

From: Vitter, Jeff
Sent: Thursday, September 11, 2008 11:52 AM
To: EVP - Deans CS Campus
Cc: EVP - Provost's Administrative Team
Subject: Invitation to the research roadmap process for the Academic Master Plan
Attachments: AMP_Process2008sept10.pdf

[Please forward to all faculty and staff in your college or school.]

To: All faculty and staff (forwarded via the deans)
Re: The Texas A&M Academic Master Plan—*Accelerating Excellence*
Date: September 10, 2008

Howdy!

Texas A&M is a university recognized for rich tradition, vibrant culture, and high achievement. Nine years ago, the university community developed a long-range transformative vision, appropriately called *Vision 2020*, to position TAMU in the top echelon of U.S. universities within two decades. I am writing to seek your involvement in creating a bold Academic Master Plan, which will serve as our roadmap—with goals, strategies, and metrics—for achieving the key elements of *Vision 2020*.

Developing the Academic Master Plan will be an exciting campus-wide effort. Success will depend upon your participation. For the past few weeks, I have been working closely with the deans and various campus groups and organizations to design a structured process that will foster broad participation and grass root efforts, fully engaging the faculty, staff, and students of the university as well as key partners among former students, the community, and the Texas A&M System.

In this email, I will describe the process, governance, and timeline for the Academic Master Plan. This email is a “call out” of sorts to motivate people to get involved now. The process has started.

Texas A&M, like all great land-grant institutions, is founded upon three fundamental pillars: teaching, research, and engagement. Accordingly, our Academic Master Plan will be composed of three roadmaps:

1. a teaching roadmap for excellence in education that will take a fresh look at the core curriculum and address the recommendations of the Murano report;
2. a research roadmap to develop “landmark” areas of excellence where Texas A&M will command worldwide distinction in the creation and dissemination of knowledge;
3. an engagement roadmap to lay out A&M’s role in impacting society through developing pathways to higher education, community and government engagement, and entrepreneurship and commercialization.

Common to all three roadmaps will be overarching issues involving

- developing human potential via recruiting and mentoring for excellence, building diverse communities, and improving quality of life;
- international programs and globalization;
- facilities and infrastructure; and
- marshalling financial resources.

To oversee the overall process of the Academic Master Plan, we will be forming a steering committee with membership that reflects broad and deep participation from across the university. If you have suggestions for

steering committee membership, please contact your dean; I have requested the deans to submit nominations for membership by September 17. The steering committee will then appoint three committees for the three roadmap areas, each co-chaired by a faculty member and an administrator. The three roadmap committees will interact regularly with the steering committee and relevant councils.

I will focus the remainder of this email on the process we will follow to create the *research roadmap* and its research landmark areas. This roadmap is most time-critical and fundamental to our planning efforts. Identification of the research landmarks will play an important role in guiding our deployment of resources—such as hiring superstar faculty, seeding major center initiatives, and prioritizing building and renovation. For that reason, we have designed an open process that emphasizes wide input, and we seek your participation. Below is a snapshot of the upcoming events that form the process.

As input to the process, but not formally part of the process, I have asked the dean of each college (or school) to lead an open, inclusive effort for identifying the college's key long-term priority areas, which will be the basis for the college's future decisions on hiring faculty and allocating resources. These college research plans should identify where the college can achieve renown, especially where it can address the grand challenges impacting society. Grand challenges generally cannot be solved by any one paradigm or within any one discipline, and thus by nature they require a multidisciplinary approach. My hope is that college plans will identify how they can play a key role in addressing certain grand challenges. The college plans are due December 1, 2008, and they will be disseminated and prominently featured on the Web.

In the next few weeks, as the colleges start work on their research plans, the research roadmap committee will issue a formal call for short (3–4 page) white papers, due January 12, 2009, that propose landmark areas for the research roadmap. Any group of faculty or staff members can submit a white paper. The white papers will form the basis for what will become our research landmarks, the central feature of the Academic Master Plan's research roadmap. It is very important for the work on the white papers to start soon, and I encourage you not to wait for the formal call for white papers, but rather to start discussions with your colleagues now. This email lays out the basics of what we're looking for to allow you to start those discussions.

