

## GREETINGS FROM THE FACULTY

Good morning and greetings on behalf of the faculty of Texas A&M University. As Speaker of the Faculty Senate, it is my privilege to represent my distinguished colleagues on this joyous occasion.

On October 4, 1876, the opening exercise of the A&M College of Texas was reported in the Galveston News as follows:

“There auspiciously has begun an new era of education in Texas and, though the attendance of students is not large, there being not more than 50 cadets present, yet a start has been made and this number will rapidly swell to 300 or 400 during the session. The faculty is one of the ablest in the South. (Our faculty was also modest then). The facilities are equal to those of any other College and there is not reason why this shall not at once take a front among the institutions of the country.”

Although the number of students enrolled at Texas A&M has increased well beyond 400 to more than 45,000 and, in addition to our Corps of Cadets, includes the women and minorities who will lead our great state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, much is the same.

Our faculty is one of the ablest, our faculties are among the best, and Texas A&M is actively pursuing a Vision of Excellence, Vision 2020. Concerning that pursuit, I would like to echo the words of President Thomas S. Gathright on that opening day, 125 years ago.

“To the full success of the college, I can promise the best efforts of my colleagues in the faculty, as I pledge my own . . . this great work, in which all the people of this good state are interested, must go on and must succeed.”

Eighteen (or even fewer) years from now, in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Bush Library at another convocation, another Speaker will recount how Bob Gates embraced Ray Bowen's Vision 2020, and led students, faculty, staff, administrators and former students on the path to realizing our ambitious aspirations. As President Gathright said 125 years ago, we must succeed. Under the leadership of President Gates, we will succeed.

Again, welcome. Thank you for joining us as we celebrate the beginning of our next 125 years.

## AFFIRMATION OF VISION AND PRINCIPLES

As a former military leader (Corporal in the United States Marine Corps), I was apprehensive, to say the least, at the prospect of speaking after my commander-in-chief, the great leader of the free world.

So apprehensive, in fact, that I forgot the remarks prepared for me by President Gates' Office, so I guess I'll just have to wing it.

Thank you, former President Bush, for filling in for your son today and relieving some of my anxiety.

For reasons that are all too obvious, my son who is my boss as Dean of the Mays Business School and with us on the stage this morning would never take that risk.

In his remarks, Bob often mentions his affection for his alma mater, William & Mary and football. This great institution and football are not often mentioned together so let me attempt to link them.

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What an awesome group we have with us on our stage today!

To paraphrase the words of another former president, John F. Kennedy, there has not been such collective knowledge, wisdom and leadership gathered in a single location since Thomas Jefferson, the founder of my alma mater, walked the lawn alone at the University of Virginia.

OK Bob, I will concede that took place over 100 years after William & Mary opened and that Mr. Jefferson was a graduate of William and Mary. To be sure, William & Mary does produce leaders!

Now let's turn to football. Some may suggest we cancel our trip to Blacksburg next year and go instead to Williamsburg or Charlottesville. I suggest, however, that Bob will tell our new Athletic Director, whoever she may be, to go to Blacksburg and beat the hell out of Virginia Tech!

I met Bob Gates only a few short years ago when he served as Interim Dean of the Bush School. At that time, I was pleased to support several of his innovative initiatives for that School and its students.

Later, I served on the Search Advisory Committee that was charged with identifying and recommending his successor as Dean. Our committee sought the input of Bush School students. They told us "Recommend only Bob Gates." When the students were told that Bob did not wish to be reappointed, their advice was simple, to the point, and, some may say appropriate for Texas A&M – "Clone Bob Gates."

Now, it is our collective good fortune that Bob has returned to us as our leader. Although his title is President, I prefer to consider him Colleague and Partner, partner of our students, former students, faculty and staff in the shared governance of this great institution. His vision, statements and, perhaps most important, his actions to date richly justify this belief and confidence. He is truly a scholar, colleague and leader.

Bob has described himself as “an agent of change” This is NOT entirely true, Bob is change. At the same time, however, he is committed not simply to maintaining, but enhancing those rich traditions and core values that make Texas A&M the great university that it is today.

As but one example, this week Bob has shared with me his plan for an innovative program to recognize the critical importance of, and reward, teaching to an extent which is unprecedented at Texas A&M (and for that matter, at most other Universities).

Bob assures us that he will not “weaken the strong, even to strengthen the weak.” He identifies “Teaching and Research” as our mission and tells us that under his leadership administration serves, not guides, in achieving these goals.

I was privileged to work with Ray Bowen, Bob’s distinguished predecessor, who is the architect of Vision 2020. I am confident that Bob Gates is the leader who will guide us in our achievement of the lofty goals and aspirations of Vision 2020.

~~This morning, Bob will speak with us of the foundation of this vision. In today’s world,~~ these values may be regarded as a challenge. But it is one that we can and must meet.

What a splendid opportunity to forge a workable and meaningful partnership of students, former students, faculty, staff and administrators to address and resolve these critical issues that we face.

What a great opportunity to hold out our Aggie Honor Code as a core value of a lifetime.

What better opportunity for our corps of cadets to assume a true leadership role in this undertaking.

Bob told our Faculty Senate “Don’t just listen to my words, watch what I do”. We are watching. Bob, you certainly are doing. You warned us that “it will be a hell of a ride.” It already has been and I am confident that it will get even better.

The faculty joins with you, President Gates, in advancing this great university on the foundations of academic freedom, academic responsibility, the highest ethical standards, shared governance and distinctive service to our students and public.

Bob, you are one of us, thank you for honoring us with your leadership.

Again, on behalf of my faculty colleagues, welcome.

## LUNCHEON GREETING

Inspired by President Gates' remarks this morning, let me tell you what really happened this morning. I was originally scheduled to speak after President Gates, affirming the vision and principles presented in his talk. I learned that I would speak before Bob only when the Provost turned and introduced me – so I really did have to “wing it.” Oh well!

To provide you with but one example of the changes that are taking place under Bob's administration let me relate to you an experience that we had just last week.

The son of one of the major donors to the Mays Business School recently applied for admission to our graduate program. His GPA was OK, but his GMAT was low – way too low.

Naturally we went to our Provost for help and David took us to the Medical School to arrange for a brain transplant for the applicant.

When we met with the surgeon scheduled to do the transplant, she outlined our choices as follows - we could select from the brains of:

- a professor at a cost of \$10 an ounce .....
- a dean for \$25 an ounce .....
- a provost for \$50 an ounce .....
- a president for \$100 an ounce .....

We told the surgeon that this was a very important matter and we really wanted the best available for our applicant.

The surgeon told us that would be the brain of faculty senators at \$10,000 an ounce.

Our reaction was OK, but why was the cost so much higher?

In reply, the surgeon asked us “Do you realize how many faculty senators it requires to obtain an ounce of brain?”

Then she added “.... And, also, you are getting a brand new brain - one that has never been used!”

Now more seriously,

Again, I bring you greeting on behalf of the faculty at Texas A&M University. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you for just a moment on the topic of excellence. Particularly the excellence that is indicated by the long lists of names and accomplishments recognized in the Convocation program.

A unique and valuable feature of our Academic Convocation, which I suppose is now a tradition, is the care and the time spent during this annual event to honor faculty and staff who have received significant external or internal recognition. This practice illustrates that Texas A&M's faculty and staff are engaged in teaching, research and service that serves public needs beyond Texas A&M University. It is an affirmation of excellence in our people and our programs.

Here at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I am proud to be a part of this university community, adapting the land-grant concept to a new millennium, and serving the people of Texas, the nation and the world. Thank you for all you do to make Texas A&M the institution it is.

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