Earlier this morning, I presented Texas A&M University's Legislative Appropriations Request for next spring's legislative session to staff from the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor's Office. While in Austin with our colleagues from across the A&M System, we were reminded of the difficult decisions facing the state during the upcoming legislative session.

I want to thank each of you for your energy and efforts over the past three months as we have worked on the FY12-13 biennium budget plan. We believe the dialogue in each college and division has reminded us all of the most important issues we face as a university and refocused our attention to our values, core mission, and commitment to utilizing every resource in the most effective manner to achieve our aspirations, as described in Vision 2020.

We have appreciated your feedback in person, online, and through a network of representative committees, councils, and organizations. Groups such as the Faculty Senate, Council of Deans, Distinguished Professors, Student Government, Provost Administrative Team, University Staff Council, Council of Principal Investigators, and many others have worked with Interim Provost Watson and me throughout the process.

The Chancellor has extended our deadline for the University Strategic Plan from August 31, 2010 until later in the fall. The ongoing discussions on reallocating funds will thus be able to drive our considerations of what are the highest priority elements needed in our strategic plan, A&M Action 2015.

I have reviewed the many ideas you shared on ways to solicit your suggestions, and I am pleased to announce the Strategic Budget Reallocation Process. We will consider feedback on the proposed process through this Thursday (September 2), but it is imperative that we begin
implementing the process as soon as possible.

The process being proposed features three distinct phases:

PHASE 1. Gather Input {September 2nd-September 30th}

We will continue to gather input on the greatest needs and best ideas for utilizing resources through existing feedback opportunities such as emails to the president and provost, communication through councils and committees, and a series of open forums.

PHASE 2. Formulate Recommendations for Action {October 1st-November 1st}

A representative working group will review all inputs and create a set of recommendations for review by the president and provost. Recommendations will include priorities for funding, funding levels, eligibility and criteria for selection of funding recipients, timeline and procedures for proposals for funding, and source of funds. I remind you that while we know the initial $21 million available for reallocation, we will not know the full extent of resources we may have available until after the legislative session.

PHASE 3. Implement Recommendations {November-FY12 Budget Preparation}

After considering the working group recommendations, the President will work with the Provost and Executive Vice President, Deans and other Vice Presidents to implement recommended procedures to reallocate funds. All reallocation processes should be completed for funding in order to be reflected in the FY12 Budget Preparation process next spring. Priorities identified will be reflected in strategic plan, A&M Action 2015.

An essential element of Phase 1 is a series of open forums focused on the key strategic issues discussed in numerous planning meetings and prior communications on strategic areas in need of strengthening. A number of these areas correspond with the task forces we convened last fall. I have called on the task force leaders and administrators who work on these issues every day to provide a framework for understanding each issue and describe the needs that have already been identified. Your input in these meetings will help us ensure we incorporate the best ideas and strategic approaches to address each issue.
The first open forum will be focused on Improving Our Graduate Programs and is scheduled for this Friday, September 3rd. Other open forums scheduled include:

Friday, September 3rd                    11:30am-1:00pm  
Improving Our Graduate Programs

Tuesday, September 7th                4:00pm -5:30 pm  
Enhancing the Undergraduate Experience

Thursday, September 9th              10:30am-12:00pm  
Improving Facilities & Infrastructure

Wednesday, September 15th      1:00 pm-2:30 pm  
Elevating the Faculty

Friday, September 17th                  10:30am-12:00pm  
Ensuring Institutional Functionality

All open forums are taking place in Rudder 601 and will utilize electronic simulcast for maximum participation. The open forum schedule does not reflect priority order and were scheduled based on availability of presenters.

To view the full details of the process, timeline and reference materials, please visit the budget information website at: http://finance.tamu.edu/budget or the A&M Action 2015 website at: http://provost.tamu.edu/strategic-planning-2010

Thank you again for your partnership throughout this process and I look forward to our discussions.