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**DR. MATSON**

Good morning! Thank you for being here. I hope that you all enjoyed a wonderful holiday break and have returned to campus rested, energized, and ready to embark on a fabulous 2019. I'm looking forward to our students coming back on Monday—the hallways and sidewalks seem so empty without them!

I'd like to introduce you to someone new to our university who we recruited to lead an area to which we, as an institution, devoted a great deal of thought, time, and investment going into and throughout Fall 2018: the newly created division of **ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**. And here to talk to you about the important work going on there is our Vice President for Enrollment Management, Brandy McLelland.

Brandy comes to us with 20 years of experience in enrollment management for higher education. She joins us from California State University-Dominguez Hills, where she served most recently as Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, and in previous roles as the Director of Admissions and Records, Registrar and Director of Student Information Services. Here at A&M-SA, she is responsible for a broad range of student support services and related programs, including student recruitment and admissions, the welcome center and enrollment management communications; financial aid; and the registrar's office.

Brandy is a passionate student advocate and a seasoned enrollment management professional. I am so happy to have her here and am so pleased to now introduce her to you. Brandy?

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**DR. MATSON**

Thank you, Brandy, as we plan for the future of A&M-San Antonio, we're doing what it takes to bring the best and brightest students to this campus, and growing at the pace that we need in order to serve our fast-growing city.

And thank *you to everyone* for the work that *you* do to ensure that when those students come to us, they find a warm and welcoming community and first-rate academic experiences awaiting them. **[PAUSE]**

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge another member of the President's Cabinet, Dr. Richard Ortega, Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Richard, will you please stand up so we can see you?

As may have heard, Richard is leaving A&M-San Antonio later this year. I share this news with sadness for our campus and joy for Richard. I know that this was a difficult decision for Richard, and he made it driven by medical concerns that he is facing. As VP of Advancement, he has done incredible work to advocate for A&M-San Antonio, to bring in the philanthropic and corporate support that funds much of the exciting work we do here, to build and strengthen our ties out in the San Antonio community, and to leave a solid foundation upon which his successor can build. Richard, I want to thank you so very much for sharing your talents. We are now actively recruiting for the next Vice President and later this year we will have a soiree to celebrate Richard's retirement. Let's all please give him a round of applause. **[PAUSE]**

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Last week, like many others in the community, I had the opportunity to pay respects to the late Commissioner Paul Elizondo. His rosary service was of course filled with all the traditions of a Catholic mass and the sharing of memories and reflections on the Commissioner's life. Loved ones talked about his passions for music, and for the servant leadership with which he so selflessly enriched his community. Throughout the service, what struck me most in all of the stories about Commissioner Elizondo's life was that it was a life lived with intentionality and purpose. As I sat there in the beautiful San Fernando Cathedral, listening, I imagined him as a young college student from the West Side of San Antonio, then becoming a Marine, then moving through the many experiences that shaped him into the profound leader he became, with an illustrious career spanning decades.

As I left the service and walked to my car on that brisk, rainy night, I kept coming back to a particular sentiment that summed up the impact of the Commissioner's life—and I'm paraphrasing here from remarks by Judge Wolffe and the Honorable Henry Cisneros—"There are children **not yet born** who will live a better life because of the impact and influence of Commissioner Paul Elizondo's work in our community." [PAUSE] *Children not yet born.* [PAUSE] What better evidence could there be of a life well-lived life? What an amazing legacy—it's certainly one to which I think we would all aspire.

As I think about how our university came to be, and the work we all do here at A&M-San Antonio, I see parallels with the stories of great community leaders like Commissioner Elizondo and **Senator Frank Madla**, whose tenacity led us to where we are today. The late Senator's work to create this university, against

all odds, has changed and influenced the lives of everyone in this room and, most importantly, thousands of students from all over the world. I want to remind you that what happens here every single day has a far greater reach than you or I can foresee. We plant these seeds and in some cases wait a very long time before we see the complete intellectual harvest, but it gives me great pride—as I’m sure it does for you—to know that we are educating the next generation of leaders, some of whom will go on to change a community or an industry. Any one of whom just might be the next Commissioner or Senator who will impact not only their communities, but perhaps even children who are not yet born. This is the potential and impact of our university, and it is fueled by each of you. Never doubt that you are a part of something bigger than any one individual, and that you are helping to create a better tomorrow. **[PAUSE]**

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2018 was a very special year for our university and, of course, for San Antonio and Bexar County. As you know, in 2018 San Antonio celebrated its Tricentennial. We are honored to have played a role in that momentous celebration, and to have been represented at the 2018 Citywide celebrations to ring in the New Year on January 1, and again to usher it out on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

