, K through 12 education and to continue to do research of some kind. Surely, the Biology Dept. plans to do some biological research. Surely, the new Protein Chemistry lab, located in Chemistry, but serving the entire campus, could be mentioned, perhaps as a model system, perhaps as part of a campus wide reorganization (with revised, perhaps increased funding) of service facilities. Since research infrastructure seems to be a major objective, service facilities deserve to be treated in greater detail.

As another example, the College of Education hopes to recruit a diverse student body and faculty, to meet national standards for undergraduate curricula, and to evaluate administrative decision making. Surely, the College of Education could get involved in setting up new research programs in education such as model pre-kindergartens, since day-care seems to be a goal of the university. Perhaps it could cooperate with the local communities in devising and testing model programs for disadvantaged education, mathematics instruction, self-directed learning and so forth. The entry for the College of Education does not even mention the cooperative programs designated by other Colleges as being in collaboration with the College of Education.

The College of Business might wish to consider whether they would like to tie into the Life Sciences theme with a few words about their potential contributions to Biotechnology companies in Texas. The Texas Biotechnology effort has become very sizable and extensive, and many of the companies are very well regarded, even though there are, as yet, no Amgens, Genentechs, or Biogens. Some of these companies are located in the Woodlands, where the College of Business plans to establish a new physical facility, including a center for executive development. The College of Business could play an important role in helping scientists in Biotechnology companies understand the realities of business.

It is not absolutely necessary that each College interface with the theme areas. For example the College of Geosciences and Maritime Studies has an excellent, brief account of their plan, which seems important, useful and achievable, even though it, too, does not tie into the Themes. The ghost-writer for the Strategic Plan should meet with each Dean for ten minutes to decide on words that tie the first and second parts together, without misrepresenting the Strategic Plan of each College.

The Committee strongly recommends that it be made much, much clearer that each College has a more detailed plan, and that the brief account presented is only an executive summary. The individual College plans should be attached as an appendix to the University document. Or, if that is not practical, the College plans could be placed at the library and other strategic locations, for the use
of those interested in further details. The location of these detailed documents should described prominently in the Strategic Plan.

THE THIRD PART, ON IMPLEMENTATION, IS WEAK

The Committee feels that the third part of the document, which could be regarded as an Implementation Section, is very weak. This section should clearly describe what can be done by internal reorganization and redistribution of existing funds and priorities, what can be reasonably expected from federal and other granting agencies, and what is needed from the State Legislature. Minimum financial support for the Strategic Plan is mentioned (p 18: 21-28), but we could not identify these funds in the FY 1998 Budget.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN NEEDS TO BE MORE SPECIFIC

The Committee feels that there is an almost total lack of detail and specific objectives in the Strategic Plan. The plan talks about general objectives, but not how to obtain them. For example, statements in the College of Engineering section, "...will advance its consistent top-20 ranking by improving national visibility and moving two of its larger departments into top-10 positions", are unaccompanied by any indication as to how this will be accomplished. Perhaps a reference to the College Strategic Plan could be made to indicate that this goal has been carefully chosen and is achievable.

Specific items which could be included, which would clearly assist the faculty in their research efforts, are: 1. Regular sabbaticals. 2. Designated funds, which accompany each faculty position, to allow individual faculty to attend a national meeting in their research area. 3. A mechanism by which faculty teaching responsibilities can be adjusted in Colleges so that adequate free time for research is available. 4. Commitment and sources of competitive levels of start-up funds for new faculty in all Colleges.

Some flexible, internal funds are available for research. The level of funding could be increased. One use for internal funds would be to fund start-up efforts by faculty who have good projects, but who did not receive outside funding. A huge amount of work goes into each grant proposal, which is often read by only one or two reviewers at granting agencies. Many scientists believe that some worthwhile projects are not approved, because they are not adequately reviewed, in addition to those that are considered good, but ranked below the pay line. These proposals could be re-reviewed at TAMU and those that seem important and carefully planned could be funded on a start-up basis by the university. The difference between this proposal and the Texas Advanced Research program is that a very detailed proposal would be available for review with no extra effort.

