

GENERAL FACULTY/STAFF MEETING

January 12, 2009

Jones Auditorium

Good morning and welcome back to campus. I've been here about 100 days now, and Karen and I have found the university and surrounding community to be a welcoming environment. This community is a wonderful fit for us in terms of values and culture, and we know we've come to the right place.

Texas A&M University-Kingsville has some outstanding programs, and there's some significant research going on here.

- Dr. Yifang Zhu in environmental engineering was recently awarded a prestigious CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation for her ongoing work.

I believe we have a solid foundation at Texas A&M-Kingsville, and I'm ready to work with all of you to build upon that foundation.

This year, I have three main issues to address:

- Develop my leadership team

- Fill Provost's position
- Fill Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Two dean vacancies (engineering and business administration)
- Continue with redevelopment/beautification of campus
 - Rhode Hall renovations
 - Two groundbreakings
 - New residence hall
 - New student recreation center
- Recruitment and retention efforts
 - Our numbers are up for recruitment
 - Numbers are stagnant in terms of retention

Our student numbers must grow, and retention is crucial to our growth. It is a very complex problem and one that involves every person who works here. Whether we're faculty, administrators, accountants, electricians or groundskeepers, we all play a role in retaining students.

I am going to appoint a committee to address retention issues, but I want all of you to understand that our plans will center on my belief that ***retention concerns all of us -- and we're going to address it together as a team.***

We've already begun to tackle this issue with a few changes:

- Priority registration
- Online degree audit

There's one more very important item that I need to share with you today. Before I came on board, the Texas A&M University System conducted a governance audit of the university. We are the first university in the A&M System to go through this process. The audit looked at:

- Accountability
 - Planning
 - Performance monitoring
 - Customer Service
- Leadership

- Human and Technology Resource needs
 - Employee Turnover
 - Use of technology

I received a preliminary report from the System on November 20 and shared it with the President's Council. We had one month to prepare a response. We developed a timetable to address the issues identified through the audit, but there is not enough time in this meeting to go into great detail.

This is a very important issue and it's very complex, so I have planned a special university-wide meeting next Monday, January 20, to outline the audit for you and to share our plans to address it. Reminders about the meeting will be sent to the campus through email. Please make plans to attend.