I first want to emphasize that the white papers will be submitted *by groups of faculty and staff directly to the research roadmap committee and not through departments or colleges*. Copies of the white papers should, however, be sent to the deans of the colleges that have faculty involved in developing the white papers. The college plans due December 1 should help inform the white paper authors, who will formally submit their papers the following month on January 12. The most successful white papers will be those that leverage the priorities in the college plans, and so it is important that potential white paper authors get actively engaged soon in their college planning. These two processes—college plan development and white paper development—are separate yet synergistic and should inform one another.

The white papers will be judged upon the following seven specific criteria:

1. Merit and potential for societal and scholarly impact;
2. Multidisciplinary nature of topic—participation and leveraging potential;
3. Alignment with *Vision 2020* and College plans;
4. Existence of critical mass and excellence at Texas A&M and availability of an external candidate pool;
5. Space and infrastructure feasibility (including proposed plans);
6. Corporate, federal, and foundation interest and award potential; and
7. Needed resources and cost effectiveness.

The formal call will include a standardized template to use for organizing the white papers; the template will mirror the seven criteria so that it addresses each criteria as directly as possible.

The white papers will be reviewed by the research roadmap committee and by some councils and advisory groups who will provide feedback and recommendations. The roadmap committee will use this input to select a smaller set of “finalists.” The submitters of the finalist white papers will be requested to expand them in more detail to be put on the web.

The finalist white papers will be explored, discussed, and analyzed at an all-day University retreat, tentatively scheduled for April 17, 2009. The format will include a mix of parallel presentations to small groups and single discussions in the large group. The roadmap committee will gather feedback and incorporate a final recommendation of research landmark areas to the steering committee. While I expect the retreat to be especially productive in terms of planning outcomes, I am also confident that it will be memorable for its intellectual stimulation and contribution to campus discourse.

This semester my goal is to attend a departmental meeting in each department on campus so that I can start to get to know people, find out what’s important to them, and work collaboratively on ways to move their units forward. I also want to use each visit as an opportunity to encourage participation in this Academic Master Planning process and clarify any aspects where there are questions. I have already met with some departments and am pleased with the level of interest and enthusiasm in the planning process and potential. I have also started meeting with key groups such as the Council of Principal Investigators, the University Research Council, and the Distinguished Professors Executive Committee to get their feedback. These groups will serve as important resources to the steering committee and roadmap committees throughout the planning process.

I’ve attached an overview of the Academic Master Plan and a detailed timeline of the process for creating the research roadmap. The best time to start the discussions needed for a successful white paper and ultimate research landmark area is now, and I encourage you to pursue those discussions.

Academia is an exciting place to be, because it is a world of ever-evolving ideas. Having the freedom to develop and explore ideas is probably an important reason why many of us were drawn to academia. I hope you find this Academic Master Planning process to be one that helps energize the campus in a discourse about a bold and exciting future of our own creation. I look forward to your comments and involvement.

Gig ‘Em!
--Jeff

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Welcome to Aggieland

Texas A&M Academic Master Plan 2008–2009

Accelerating Excellence

Vision 2020 lays out the long-range vision for excellence at Texas A&M University. We are commencing an Academic Master Plan, *Accelerating Excellence*, to identify goals, strategies, and priorities that will fully advance key components of *Vision 2020*.

Academic Master Plan Roadmaps:

A. Teaching Roadmap

- a. Realizing the Goals of the Murano Report
- b. Curricular review and assessment

B. Research Roadmap

- a. Identifying Landmark Areas

C. Engagement Roadmap

- a. K–12 outreach and developing pathways to Texas A&M
- b. Government and community partnerships
- c. Entrepreneurship
- d. Professional service
- e. Student advising

Common to the three roadmaps are overarching issues that we need to address in order to enable success:

Overarching Issues

- a. Human development
 - i. Recruiting and mentoring for excellence
 - ii. Diversity
 - iii. International studies
 - iv. Quality of life
- b. Facilities and infrastructure
- c. Resources

The remainder of the document focuses on one important component of the Academic Master Plan: the research roadmap that identifies university landmark areas for faculty development.