GRADUATE EDUCATION CAN BE IMPROVED

Similarly, items which would assist graduate education would include: 1. Increased levels of full or partial tuition waivers for in-state and out-of-state graduate students, especially those in funded
positions. Some thought needs to go into the practicality of this. 2. Graduate stipends should be at or above levels at peer competing institutions. If the lower cost of living at TAMU is taken into account in the stipends, this needs to effectively be communicated to applicants. Graduate students contribute to teaching excellence in important ways and this should be recognized.

With respect to teaching, the Committee believes that the basis of good teaching, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, is good scholarship and that the elements of scholarship are similar to, usually identical to, the elements of research. Scholarship of any kind takes time and resources and this needs to be emphasized. The fun in teaching and in research is partly derived from scholarship, and the results of both teaching and research depend on the resources and time for scholarship being available.

THE REPORT UNDERESTIMATES THE DIFFICULTIES OF DOING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

The Committee has some reservations about making interdisciplinary research the only major focus. In order to learn a new field, considerable startup obligations must be undertaken. If a faculty member becomes "interdisciplinary", department heads must understand and accept this change in emphasis. The current interdisciplinary Programs in Genetics, Neuroscience, Nutrition and Toxicology illustrate this dilemma. Departments hire faculty in accordance with the departmental mission and the Programs make do with the available faculty. Perhaps additional support for the Programs should be contemplated.

An interdisciplinary approach to anything is only as good as the expertise of each individual that participates. Therefore, the Committee believes there should continue to be strong emphasis on research programs led by individual members of the faculty. Some believe that the word "interdisciplinary" has become a trendy buzzword, whereas others argue that it is very important to cross-fertilize research programs. In any case, for the foreseeable future, much of the strength of the university research effort in many, but not all Colleges and University-related units, will lie in individual labs headed by individual faculty.

The Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies has considerable experience in its effort to support interdisciplinary research through interdepartmental and intercollegiate grants. Some consideration should be given as to whether this should be the principal route for supporting interdisciplinary programs, or whether some other program should be developed.

WE ARE NOT YET A PREEMINENT RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

The Committee feels that the administration should be more careful about sentences that link $366.7 million and a TAMU ranking among the top ten research universities (p2: 32-34). The Committee feels that $366.7 million, if expended intelligently, creatively, and diligently on important research problems, may be sufficient to fund research that could put TAMU among the top ten research universities. However, being ranked in the top ten is not decided by dollar input, but rather
by the quality of the research output. The more correct statement that TAMU ranks in the top ten in terms of research expenditure may be literally true, but it is still intended to imply that we are in the top ten in terms of research quality and impact. The Committee feels that we are not yet a preeminent research university and that there is considerable danger in misleading ourselves, if we are not. This is especially true when engaged in the planning process. If the assumptions are incorrect, the plan cannot focus on what is really needed and therefore cannot be successful.

Increased membership in the National Academy of Science, Medicine, or Engineering, as well as leadership in other professional societies is important and could provide a clear and objective measure of first-rank scholarship. Improved rankings of graduate programs in the National Research Council survey of research doctoral programs is another measure of progress. The Strategic Plan does suggest that a Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa would be desirable, but the scholarly reputation of the university could be enhanced by broadening the emphasis beyond Phi Beta Kappa.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Finally, no one on the Committee could offer a single example of anything that had been improved by the Continuous Improvement Process. This may, however, be due to an emphasis on improvement in service processes, facilities planning, administrative procedures etc., which may not directly come to the attention of individual faculty. The sections beginning p14: 32 and ending p15: 13 and beginning p41: 22 and ending p42: 28 take up more space than important Colleges, and are good examples of the tendency to provide sweeping generalities and discussion of objectives in the absence of any discussion of how to obtain them.

