



# Council of Principal Investigators

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Texas A&M University - Texas A&M Health Science Center - Texas Engineering Experiment Station -  
Texas AgriLife Research - Texas Transportation Institute

May 17, 2011

Dr. Richard A. Box, Chairman  
TAMUS Board of Regents  
TAMU  
College Station TX 77843-1123

Dear Chairman Box,

Following Chancellor McKinney's "retirement" announcement, we are writing on behalf of the Council of Principal Investigators (**CPI**) to provide you and the Board of Regents (**BOR**) the CPI's perspective regarding the necessary qualifications of the next chancellor of the Texas A&M University System. For your information, the CPI is an elected body that represents more than 2000 TAMUS Principal Investigators. It is the CPI's position that the new TAMUS Chancellor must have appropriate experience to lead the academic and research activities at a flagship research university.

The CPI is cognizant of the various constituencies that the TAMUS Chancellor represents. However, the majority of weighted SCHs and more than 90% of research funds are generated in the Bryan/College Station TAMUS corridor. Consequently, it is imperative that the new TAMUS Chancellor has relevant experience to represent the teaching, research and service activities of the Bryan/College Station TAMUS constituency.

It is incumbent on the BOR to identify a new Chancellor who will support and promote Texas A&M University in achieving its mission:

**"Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility, and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic, and geographic groups, women and men alike, as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the twenty-first century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions."**

The new chancellor must be above the ongoing political fray involving the Texas Public Policy Foundation (**TPPF**) and other *ad hoc* special interest groups. These groups have no provenance with respect to Texas higher education and provide misinformation and simplistic ideas to "reform" higher education. This is especially relevant given the recent media revelation of the role of one member of the TPPF attempting to manipulate the policies of Texas A&M. This is highlighted by a quote from an article in the Dallas Morning News (12 May 2011) where Rep. Dan Branch (R-Dallas) has said that "he is concerned that one person with a narrow focus of education is suddenly dictating the policies at state universities." Moreover, State Senator Judith Zaffirini of Laredo has stated (Times of Texas; 13 May 2011), "What I understand from those emails, is that the Sandefers and the TPPF working through the staff of the Governor of Texas have been trying to dictate a change in the direction of higher education in Texas, and that will hurt A&M, hurt UT, and it will hurt higher education in Texas and I'm very perturbed about it."

Texas A&M University and its associated institutions, comprising TAMUS, are founded on sound academic and research principles consistent with other higher education institutions across the country.

These principles have led the United States from a primarily 19<sup>th</sup> century agrarian society to the technologically and information intensive 21<sup>st</sup> century. Across the U.S., university faculty led this incredible intellectual and technical transformation. This process continues cyclically. Faculty educate students; those students then continue to press the innovation envelope; and they in turn educate new students. **This is how we got where we are!** We must ensure that this educational environment remains vibrant and expands to meet the increasing needs of our students.

In closing, we urge you and the BOR to ensure that the next TAMUS Chancellor has appropriate qualifications to lead TAMUS toward our mission and the goal of achieving the objectives of Vision 2020 (see <http://vision2020.tamu.edu>). The CPI looks forward to participating in the search process, and we request that a CPI representative be included on the search committee.

Sincerely,



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Professor, Department of Biology



Lawrence Rauchwerger, Ph.D.  
Vice Chair, Council of Principal Investigators  
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Nancy Amato, Ph.D.  
Past-Chair, Council of Principal Investigators  
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Cc: Regents  
TAMUS CEOs  
State Senator Judith Zaffirini  
State Representative Dan Branch  
State Senator Steve Ogden  
State Representative Fred Brown