We also now have a permanent, physical legacy from the Tricentennial here on our campus in the form of two unique mementos. **One is the Tricentennial Flame**, an art installation representing the commemorative flame that was lit on a designated day of reflection honoring San Antonio's native populations. **We also have a beautiful Texas Red Oak tree** from the Bush family farm in Crawford, TX, that we received in conjunction with the City of San Antonio's "Tree-Centennial" initiative, which committed to planting 300 trees at the various higher education institutions across the city. Later this semester,



we'll begin planting a variety of approximately 85 more trees across campus, also part of this "tree-centennial" gift. So we will enjoy these symbols of SA 300 for many years to come.

**[BRIEF PAUSE]**

With 300 years behind us as a city, it is now 3-0-1- in the 2-1-0... and the celebratory aura of the Tricentennial lingers on this 10th day of 2019, as we launch our 10th Year as a stand-alone institution. **[BRIEF PAUSE, LEAD APPLAUSE]**

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### **Strategic Framework for The Power of A&M**

At 10 years of age as a standalone university, the power of the A&M system is clearly at work here on our campus. Some of you in this room have been here from the very start! If you were here at the beginning as a part of the Kingsville team, please stand. **[BRIEF PAUSE FOR APPLAUSE]** Some of you joined

us in or around Fall 2016, when our faculty and staff needed to grow to serve the many new students that comprehensive expansion allowed us to welcome. If you're one of those folks, please stand. **[BRIEF PAUSE]** And some of you are pretty new to this campus—if you have joined us since our last Convocation on September 1<sup>st</sup>, please stand. **[BRIEF PAUSE]** Like our students, you arrived here by many diverse paths, but we share in common a passion for our students and a commitment to supporting them in their academic journeys.

Together, we continue to move at a rapid pace of growth and change, far more so than you would find at other public universities, where change tends to be incremental. Ours has been wholesale and I'm sure, at times, exhausting. But it's also exhilarating, when you think about where we came from, where we have been, and where we are going. And it's where we're

going that I really want all of us to be focused on. At our 10-year mark, it's important that we move forward deliberately and thoughtfully. That we approach the future with a vision. That we maintain the same energy and audacious spirit that drove Senator Madla's efforts to bring this dream of a four-year-university on the South Side to life. That like Commissioner Elizondo, we act with intentionality and purpose.

Every day that you come to campus, recognize that we are a bit bigger and better than we were the day before. Having now achieved remarkable growth in our undergraduate student population and accomplished our downward expansion, we must continue to grow in order to meet the educational needs of one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation—but it is critical that we do so with an emphasis on **the high standard of academic excellence** that is a hallmark of the A&M system. [PAUSE]

Serving our students well starts with knowing who they are.

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We now have data on three cohorts of first-year students and we're beginning to better understand what they look like coming in, and how best to support them once they're here. We continue to learn more about **our transfer students**, what academic challenges they face, and how we can bolster their academic success. We know that in order to remain faithful to our goal of being a national model for student success, we must be agile and responsive to the needs of our student populations. We are adapting resources to meet challenges or unmet needs that students of all ages, genders, ethnicities and income levels are experiencing. We are examining our practices to ensure that equity and access are guiding principles in all that we do.

For example, under the leadership of the Provost, we have created a “one-stop shop” that co-locates Success Coaches, Advisors and supplemental instructional resources for students because we know that the easier and more convenient it is for students to navigate the various resources and supports we put in place for them, the more likely they are to use them and enjoy the benefits that such resources so richly provide. Those units will be relocating into the *very* imaginatively named Mod C, located, as you might have predicted, right next to Mods A & B. Please be patient as those units get settled into their new homes. It’s always difficult to make such a big change but the end result will be that are students are better supported in their academic endeavors.

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There is so much that we are already doing to move the university in the right direction. We have focused on implementing our strategic plan, *Build.Impact.Transform*. I want to take a moment to thank those who shared time and insights to creation of this plan. If you're one of those people, please raise your hand. Remember way back to 2015-16, those long-gone quieter days on campus, when you could find a place to park and many classrooms were empty! You were here with me and you believed in what we could accomplish and we've made significant strides towards those goals. Thank you again.

Many faculty and staff have contributed to our progress on strategic plan goals through their work on projects funded through the Strategic Plan Seed Fund Grants, the results of which will be shared at the spring Student Research Symposium.