Perhaps the Continuous Improvement process could deal with the (probably not solvable) problem of how to evaluate, assess, quantify, and rank scholarship and research accomplishment at Texas A&M, with a view to improving the university through a better understanding of the important elements of scholarship and how they are fostered or inhibited at TAMU. Probably, this is, in essence, the proposal described on p42: 5-12. Although the proposal does call for enhanced benchmarking with selected peer universities, it avoids identifying and targeting straightforward, objective measures of the quality of scholarship at TAMU.

REWRITING TO AVOID NONSENSE SENTENCES IS NECESSARY

Two examples: 1. The strange statement (p10: 26-28) should be replaced with a forthright statement of its meaning, whatever that is. 2. Rewording is needed to avoid the implication that we are going to offer courses in research development and jobs creation (p50: 13-15)
INDEPENDENT COMMENTS

Remarks on the Strategic Plan from Senator D. Hensley:

(1) Welcomes all people...this is easily misconstrued. What is not the case, and cannot ever be the case, is that Texas A&M admits everyone and prepares all those admitted for success. Even if we did have open admissions, Texas A&M would not be right for everyone, or even for most everyone.

We welcome those who share our zeal for achievement and perhaps excellence, and who have in some degree those strengths of intellect, character and preparation which are needed to pursue college work.

(2) The mission and role of higher education are in the process of fundamental change. One hopes not. The enduring mission and role of Universities, like that of other fundamental institutions of society such as government and church, does not undergo fundamental change every decade or so.

What is changing is the means by which we pursue this mission. Here, the talk of exciting era of revolutionary change makes sense.

(3) Diversity: The paragraph on challenges makes no mention of the fact that California is in the same boat...we are at no disadvantage vis-a-vis California in this respect. It also makes no mention of our many strengths which might be brought to bear in this regard. Texas A&M offers good value for the dollar, it offers a degree which is well respected and which has networking pluses, and our minority graduation rates are significantly better than at many of the schools with which we will be competing for students. Whether all these are specifically mentioned or not, at least it should be asserted that we DO have some factors working for us here.

(4) Student financial aid: This is a stylistic point.

'Student financial aid - The need for financial aid of all types for students to continue in and graduate from a university is increasing. This is of tantamount importance for students from lower socioeconomic groups who have gained admission, but are not able to initially finance their own higher education.'

The word 'tantamount' is not appropriate here. What is needed is the word 'paramount'.

(5) Now seriously, does anyone expect that in the coming century, Latin America will overtake North America and Europe? What is expected is more modest: that Asia will move into first place, perhaps, and that Latin America will catch up with N. America and Europe. Of course, this less hyperbolic expectation carries with it the same message: our students need to learn foreign
languages and participate in study abroad and international internships.

'Global markets - Rapidly emerging economic regions which are anticipated to dominate world markets during the early part of the 21st century are Asia and Latin America. Study abroad and international internships offered by a university must consider this fundamental change in the economic relations of nations and how our graduates must be prepared to succeed in it.'

(6) Safety: The passage 'Emphasis areas are: security for personal property, computers, automobiles and other transportation means,' should read 'Emphasis areas are: security for personal property, computers, automobiles, bicycles, and other transportation means'. Most Universities encourage biking. With our climate, large campus, and flat layout, we have all the prerequisites.

The advantages to the University of having large numbers of students (and heck, faculty etc.) biking to campus include reduced load on the ever aggravating parking shortage, and reduced congestion on campus streets at rush hour. On top of these obvious points, there are health consequences, which figure to cut insurance costs.

Telecom: There should be some mention of data encryption, security, and data compression here. (At least, the mathematician in me thinks so.)

Math Ed: Style point. 'Emphasis' is not a verb.

'K through 12 education - We emphasis (EMPAHSIZE) our work to address critical needs of society in preparing mathematics and science educators in collaboration with the College of Education and through our own expanding outreach efforts.'

Style point: The contraction 'it's' stands for IT IS. The correct word in the passage below is 'its', with no apostrophe.

5.6 Athletics

'The intercollegiate athletic program is dedicated to providing an atmosphere that allows it's [ITS] student-athletes and...'