Research Roadmap and Landmark Areas

College Activities

September–November 2008

- Deans and their department heads will work with faculty to develop their College's 10-year research plans and processes, which will ultimately help identify priority landmark areas at the University level.

Process characteristics:

- Open and transparent
- Engages faculty, staff, and students and demonstrates buy-in.

Plan characteristics:

- Written and available on-line
- Globally focused with collaborative potential identified
- Strong connections with *Vision 2020*
- Highlights components that may define or relate to University landmark areas.
- Serves as planning mechanism for hiring
- Documents the process followed in development of plan, especially reporting how faculty, staff, and students were involved.

Key questions for deans/department heads/faculty to ask when developing research plans for their colleges:

- What are your College's three to five greatest research strengths?
- What "rare" research strengths are in your College that set it apart nationally and internationally?
- How do your College's research strengths contribute to the foundational excellence of the University?
- Does your College have the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary strength to meet society's grand challenges? Elaborate on the potential and priorities for the College. This information will be especially important for development of landmark areas.

December 1, 2008

- Completion of 10-year research plans for each College.
- Reports will be made available online and in hard copy and distributed campus-wide.

Provost Activities

September–December 2008

- Meet with departments of all Colleges to seek input on research priorities and issues, share information on the process for developing the Academic Master Plan, and encourage broad participation.
- Form steering committee for Academic Master Plan
 - Design and oversee master planning process for identifying priorities where university can distinguish itself and achieve international stature.
 - Chaired by Provost.
 - Committee members drawn from all Colleges, and appropriate administrative offices, staff, students, and partners.
 - Create subcommittees representing Academic Master Plan priority areas—research, student success and curriculum, and others to be determined.
 - Engage and seek input from university stakeholders: faculty, staff, councils of Faculty Senate, Texas A&M administration, System administration, Board of Regents, industry, community leaders, and alumni.

Research Roadmap Committee Activities

Fall 2008

- Establishes and publishes input report, criteria, and metrics for university priorities.
White paper criteria:
 1. Merit and potential for societal impact.
 2. Multidisciplinary nature of topic—participation and leveraging potential.
 3. Alignment with *Vision 2020* and College plans
 4. Existence of critical mass and excellence at Texas A&M and availability of an external candidate pool.
 5. Space and infrastructure feasibility (including proposed plans).
 6. Corporate, federal, and foundation interest and award potential.
 7. Needed resources and cost effectiveness.
- Issues call for white papers due January 12, 2009 that draw upon priorities identified in College research plans. Specifies template to use and issues to address.

January 12, 2009

- White papers due on university landmark area priorities.

February 27, 2009

- Steering committee oversees key committees' input on white papers and selects "finalists." Submitters of white papers on the superset are asked to expand white papers in more detail.

March 31, 2009

- Expanded white papers are put online for public review and comment.

April 17, 2009

- Steering committee hosts all day University retreat on the finalist white papers with presentations and discussion groups.

April–May 2009

- Research roadmap committee makes final recommendation of research landmark areas to the steering committee.
- Steering committee incorporates research roadmap recommendation and retreat inputs into report on landmark areas.

Appendix**Inputs to consider:**

President Murano's six priorities:

1. Elevate the faculty
2. Enhance undergraduate and graduate experiences
3. Increase diversity and globalization
4. Improve space
5. Attain resource parity
6. Enlightened governance.

Recommendations of the Committee on Implementation of the Task Force on Enhancing the Undergraduate Education Experience (*Murano Report*).

Texas A&M "Dean's Goals:"

- Enhancing Study Abroad and Globalization
- Enhancing Graduate Education
- Facilities Reinvestment Program
- Research Acceleration—Hiring Top Faculty
- Increasing Minority Student Enrollments and Graduation from Texas A&M University: Establishing a "Pathways to A&M" Program
- Advanced Study Institute