January 2014 Faculty Staff Meeting
January 13, 2014

- Music playing and looped slide show from Fall as enter
- UAS coverage video montage starts when seated
- Killebrew PowerPoint

KILLEBREW

Welcome

[SLIDE 1: Aerial of Island] Good morning! I hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday and enjoyed good times with family and friends.

UAS

[SLIDE 2: UAS Slide] During the break, we received the exciting news that our proposal to become one of six Federal Aviation Administration test sites for unmanned aircraft systems was accepted! Unless you were studiously avoiding media over the holiday, you probably saw some of the coverage that we just played.

We know the story ran in more than 300 media outlets, across the country, including network news broadcasts, and internationally, as far away as Qatar.

I want to thank everyone who worked on this proposal for the past year and a half – who had faith and persevered – even when the odds did not seem good. Luis Cifuentes, Ron George, will you and everyone who worked on this proposal please stand. Let’s give these folks a huge round of applause. [LEAD APPLAUSE]

At the moment, I think they are feeling a little bit like the dog that caught the car – or maybe in this case the quadacopter – but they are already hard at work getting ready for a meeting with the FAA and will be turning in their activity plan for the next year tomorrow.

All kidding aside, this is indeed a game changer for the university and for the community. Aside from the economic development potential it brings to the community, it provides a giant step toward our goal of becoming an emerging research institution.

Emerging Research Institution

I want to visit with you some about this goal of becoming an emerging research institution. I’ve heard some concerns expressed about it. To be clear, becoming an emerging research university is about more than achieving a certain number of doctoral programs, doctoral graduates or research expenditures. Those are merely external markers for recognition of the status by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that makes us eligible for additional funding.
The true importance of striving to become an emerging research institution lies in the culture of scholarship and creative activity that are essential to the culture of learning that we are modeling for our students. Our own engagement in learning and exploration of our disciplines elevates our instruction and helps engage our students. And it may also make a difference to society – whether that’s in our own community or in a broader context.

I know some fear that we will lose our focus on undergraduate education as we move in this direction. Others fear that only areas that generate externally funded research will be considered important. Those are legitimate fears, but they need not become fact as we create our own future and define ourselves.

I sincerely believe that within the context of this goal, we can build on our historical strength in undergraduate teaching and learning to grow graduate programs that help meet regional workforce needs.

I believe that moving toward emerging research designation can energize and increase the value of teaching and provide more opportunities for undergraduate research and creative activities.

I believe that moving toward emerging research designation will increase the capacity and value of non-grant-based research, since indirect cost dollars can be used to fund research and scholarship in areas that don’t typically have access to grants.

I believe that moving toward emerging research designation will focus and increase the value of service and expand partnership opportunities with our larger community.

There will be many considerations – how we think about curriculum, how we structure workloads, how we plan facilities, how we advertise and recruit, how we evaluate faculty and staff, and much more. Everyone will have a role to play in achieving this institutional goal.

We are at a very exciting time at the university and in the Coastal Bend. We have a great opportunity to make an even greater difference than we already do. And to me, that’s why we are here – to make a difference, to inspire positive change and growth. That’s what motivates me to get up and work hard every day … the chance to see the light go on in a student’s eyes, a colleague succeed, the community to be a better place. I hope you are as thrilled as I am about what lies in front of us.

**Update on Strategic Plan**

Talking about our emerging research institution goal is a perfect segue into an update on our strategic planning process.

[SLIDE: Overarching Goal] On the screen you see the overarching goal for our planning effort, which kicked off last May. As I’ve just been discussing, it very intentionally includes our commitment to student success and our role in closing achievement gaps for students.
Since our kickoff last May, nine theme groups have been hard at work. I’m happy to announce that they finished their work ahead of schedule! Will all of you who participated on a theme group please stand so we can thank you. [LEAD APPLAUSE]

It was a large group – about 200 people, including faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members – who gave their time, energy and talent to helping us think about our next five years and what our path forward needs to be during this time.

Our challenge now is to take their input and weave it into a university-wide plan, which we expect to release next May at our faculty-staff meeting. There will be opportunities for input as we move toward release of a final plan.

**Equity/Mid-Year Merit and RA/TA/GA increases**

In the fall, I promised that if enrollment increased sufficiently, we would have a mid-year merit pool. In case you did not see the announcement that went out to campus, we were able to provide a 2 percent pool. I would have liked it to be more, but I am glad we were able to do this.