Comments on Strategic Plan from Senator Yasskin:

1. Relation to Local Community:

On page 1 lines 26-30 the plan recognizes that there are many constituencies which have a stake in what the University does, including the public and various levels of government. However, nowhere in the Strategic Plan is there any mention of the local community: its people and various governments: Brazos County, College Station, Bryan, the two school districts and the Economic
Development Council. These are profoundly affected by the actions of the University and have a significant effect upon the well-being of the University. The relation of the University to the local community is not normally a big money issue for the University but the University's position on various issues can have a big effect upon the community and vice versa.

The Local Community should not be left out of the Strategic Plan.

I list below some ways in which the University has an effect on the local community and vice versa and things which can be done to improve this relationship. Some of this should be discussed in section 2.1 (on page 4 line 31 and following) along with the State considerations as Local considerations. It should also be mentioned in many other places in the document.

The effect of the University on the Community:

a. Bush Library and School will have a major impact on the local economy.

b. The Opera and Performing Arts Society add significantly to the local culture.

c. The University runs Easterwood Airport.

d. The football weekends, fire school, graduation and other University activities affect the local tourist business.

e. The Texas Transportation Institute and the local Police are in the national forefront in developing new crime prevention technology.

The effect of the Community on the University:

a. A healthy community helps the University attract good faculty and administrators.

b. Police and Fire Departments from the cities provide service to students and back up such services on campus.

c. You can't have a safe environment on campus unless there is a safe environment in the community.

Things which can be done to help improve the relationship between the University and the Community:

a. The University should push to get a Regent from the local community.

b. The University and the Community should work together to improve the transportation in and out of the region. This includes getting highways built to Austin-San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas-Fort Worth and includes improving airline service such as getting direct flights to Austin and/or San
c. The University Research Park must cooperate with the Economic Development Council and the business parks from the county and two cities to bring more high-tech industry to the area. These provide major sources for interaction with the faculty.

d. The University Police and Fire Departments must continue to cooperate with their local counterparts.

2. Financial Aid: The University should establish as a goal that "Any student who is good enough to be accepted to A&M should not be prevented from enrolling due to financial reasons." Scholarships should be awarded on the basis of merit and financial need. However, we should attempt to make interest free loans for tuition and fees available to any student who asks for it with preference to those with the most financial need. And we should provide jobs for students or help them find jobs to pay for books, room, board and other expenses. On the loans, the University would not make the loans itself but negotiate with the local bankers to provide the loans with the University paying the interest for five years. This might help offset the effect of the Hopwood decision.

For example, at present, tuition and fees are $78 per credit hour plus about $123 per semester. If a student takes 125 credit hours in 8 semesters that is $10,734 in loans. The University just received a $25 million donation from Mr. Harvey Bright. The interest from that money could pay the interest on $25 million in student loans. That would provide loans for 2,330 students. Perhaps more alumni could be encouraged to contribute to a student loan fund so we could be able to offer loans to all students.

3. Distance Learning Technology: What are the Academy for Advanced Telecommunications and Learning Technologies and the Center for Distance Learning and Research? Do they already exist? When were they formed? Where are they housed? Did the Senate approve their creation?

Comments on Strategic Plan from Senator Ryan:

Our Galveston campus constituents would like to see something about addressing the gross salary disparities between those paid on the main campus and those paid on our campus. We are called a part of TAMU, we award a TAMU degree, we have Senators in the TAMU faculty Senate, but we are not TAMU on pay day. Morale here is, I would argue, even lower than at College Station, because NO FACULTY MEMBER ON OUR ENTIRE CAMPUS received any raise this year, although administrators gave themselves raises.

Comments on Strategic Plan from Senator Diane S. Kaplan:

Primary Concern: Highlighting of Efforts to Enhance Diversity at Texas A&M University
I. The University's commitment to enhancing diversity of students, faculty, and staff should be highlighted throughout the strategic plan.

