

September 13, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Staff, Faculty and Students

SUBJECT: University Staff Advisory Council Task Force

In his State of the University address to the fall 2006 Academic Convocation, former Texas A&M University President Robert M. Gates expressed a broad, bold vision for shared governance throughout the ranks of the University. Most notably, he indicated an “organizational gap” in shared governance and the need for a staff organization to discuss issues that impact staff and to serve as a source of advice to the President. I agree that our extraordinary staff has valuable insights that should be considered in making important decisions affecting the campus community.

Preliminary reviews of staff advisory councils around the nation indicate that staff councils are quite varied in terms of purpose, size and levels of efficiency and effectiveness. To facilitate the creation of a staff advisory council that adds value to the Texas A&M’s governance structure, I am appointing a task force to advise me on how to move forward with establishing the staff advisory council. My charge to the task force in making its recommendations to me is five-fold: (1) to gather a sense of staff expectations; (2) to propose a mission for A&M’s staff advisory council; (3) to propose a first-year organizational structure; (4) to propose an outline for a first-year implementation plan; and (5) to propose a timeline for implementation of the first-year council. Let me be clear—in the spirit and necessity of self-governance, the important responsibility of creating a permanent organizational structure, including how to select or elect officers and members of future councils—will be vested in the first-year council.

I have asked my Chief of Staff, Dr. Rodney P. McClendon, to serve as the Chairperson of the staff advisory council task force. In his role as Chief of Staff, he is attuned to the original vision for a staff council, and he has a clear understanding of the value and importance I place on a staff advisory council.

In consultation with key university groups, I have asked the following individuals to serve on the task force:

- Ms. Karan Chavis, Executive Director for Administrative Services—Employee Services
- Ms. Venesa Flores, Associate Registrar—Undergraduate Programs & Academic Services
- Mr. Felix Flores, Jr., Area Maintenance Foreman—Division of Facilities
- Mr. Victor Fryinger, SIMS Lead Security & Training Coordinator—Computer Information Services/Information Technology

- Mr. Michael Jackson, Library Specialist III—Libraries
- Mr. Otis McGresham, Residence Hall Director—Division of Student Affairs
- Dr. Paul Meyer, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs & Assessment—Executive Vice President & Provost
- Ms. Mona Osborne, Program Coordinator—Athletics
- Ms. E. Jill Pollock, Associate Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer—Division of Finance
- Ms. Kimberlee Pottberg, Administrative Assistant—Vice President for Diversity
- Ms. Shannon Prescott, Senior Administrative Coordinator—Deans' Administrative Liaison Council (DALC)
- Dr. Joseph Reibenspies, Senior Research Instrumentation Specialist—Research Professionals
- Ms. Nydia Riojas, Customer Service Associate—Dining Services
- Ms. Nancy Sawtelle, Director of Communication—Executive Vice President & Provost
- Ms. Rosemary Schoenfeld, Assistant to the Associate Director—Texas A&M University, Association of Professional Support Staff (TAPSS)
- Dr. Albert Broussard (ex officio), Professor of History—Faculty

The task force will deliver a draft final report to me of its findings and recommendations by February 2008. There will be multiple opportunities for broad staff input, and I encourage you to participate actively in the process as a step toward more inclusive governance at the staff level.

Eddie J. Davis

Interim President