

October 30, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO College of Liberal Arts

FROM: Charles A. Johnson, Dean

RE: Preliminary Identification of College Research Strengths

The College of Liberal Arts is fortunate to have nationally prominent departments, programs, and faculty. The fact that departments, programs, and faculty have attained national attention for their successes significantly enhances the college's response to Texas A&M University's plans to develop an Academic Master Plan. As the university identifies landmark areas of research and as the college identifies research strengths, I want to underscore that seeking national prominence continues to be a college-wide goal for everyone. All of these efforts will advance the college and the university toward the goals outlined in *Vision 2020*.

College Research Strengths

You will recall that identification of college research strengths is the first step in the Academic Master Planning process as developed by Dr. Jeffrey S. Vitter, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics. You have received several memoranda concerning this process. Additionally, faculty in the college have prepared white papers proposing research strengths which were reviewed by the ad hoc Research Strengths Advisory Committee (RSAC). All of the documents relating to this process and copies of the college white papers are posted on the college website at <http://clla.tamu.edu/collegeinfo/keyissues/academic-master-plan/>. I also received comments from faculty, the Executive Committee, and the Liberal Arts Council (LAC) about college research strengths.

The five proposed areas of research strength in the College of Liberal Arts are:

- **DIVERSITY AND SOCIETY**
- **CULTURE AND CHANGE**
- **GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS, AND BEHAVIOR**
- **TRANSNATIONALISM, GLOBALISM, AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS**
- **HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE**

Complete details for these areas can be found on the college's website at the following url: <http://clla.tamu.edu/collegeinfo/keyissues/academic-master-plan/proposed-college-research-strengths/>.

Developed in consultation with the Research Strengths Advisory Committee, these five research strengths represent overarching areas of scholarship that can be broadly understood to have common or related research questions. Each of these areas involve highly successful faculty with records of nationally visible publications, external grants and awards, and well-mentored students. And, each of the areas has the potential for scholarly growth and innovation through faculty collaborations, as well as the potential for creating or sustaining research centers or institutes with external funding.

I would appreciate receiving faculty and staff comments about the proposed research strengths. I will be discussing these proposed strengths with the college's Executive Council and with the Liberal Arts Council. Faculty and staff may share their comments with either their department heads or with their departmental LAC representative. Faculty members may also choose to attend the LAC meeting which will be held at 3:00 pm in Coke 206A on Wednesday, November 5th. Faculty may also comment by sending me an email or personal letter. The final draft of the research strengths and the research plan for the college will be the week of November 24th.

University-Level White Papers

Contrary to plans discussed in my September 17th memorandum on the college's academic master planning process, there will not be a second round of white papers that might be submitted to the university proposing landmark research areas. It is clear that development of these papers will require more time than the two weeks originally planned in my September 17th memorandum. Moreover, the university has encouraged faculty submission of white papers that may or may not be tied to research strengths identified by colleges.

The RSAC and I do, nevertheless, want to facilitate preparation of university-level papers in areas that appear to be well poised for development as university landmark research areas. I plan to work with department heads, members of research groups, and individual faculty to encourage preparation of university-level white papers. Members of the RSAC are available to comment on drafts of university-level white papers. Additionally, I plan to contact deans and faculty in other colleges to alert possible partners in these areas of papers being developed by liberal arts faculty. The provost's office has posed general information about the planning process and preliminary materials in preparation for the Research Roadmap Committee (<http://www.tamu.edu/provost/amp/>). We will continue to post information on a college website devoted to the academic master planning process (<http://clla.tamu.edu/collegeinfo/keyissues/academic-master-plan/>).

I want to thank members of the ad hoc Research Strengths Advisory Committee for their exceptional work in helping to identify this preliminary listing of research strengths in the college. Additionally, I want to thank the many faculty who contributed to this process by authoring college-level white papers or by commenting on the submitted papers.