In addition, we were able to dedicate some funds to address equity and salary compression for faculty and staff. Merit and equity programs were both based on performance.

Finally, we also increased the floor of our pay plan for staff by 6 percent.

While pay is not everything, we know it is important, and want to keep our salaries as competitive as possible. All who received an increase will see it in the February 1 paycheck.

I should also mention that we’ve set minimum salaries for graduate assistantships at the master’s, master’s of fine arts, and doctoral level. This is resulting in increases for many graduate assistants.

**System Administrative Review Process**

The A&M System is conducting a review of all staff positions throughout the System. The review of Texas A&M is complete and review of the service agencies based in College Station is underway. Our turn, and that of all the other regional institutions, will come in March. This means that each supervisor is going to be asked to complete a questionnaire on every staff or administrative position. In preparation for this, we will be compiling detailed organization charts, so supervisors should expect to see a request for those soon.

**Facilities Updates**

Now I’d like update you on our various facilities projects.

[SLIDE: University Center] On the Island Campus, work on the University Center is progressing on schedule. All the piers are drilled, which I’m sure the occupants of the building are happy
about! You’ll be seeing a lot of progress in the next few months on the new ballrooms at the west end of the building.

You may have noticed the modular building in the parking lot near the UC. In March, that will become the temporary home of the bookstore.

[SLIDE: Dining Hall] Rain has delayed the dining hall construction some, but we hope to make up time on that so that Phase II for the University Center, which will include the dining areas, is not delayed.

Construction will start this month on the next two residence halls, which will be near the dining hall, and provide another 150 beds.

We are also in planning and design phase for additional music practice rooms, which will be in a pre-fab building right behind the Center for the Arts. The building will be similar to the research buildings near Blucher and will provide a large rehearsal space as well as several individual practice rooms – all with adequate sound proofing.

Last fall, because of all the disruption to parking caused by construction, we instituted a shuttle service between the Momentum Campus and the Island Campus. I’m pleased to report that it has been successful and we will continue it in the spring.

[SLIDE: Momentum Campus] Turning to the Momentum Campus, you’ll be seeing some changes there also.

We are taking an agenda item to the Board of Regents at the end of this month for residence halls with 350 to 500 beds, which will be situated along Ennis Joslin, as you see in the slide. If approved, American Campus Communities will plan, design and construct the halls, with a July 2015 target date for completion. All of our previous housing has been constructed by Camden, but they declined this opportunity.

We’ll also be creating infrastructure for housing and future facilities on the Momentum Campus. We will be building a road from Ennis Joslin that will connect on Nile with the road to the Soccer and Track Stadium. Along it will be parking for the Rec Sports fields. Additionally, along the road will be potable and non-potable water lines, sewer and gas lines, conduit for electric service and data lines as well as storm drains. We plan for these projects to be complete by August 2014.

We are also in the planning stage for using effluent water on Momentum for watering grass and landscaping and for flushing toilets. We will be able to get this water for free and it will cut our potable water use by half, which will be a savings in money and of a precious resource. We expect to complete this by August 2014 and are working on grants to be able to extend the use of effluent water to the Island Campus.
The original design of the Rec Sports fields, which were relocated to the Momentum Campus, was not conducive to multiple uses. We are redoing the drainage so that these will be adaptable to various sports, and we expect they will be ready for play this spring.

Finally, on the Momentum Campus, we will be installing lights on the Dugan Family Soccer and Track Stadium, allowing nighttime games and events. We expect this to be complete in time for next fall’s soccer season.

IT Update

[SLIDE: Bandwidth Utilization] Moving to IT, our bandwidth use has skyrocketed with a 200 percent increase since last year, almost four times the average increase across the System. This is the result of additional research needs as well as an increase in wireless devices. Although we still have enough bandwidth for our current needs, Terry Tatum is activating the plan to increase our available bandwidth so we can stay ahead of the growth. IT also is mapping wireless usage and setting priorities for additional wireless access nodes.

Work on transitioning to a voice over internet protocol phone system continues. Over the holidays, telecom staff worked diligently to re-cable five buildings so they can be transitioned. You may have noticed some rearrangement of items in your area or some “mess” when you returned, but it is for a good cause. In the next few months, new equipment will be installed and training will be offered. We expect to be fully transitioned by this coming fall.

Students will be moved this spring to a new email powered by Microsoft Office 365. Soon after the move is complete, it will be easier to access student e-mail addresses because you will see an additional directory in Outlook for them. We had hoped to introduce this transition today, but issues arose with the cloud provider’s services and we are working with the vendor to get them resolved.

