

Dr. M. Katherine Banks, President
Texas A&M University

Dear President Banks,

We write to you on behalf of The Council of Principal Investigators (CPI), the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate (FS), and the University Staff Council (USC).

Like you, these groups and their constituents are deeply committed to Texas A&M University. As you know, over the past several weeks, our respective organizations have undertaken independent efforts to consider and assess the recommendations put forth in the recently completed MGT Report dated October 19, 2021. The CPI and USC conducted web-based surveys and had numerous internal discussions. The Faculty Senate held a well-attended Zoom-based “Town Hall” with about 500 combined attendees and streaming viewers, plus many other discussions. The CPI and USC asked their PI and staff constituents, respectively, to consider all recommendations and then collected rating and text data. The Senate followed a complementary approach, focusing its attention on only the recommendations it considered likely to have the most institution-wide impact. All three organizations observed that approval levels of individual MGT Report recommendations ranged widely, with some broadly and highly favored, many neutrally or very-mixed in view, and some moderately to highly disfavored.

Representatives of these groups met recently to compare findings, identify themes, and communicate the results. Many common themes and patterns of results emerged from these groups’ independent efforts. Our groups consider about a third of the 43 or so MGT Report recommendations to be very concerning in that they are perceived to likely lead to significant undesirable ramifications, to be seriously flawed, and/or to be unjustified. Here we list MGT Report recommendations viewed likely to have significant negative consequences for our institution and its constituents. We urge each recommendation so identified be approached very cautiously if at all, starting with detailed considerations and analyses by diverse groups. **In the list of MGT Report recommendations below, organized according to the MGT Report format, the bold font indicates which recommendations drew the most widespread and severe criticism and are thus considered especially problematic.**

I. PROVOST OFFICE

- **Recommendation #1: Reorganize the Office of the Provost to allow greater focus on student academic success.**
- **Recommendation #2: Centralize undergraduate academic advising.**

II. FACULTY AFFAIRS

- **Recommendation #1: Create a new Vice President of Faculty Affairs position.**

IV. ACADEMIC REALIGNMENT

- **Recommendation #1: Combine the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science, and the College of Geosciences to create a new College of Arts and Sciences.**

- **Recommendation #5: Create the new Institute of Biological Life Sciences which will contain the Department of Biology and the Biomedical Sciences Program.**
- **Recommendation #6: Merge the University Libraries into the newly created College of Arts and Sciences and create a new Department of Library Sciences.**
- **Recommendation #9a: Reassign the University Studies degree program exclusively to the College of Arts and Sciences.**

VI. FACILITIES

- Recommendation #1: Restructure Facilities and Operations/Safety and Security to include all facilities services under a new centralized management structure in Facilities Management.

VII. FINANCE AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

- Recommendation #1: Centralize financial/business services under the Chief Financial Officer.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

- **Eliminate the Human Resources Liaison Network.**

IX. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- **Recommendation #1: Consolidate Information Technology across campus.**
- Recommendation #2: Establish a university-wide Help Desk and ticketing system.

X. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Centralize marketing and communications across the university.

We emphasize that two of the most common comments regarding the MGT Report arising from our considerations and the overall body of report-assessment data from staff, faculty, and PIs, were that the purposes and justifications for specific MGT recommendations were often lacking and that the recommendations were often quite vague (*e.g.*, the recommendations for “IX. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY”). Critical comments about “IV. ACADEMIC REALIGNMENT” were particularly widespread. For example, while administrative and financial efficiencies are often desirable, they don’t necessarily lead to a “better” university. Perceptions about general deficiencies in the MGT Report further compound concerns about specific shortcomings and inadvertent complications that our groups foresee will arise from implementing some of the recommendations.

We ask that the recommendations be carefully considered and analyzed by diverse representation across our institution *before* decisions are made to implement them, so that there is ample time to identify, avoid and mitigate undesirable outcomes. These efforts will lead to better action plans and a stronger university. We look forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Respectfully,



David M. Stelly, Chair
Steve Maren, Past Chair
Debjoyti Banerjee, Vice-Chair

Council of Principal Investigators



Dale Rice, Speaker
Patti Smith, Speaker-Elect
Tracy Hammond, Secretary

Faculty Senate



Cynthia Billington - Chairperson
Sarah Franke - Vice Chairperson

University Staff Council