



# Council of Principal Investigators

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July 7, 2011

Dear Fellow PIs,

These are turbulent times! At the national and state levels, we face significant economic challenges. Perhaps because of these challenges or other unrelated factors, there are those who have concluded that higher education is flawed and requires a major overhaul to improve efficiencies and increase transparency. These opinions ignore the fact that the U.S. higher education system is the envy of the entire world and that we as educators are always striving to better serve our students to enable them to achieve their career aspirations.

Be assured that TAMU leaders, including the Council of Principal Investigators (**CPI**), Faculty Senate and Distinguished Professors, are working to ensure that external elements do not circumvent the education and scholarly activities of TAMU faculty. For example, on 17 May CPI officers jointly communicated our concerns in writing to Board of Regents (**BOR**) Chairman Box ([http://cpi.tamu.edu/Regent\\_Box\\_CPI\\_chancellor.pdf](http://cpi.tamu.edu/Regent_Box_CPI_chancellor.pdf)). Furthermore, the CPI Chair along with the Speaker and Speaker-Elect of the Faculty Senate and the Chair of the Distinguished Professors Executive Committee met to discuss these issues with BOR Chairman Box and Regent White (20 May, 2011). At that meeting, Chairman Box expressed a desire to develop *a more constructive dialog with TAMU faculty*. Your CPI leaders will strive to engage in this dialog **and** will continue to emphasize the primacy of the goals of Vision 2020 as the roadmap to achieving national prominence and ensuring that our students receive the best education possible.

As a reminder, the CPI Executive Committee meets monthly with the President and Provost and quarterly with the CEOs of TAMUS research entities (Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health Science Center, Texas Engineering Experiment Station, Texas AgriLife Research and Texas Transportation Institute). In these meetings, the impact of local and more global events on the research enterprise are discussed. In the future, the CPI leadership will provide timely updates on these discussions.

Finally, the recent establishment of the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education (**TCEHE**) (<http://texaseducationexcellence.org/>) is very encouraging. The founding members of this group represent a spectrum of TAMU and UT graduates as well as a number of individuals with no formal connection to either TAMU or UT but who understand the importance of higher education in the socio-economic development of the state and the nation. I am hopeful that the **TCEHE** will provide the needed pushback to those attempting to redirect and degrade higher education in our state. The CPI leadership is establishing a dialog with the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education.

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In closing, we appreciate your concern over recent events, but we assure you that your campus leaders are working assiduously to promote the values of Vision 2020 and to ensure that our academic principles are not compromised. We will keep you informed of events and discussions as they transpire.

Sincerely,



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