Who’s Who?

Don Albrecht, our vice president for student engagement and success, discovered that we had never submitted students for “Who’s Who Among American College and University Students.” I am happy to report that 186 applications from students were received. These are being reviewed for submission.

Distinguished Speaker Series

[SLIDE: Tyson] We are looking forward to hosting Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist and frequent television and radio contributor, on March 27, as part of our Distinguished Speaker Series. You may have seen him on NOVA Science Now on PBS or on The Daily Show or the Colbert Report. And if you receive the Caller-Times, you may have seen that he was featured in yesterday’s Parade Magazine.

His new series, Cosmos: A Space-Time Odyssey, debuts in March. It is a follow-up to the popular Carl Sagan series from the 1980s. We expect this event to sell out, so if you want to attend, please get your tickets early. It promises to be a “stellar” event – pun intended!
Faculty-Staff Campaign

Our participation rate in last year’s faculty staff campaign was 41 percent, which is very good. I would like to thank Don and Kathy Deis, last year’s campaign chairs, and on their behalf, thank everyone who showed your strong support of our university in 2013. Let’s give Kathy and Don and all who supported the campaign a big round of applause. [LEAD APPLAUSE]

For this year’s campaign, a committee that also includes a representative from each college has been formed. The committee members will be providing information about how to make a gift and the opportunities for designating them for a specific area, scholarship or program.

This year, we’d like to take our participation to an even higher level as a strong demonstration to outside funding agencies of the commitment our employees have to the institution and to our students and their success. Gifts of all sizes play a role, so please consider helping your department reach 100 percent participation. Campaign committee members and development staff will be in the lobby and can answer your questions or provide additional information.

[SLIDE: Momentum Sculpture]
And now I ask Provost Chris Markwood to come and provide us with an academic update, beginning with a “Why I Teach” video.

MARKWOOD

- Why I Teach Video
- Markwood Powerpoint
- Back to placeholder Momentum sculpture slide on Killebrew PowerPoint

KILLEBREW

Retirees

[2 SLIDES: Retirees – Allow one to stay for a few seconds and then click to next one]
This past fall, several of our colleagues decided the time to retire had come. We bid farewell to those seen on the next two slides and wish them well as they enter a new stage of their life.

New people

We have a number of new people who joined us this fall or are joining us this spring. We’ll introduce them to you now in a PowerPoint. [PLAY NEW PEOPLE POWERPOINT WITH MUSIC]

Would you all please stand, so we can welcome you to the Islander family? [LEAD APPLAUSE]

Recognize LEAD graduates
Two years ago, we established LEAD, short for Leadership, Excellence and Development, a program designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to be an effective supervisor or administrator, whether of staff or faculty.

Participants are required to complete 40 hours of classroom sessions plus 10 hours of online training and activities outside the classroom from June to December.

The focus is on interpersonal influence and effectiveness, team effectiveness and organizational effectiveness.

Today, I am pleased to announce our second graduating class. Will Stephanie Arevalo, Ana Billeaux, Rachel Cox, Alyce Davidson, Jason Hall, Gracie Olalde and Leticia Villarreal please stand to be recognized. [LEAD APPLAUSE]

Thank you for your dedication to completing this program and improving your leadership skills. Your new or enhanced skills will help the university achieve its goals and just as important, help it be an even better place to work.

I encourage department chairs and other supervisors to nominate candidates for the next class. Requests for nominations will be going out later than spring.

Regents Professor

I’m also proud to announce that Dr. Bryant Griffith, professor of curriculum and instruction, is our newest Regents Professor. His nomination was approved by the Board of Regents at the last board meeting and he will be honored at the board meeting to be held at the end of this month.

Dr. Griffith, will you please stand so that we may recognize your outstanding achievement. [LEAD APPLAUSE]

Being named a Regents Professor is indeed a great honor. It is awarded to individuals whose performance as faculty members has been exemplary in teaching, research or creative scholarly activity and service. With the designation also comes the responsibility of being a role model within the Texas A&M System and devoting service to system-wide activities.

Dr. Griffith is indeed a role model for the university, the System and beyond. We are proud to have him as a colleague.

Final Words

In closing, I’d like to reiterate that we are at an exciting time in the life of the university and the community and also that our commitment is to making a difference for
students like the freshmen you see at last fall’s convocation in this slide. The impact we have on their lives is our bottom line. Have a great semester!