To date, we have made more than 25 awards to faculty and staff, totaling over \$200,000.

We have faithfully followed that roadmap laid out in *Build.Impact.Transform.*, and as new leaders have joined our team, we have assessed and made necessary adjustments, while remaining true to our 4 goals. This Spring semester, I have asked Jessica Loudermilk, the University's new Chief of Staff who joined us in the fall, to work with me and the President's Cabinet to make some adjustments to the outcomes identified in the development of our initial strategic plan. We will share that refreshed version of the plan broadly, and also report out to the campus community as we continuously evaluate our efforts to determine our progress toward meeting our strategic goals.

Those goals provide the scaffolding upon which we're building the A&M – San Antonio of the future, and they will continue to

inform all that we do. As the strategic plan so clearly articulates, at this next stage of our evolution, we will focus even more intensively on what matters most for our students and our institution: *our academic excellence and our students' engagement and academic success.*

As we raise our aspirations, it has become clear that to lift our community and enhance economic development, we must examine every aspect of our academic environment from pre-college programs to faculty research, doctoral programs, alumni engagement and everything in between. Our pursuit of excellence, on behalf of our students and the community we serve, is a job that will be finished. We must continually be taking stock, identifying challenges and opportunities, and making deliberate choices about the university we want to be



tomorrow, next year, 5 years down the road, and far into the future.

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To that end, last year **Provost O'Brien and a team of 17 faculty and staff** studied admissions standards across the A&M and UT systems and we discovered that we were among the lowest, in fact, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the bottom, in entrance requirements for first-time students. Last semester, I shared in several faculty and staff forums, recommendations from the Provost's committee to raise admissions standards with a tiered approach. Thanks to the thoughtful and thorough work of that committee, **I am pleased to share** that I will submit our proposed new standards to the A&M System later today... and they'll be considered by the Board of Regents in March. Once we receive approval of these new standards, we will update our internal processes, marketing materials, and applications in anticipation of admitting, for Fall

2020, our most academically prepared and accomplished cohort yet! **[PAUSE]**

Now, let me address the Elephant in the Room. I want to be abundantly clear that this university remains 100% committed to serving the South Side and the broader San Antonio community. As I think most of you know, 7-8-2-2-4 is in my DNA and I can assure you that we will not engage in practices that leave behind the very students that we were built to serve. Along with the increase in admissions standards, I will challenge all of you to build stronger partnerships with local districts... and other agencies or non-profits that serve our community. As you heard earlier from Brandy McLelland, we are creating an aggressive plan to communicate and build partnerships with school administrators, counselors, and teachers at school districts along with high school students and their families... and I am already

in consultation with Chancellor Flores and the senior leaders at each of the Alamo Colleges and their pre-college programs.

We are already engaged in targeted outreach, pre-college preparatory programming and other partnerships to ensure students are poised for academic success, particularly in Math.

Also, we are forming a new dual-admission program where students can be admitted here pending completion of pre-identified courses at Alamo Colleges. We have set our sights on growing enrollment of not only the top 10% students from across Texas, but also foster youth, Dreamers and Early College High School Graduates. The change in admissions standards is one of the most impactful long-run decisions that we will make to elevate our institution. **[PAUSE]**

We have an audacious vision for this University and it will not necessarily be easy to achieve, but we have the prestige and influence of the A&M System behind us in all that we do, and I want to remind you that there are business, community and government leaders who continue to advocate and champion all that we're doing here. We are making critical decisions and big plans that will change the trajectory of our university and have a significant impact throughout Bexar County, but we are not alone in bringing this vision to life. And we are well underway.

*Innovative Programs and Partnerships*

I am particularly excited about how our faculty continues to both elevate and innovate in their academic programs and research portfolios, and I'll highlight just a few of those here.

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We have made great strides in establishing A&M-SA as a leader in cyber security education, in a city that has the second-largest

concentration of cyber warriors in the nation. In August, A&M-San Antonio announced that we had joined the **Facebook Cyber Security University Program**—the first university in Texas to and only the ninth in the nation to do so. The program equips students with in-demand skills that will allow them to pursue productive careers, while serving a vital national security interest. Our students have already proven themselves to be competitive on a national stage and are benefiting from opportunities to attend conferences and other professional development activities made possible through this vibrant partnership.