A. Specifically, this commitment should be explicitly stated in the core values listed at the beginning of the plan.

It would be better if the fifth core value, instead of stating that Texas A&M University "welcomes all people and prepares them for success," would make the following (or a similar) statement:

"Texas A&M University is committed to valuing and providing educational opportunity to the diverse population of Texas."

B. The commitment to enhancing diversity at Texas A&M University should be included as one of the overarching themes of the university since this commitment does apply to and affect all aspects and units of the university.

II. Additional specific programs and methods for enhancing diversity should be included in the section where it is described as an overarching theme and highlighted throughout the rest of the strategic plan as well.

Comments on Strategic Plan from Senator Larry Oliver:

Concerning Section 4.1--Overarching Themes....where did they come from? Where do you propose the dollars quoted here to come from?

Comments on Strategic Plan from Senator Frederick Schlemmer:

There is a lack of items addressed to the undergraduate population.

Comments on Strategic Plan from Senator Stanley Carpenter:

Agrees with Senator Kaplan in that more needs to be done with Diversity Issues. He states that there is no real alignment between plans.
Comments by Senators Arthur Hobbs and Philip Yasskin:

The following is a list of potential goals which might be considered by a committee to rewrite the Strategic Plan.

Potential Goals

1. Faculty
   a. Increase salaries to meet peer universities within 5 years.
   b. Increase salaries to reduce salary compression and inversion.
   c. Provide cost of living raises in addition to merit raises.
   d. Reconcile the reward structure with the multiple missions of the university.
   e. Improve faculty governance over the university.
   f. Resolve the status of faculty at the Galveston branch campus.
   g. Provide better mentoring for new faculty.
   h. Provide more development leaves and start a sabbatical program.

2. Teaching
   a. Offer sufficient sections of core curriculum courses to provide for all of our own students.
   b. Increase summer course offerings.
   c. Improve existing Ph.D. programs and increase national recruitment.
   d. Try to get the public and legislature to recognize that there are different quality universities in Texas and to eliminate the law requiring automatic transfers of courses taken at all state colleges.
   e. Distance Learning
      i. Study its desirability.
      ii. Assist faculty in developing courses.
      iii. Assure the high quality of Texas A&M courses.
      iv. Ensure exam security.

3. Research
   a. Select several existing programs and improve their national standing to the top 5 or 10.
   b. Develop interdisciplinary programs in:
      i. Biological/Life/Medical/Health Sciences.
      ii. Telecommunication and Information Technology.
      iii. Bush Library and School and Allied Areas.
   c. Improve standings in the NRC ratings.
   d. Increase the number of Faculty in the NAS, the NAE and the NIM.

4. Students
   a. Increase financial aid for undergraduates with the goal: "Any student who is good enough to be accepted to A&M, should not be prevented from enrolling due to financial reasons."
   b. Increase graduate stipends and tuition waivers for graduate students.
c. Practice enrollment management at the undergraduate level. Increase graduate student enrollment.
d. Reduce student to faculty ratio. Reduce class sizes.
e. Secure a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

5. Environment
   a. Diversity:
      i. Develop specific goals for faculty and administration hiring, tenure, promotion and retention.
      ii. Develop specific goals for graduate and undergraduate enrollment, retention and graduation.
      iii. Develop methods to expand student diversity consistent with the Hopwood decision.
   b. Improve transportation and parking on campus.
   c. Cooperate with the local community to:
      i. Improve air service to the area including direct flights to Austin and San Antonio.
      ii. Improve highway access to Houston, Austin-San Antonio and Dallas-Fort Worth.
      iii. Ensure a safe environment including police and fire protection.
      iv. Attract hi-tech industry.

6. Infrastructure
   a. Library
      i. Add significantly to the book and journal collections.
      ii. Add to the on-line services.
      iii. Replace NOTIS by 1999.
   b. Telecommunications
      i. Improve campus network.
      ii. Join the Next Generation Internet.
      iii. Improve or replace TTVN.

7. Administration
   a. Reduce the administrator to faculty ratio.