Provost Ponderings

Each day when I enter the campus I reflect upon how these are, indeed, exciting times for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. This spirit is embodied in our Mission Statement. This living and breathing document is a testament to how we approach higher education for South Texas and create the path we take in our daily work.

Our many constituents have stepped forward in helping us reshape parts of the Mission Statement. We’ve learned much from faculty, students and staff over these past months. We are capturing in this guiding document our essence – the history, traditions and character that have fed the spreading roots of this great university. We have vision and aspirations that we will fold into these bold words.

Central to the Mission Statement are objectives that take into consideration our operating principles. These objectives, to be sure, are cast around the 4Es: Excellence, Engagement, Expansion and Effectiveness. This sounds simple and memorable, but these words embrace the corners of the campus.

I’ll describe to you each of the 4Es:

**Excellence** is woven deeply into what we create, provide and support. We see it in our instruction, our undergraduate and graduate programs, our intellectual competencies, and our expertise in interdisciplinary knowledge. We have gained national prominence through our first-year learning program. We also are known nationally for how well we nurture our Hispanic-serving mission and students who are historically under-represented in higher education. Our good deeds are spoken of at many national conferences, and the promotion of student-centered learning is referenced in numerous case studies. However, we must not rest, but find more ways to obtain national prominence in various specialties while holding strong the achievements that make us most proud.

**Engagement** implies that we foster life-long learning and prepare our students for responsible citizenship in a global community. We achieve this through caring faculty and staff, excellent campus resources, and opportunities for leadership development. We stay engaged through research, scholarship and creative activity. We value cultural and intellectual diversity, and we strongly commit to the University’s outreach. Through this conscious engagement we build and sustain meaningful relationships with our greater community -- local and the global -- because they are the stakeholders in our success. Expansion is the driving force for our institution. It’s more than the new facilities and land which we so gratefully appreciate. We also must continually look for opportunities to reach beyond the academic boundaries of our island.

**Expansion** is, indeed, a vibrant metaphor for our campus community – stretching our horizons by expanding our scope, our stature and our impact.
Effectiveness challenges each of us to constantly assess the University’s mission, be good custodians of the University’s financial and physical assets, and strive to maximize our human and technological resources. We must always keep at the top of our minds that we are the ambassadors of this institution who represent the work and hearts of many.

The State of Texas has charged us with the College Readiness and Closing the Gaps initiatives. These create pathways to this University for many and ensure education is value-added with better affordability, more responsiveness and distinction. Many of you may see that we are building on proven strengths ranging from the sciences to liberal arts. New programs launched reflect our commitments. We have introduced the Bachelor of Applied Science, working closely with Del Mar College for a seamless transition for students to earn a four-year degree. We now have one of the most unique and pre-eminent research programs in the country through the PhD in Marine Biology, with active participation from Texas A&M in College Station and the A&M campus in Galveston. The shortage of nurses statewide is being addressed. We’re placing more teachers into school systems. We are producing more MBA graduates, and our intellectual enterprise in Liberal Arts remains strong and vibrant. We are among the top 10 public universities in the state in research expenditures and rank number two within the Texas A&M University system.

That reflects much for which we can all boast. In the days ahead, I look forward to engaging with many of you in this assembly. With the leadership of President, Dr. Flavius Killebrew and the President’s Cabinet, we will face the challenges that, through new accomplishments, push us higher among the best and brightest universities.