Also in the areas of computer science and cyber security, A&M-SA was awarded its first **National Science Foundation grant** this fall, a nearly \$250,000 award supporting our participation in a national project that seeks to increase the retention and transfer

of Hispanic students in computing from two-year to four-year institutions. The project will develop an innovative undergraduate computer science curriculum with cyber security modules, offering academic experiences that strengthen students' marketability by providing an NSA Cyber Defense Education certificate upon graduation. We will be positively impacting not only our students but also the regional workforce, by preparing our students today for the jobs of tomorrow.

**[PAUSE]**

The College of Arts and Sciences has continued to build on the \$750K investment by the Chancellor's Research Initiative Fund that launched the Institute for Water Resources Science and Technology. We are in the approval process to offer a BS degree in Water Resource Sciences and Technology launching in Fall 2019, and a BAAS in Applied Water Science in Fall 2020 at the

RELLIS Campus. The latter is under development with Blinn College and a similar program will be offered here in collaboration with Northwest Vista College and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service.

The M.S. program in Water Resources Science and Technology, also launching in Fall 2019, will focus on science and technologies that support sustainable water resources infrastructure, and water policy. These new degree offerings are supported by the 2015 Texas Water Technology Roadmap and our own Institute's water forums featuring top water experts focused on the "nexus of water, energy, and food," and on "water workforce education, data, and research."

These innovative degree programs in Water Resources are a national model for the future water workforce, to ensure future water security in Texas and in the nation.

Our campus was one of 3 Institutions in Texas and California that leveraged cumulative research efforts to land a National Science Foundation award of \$2.4 million, of which A&M-SA was awarded \$90,000, to deepen knowledge about the connections between food, energy and water nexus issues under conditions of water scarcity in San Antonio and southern California regions challenged with rapid population growth, water allocation challenges, and expensive proposed water projects. The Water institute is creating fruitful collaborations with partners that specialize in water science and technology including the Edwards Aquifer Authority, supported by a \$100K grant for protection of the Edwards Aquifer. The Institute has



also received a series of grants that will enable it to take the lead in organizing a statewide initiative on planning an internet for Texas's public water data. With all of this burgeoning activity, the Water Institute is on its way to making a profound impact on water research, providing not only rich scholarship and academic programs but also contributing to solutions for some of the most critical natural resource challenges of our time.

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And as you all know, tomorrow we will open the additional 28,000 square feet of space in the Science and Technology Building. This is an important step not just for meeting the current needs of our growing campus, but also to help enable us to realize our longer-term academic vision. The space is designed to support new academic programs in cyber engineering technology and electronic systems engineering technology, with an anticipated launch of Fall 2019. In an A&M

System renowned for its strength in engineering disciplines, this will be our first venture into that realm, with an engineering program that suits our community and the students that we serve, and also draws on the significant strengths we have already established in the College of Business. The strong interdisciplinary approach will be a real differentiator for our programs, alongside which we also intend to offer a teacher certification credential preparing K-12 educators to provide instruction that helps prepare children, especially those in our neighboring districts, for high paying careers in STEM fields.

I encourage all of you to join us at 9:45 tomorrow morning, as we celebrate the opening of Phase II of the Sci Tech building.

Our ambitious academic goals for this university would not be possible to achieve without providing our faculty, staff and students the teaching, learning, working and research

environments to support them—so every new classroom, lab, or office that we open holds significance for us. **[PAUSE]**

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Also in 2018, A&M-SA announced the establishment of the Henry G. Cisneros Institute for Emerging leaders, which was made possible by a \$1 million pledge from Dr. Cisneros.

The programming at the Institute will be an invaluable complement to students' work in their degree programs, offering a variety of co-curricular activities, community engagement opportunities, a speaker series and a robust research program—all designed to equip our students to be the leaders of tomorrow, with the knowledge, skills and experiences necessary to drive social and economic change in their communities and beyond.

We are so grateful to Henry Cisneros, a steadfast friend and supporter whose passion for and commitment to our students,

the South Side, and the great city of San Antonio matches our own.

Of course, these are only a few highlights of the many remarkable things you're all doing to advance our mission.

Please join me in reflecting on some of your other activities and accomplishments as we take a look back over a very busy Fall 2018 with this brief video.

**(Fall 2018 Highlights Video)**

### **Look Ahead at Spring 2019**

Wow! Were we all busy during the Fall! But it looks like we managed to squeeze a lot of fun in there, as well. I hope we're all refreshed after a restful holiday break because as busy as we were in Fall, there's a lot to look forward to in Spring.

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We will continue to build on our gathering momentum on enhancing students' academic success and campus-wide academic excellence. As you may know, in March, we will welcome a SACSCOC accreditation reaffirmation visit.

