November 16, 2008

TO:

Ms. Kristen Davis; Dr. Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak; Dr. Karen Middleton; Dr. Yolanda Keys; Dr. Ahmed Mahdy; Dr. Bryant Griffith; Ms. Angela Walker; Ms. Karen Griffith; Ms. Anna Billeaux; Ms. Maria Jaramillo; Ms. Blanca Ordner; Dr. M.K. Balasubramanaya; Dr. Patrick Crowley; Robert Nelsen

As you undoubtedly know, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi’s strategic plan, Momentum 2015, calls for the internationalization of the University. Specifically, Imperative III, “Instill Global Perspectives into the Academic Life of the University,” calls for the establishment of an International Studies Task Force to explore ways to increase student recruitment, international research collaborations, faculty and student exchange programs, and partnerships with international universities. We live in an increasingly global society, and Texas A&M-Corpus Christi has a duty to prepare its students to meet the challenges and opportunities awaiting them in that society. I am writing to ask you to serve on a newly incarnated International Studies Task Force that will take the work that has been done by other committees and task forces since the inception of Momentum 2015 and develop an action plan to realize Imperative III.

The establishment of this task force comes at a crucial time in the history of the University. The University’s mission statement (attached) was recently revised by the Faculty Senate and University leaders and now contains specific language about not only “our strategic location on the Gulf of Mexico and on the cultural border with Latin America” but also about the University’s mission to “close educational gaps” and gain “national and international prominence.” To such an end, we have recently added several important doctoral, master’s, and bachelor’s programs, and our international student population has grown from 217 students in 2007 to 315 this semester (next semester, we will probably add 60 to 65 additional international students). Two faculty-led programs have taken students abroad, and four international faculty members will visit the University this year. Beginning December 1, we will be establishing an Office of International Education in the University Center with an adjoining lounge for international students, and we will have a fulltime International Advisor to work with those students and to coordinate international programs.

But we have a long ways to go—for instance, we have only one student abroad this semester and we have no active reciprocal agreements with foreign universities. I am asking the International Studies Task Force to blaze the trail, to establish specific initiatives to meet the objectives within Imperative III. Accordingly, I have asked Dr. Patrick Crowley from the faculty and Dr. Robert Nelsen from the administration to co-chair the Task Force, and I have charged them to work with you and the other members of the Task Force to develop both a strategic vision for the internationalization of the University and the Office of International Education and a strategic plan to achieve that vision. Once the strategic plan is completed, I am asking that it be presented to the Provost’s Council, the Faculty Senate, and the President’s Cabinet. In order for the plan to receive appropriate consideration for fiscal year
2009’s budget, the plan must be finished by February 15. I know that the deadline is close, and of course, not all the initiatives will necessarily require financing, but I am certain that you agree that we cannot afford to wait yet another year to achieve our goals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Flavius Killebrew, President