

Faculty Breakfast Remarks

April 8, 2016

Good Morning—we are on the eve of spring traditions throughout San Antonio including Fiesta!

But more importantly the important spring traditions of our campus—like the Ring Ceremony, ceremonious pre-commencement activities including cording and hooding. I am reminded every day by members of the external community and internally from our students, faculty and staff about the positive energy and the importance of what A&M-SA is doing for the entire region and the overwhelming support that exists for our emerging university.

In 135 days on August 22, you will begin instruction for our first class of first year students.

Around you, are symbols that reflect a journey—a destination—towards becoming a comprehensive 4 year university. The spring semester has continued the fast-paced period of change for our entire community to plan for next fall. You all have been engaged in numerous faculty searches—to hire 33 new faculty and staff plus existing replacements. And many on campus, including a lot of you in this room have been engaged in what we call the National Model for Student and Academic Success based on proven high-impact practices. Just yesterday we had a chance to share with Commission Parades the importance of what we're doing here. He travels the nation on behalf of higher education and he told me privately, that he is impressed and inspired by what we're planning to achieve for our first-year students, transfer students and graduate students.

We've invested financial resources, time and organizational energy with national experts to help us define philosophies, principles and practices that are intentional and deliberate using research based evidence. We will share highlights of everything we know, and the conceptual plans to ensure we meet the needs of our students and that we meet your needs.

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I invited you here this morning, because your perspective and your voice is vital to our success. Our university will not reach its destination without the insights of our great faculty! As I often say, collectively you the professoriate are the single most powerful force in guaranteeing our success. You play the single most important role in ensuring a student is successful and that every student who's appropriately completed the requisite academic coursework makes it to graduation day.

As I've said to you before, you wear multiple hats, two important personas you share are architect and builder. You came here designing this great institution while simultaneously building it. We are now about to open the "next chapter" in this building phase and I applaud all that you're doing in your classrooms, departments, research, publications and public service , student engagement and so much more. I ask you to remember that the role of shared governance is more critical than ever before. Your voice and faculty perspective is a vital "check point" on the road map. Up to this point, you have each played a role in our institutional history and to a varied extent our institutional planning—our decision making is a collective reflection of our voices and our future.

I again, invite you to participate, in a meaningful and deliberate manner. I need your help in ensuring that we identify what's important to you or your department, and that we identify those critical items that will be enhanced with the wisdom of your insights in the decision making process. The Vice President's will share information with you and we will ask for your feedback on "pitfalls" and "caution signs" that we should attend to.

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I want to be abundantly clear that I'm challenging us all with audacious thinking and I know we're pushing the limits of our success model—and we're doing that intentionally, because our community needs it.

We have carefully designed this morning's activities in such a manner to enable participation and to have you help us, the administration, identify areas that we, should carefully consider as we continue to plan for downward expansion and the growth spurt that is before us. You have my commitment to listen and to be responsive to your insights. I'm going to pause and ask if there are any thoughts or questions about anything I've said, before we begin the downward expansion discussions.

Thanks, I look forward to sharing our progress with you this morning.