As part of the reaffirmation process, we will be submitting a Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, which for 2019 is an initiative focused on Quantitative Literacy, a skill area that is critical to our students' personal and academic growth, and career preparedness. It has become increasingly clear that in the twenty-first century, no student can afford to graduate from a university without attaining quantitative literacy. At A&M-SA, we plan to ensure our students acquire these crucial skills by offering courses, co-curricular programming, and other academic support, like tutoring and academic coaching,

specifically designed to address this important skill set. We want to ensure that our students leave us capable and prepared to be agile, innovative and entrepreneurial—so that they are well equipped to embark on their professional careers or continue on to graduate school.

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In addition to new programming and initiatives, we are also advancing efforts in to be recognized for our excellence in a couple of already well-established areas.

### *AACSB Accreditation*

The College of Business is well along their path toward accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), which is the gold standard across the globe when it comes to business education. The College has recently completed its initial self-study report, which is the

intensive second step in the accreditation process, and is now working on the next phase, which involves addressing gaps that exist between the AACSB standards and the College's existing programs. We anticipate hosting an accreditation site visit by 2021 and soon after, the College being able to proudly add AACSB accreditation to their list of laurels.

### *Carnegie Community Engagement Classification*

This spring, we are also preparing an application for the prestigious Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, which is a national designation recognized as the hallmark of community engagement throughout higher education. Much like other accreditation processes, the preparation of the application itself provides a valuable self-reflection opportunity for our University. A steering committee — comprising A&M-SA faculty, staff, and community representatives — is working

under the leadership of **Dr. Edwin Blanton**, executive director of the Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement. They will be reaching out in various ways throughout the semester to solicit your participation and feedback, and I encourage you all to support them in their efforts. Community engagement is a core tenet of our mission here at A&M-SA, and to be recognized for our accomplishments in this area will add yet another jewel to our crown.

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*PCOE Plans for the Spring*

Building a culture of excellence for diversity, inclusion and equity remains one of our top priorities, and the President's Commission on Equity—or PCOE—is continuing its great work to support that culture. In April, the PCOE will host its 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of Diversity Forums, welcoming scholars and other thought leaders to address topics related to structural inequalities



in San Antonio, including the history of economic segregation, housing equitability and social inequality. You'll also see a partnership between the PCOE and the Student Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management which will host a session on the impact of immigration in Texas.

In addition to offering these events, the PCOE is focused on institutionalizing our collective work in Equity mindedness, through providing funding support for events or activities that promote equity. And the PCOE Academic Interests Subcommittee is undertaking an initiative to identify courses in each college to be designated as "EI", which will stand for equity and inclusion. **[PAUSE]**

*Heritage Committee Plans for Spring*

Building on the great work accomplished by the LatinX Committee and the Black History Month Committee, the newly formed Heritage Committee, a collaboration of faculty and staff committed to honoring cultural diversity, are following the Library of Congress designation on heritage months and scheduling many engaging and thoughtful events for our faculty, staff, students and our San Antonio community.

Be watching the Growler for more details on these events, as we embrace and celebrate the many cultures that make our campus, community and nation unique. I especially encourage you to join me at the City of San Antonio's Martin Luther King, Jr. March which is less than two weeks away! On Monday morning, January 21<sup>st</sup>, the Mays Center has scheduled an event shuttle to and from our campus for participants. You can reach out to the Mays Center for more details!

And speaking of the Mays Center, please take advantage of the partnerships that they, along with Student Affairs, have established with the San Antonio Museum of Art, the Witte, and the McNay. We're fortunate to live in city that has three such prominent museums, and these partnerships allow faculty, staff, and students to be admitted at no cost!

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### *Growth/Development Update*

The final area in which I'd like to offer a preview of 2019 activity is related to our physical footprint. And since much of this involves talking about buildings that aren't yet built, or land that is not yet cleared, it's going to require a little bit of imagination from you all.

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In fact, imagination and curiosity are, for me, the most important tools we have for building the future of this university. As the great visionary and legendary dreamer Walt Disney famously said, “Around here we don’t look backwards for very long...we keep moving forward, opening new doors and doing new things, because we’re curious...and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.” He could easily have been describing A&M-San Antonio!

When it comes to planning for the future of our campus, there are two significant initiatives that will gather steam this year, and that should really spark your imagination and pique your curiosity—one of those is Opportunity Zones and the other is SA Tomorrow.

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SA Tomorrow is the City's comprehensive planning effort to prepare San Antonio for smart, sustainable growth toward the year 2040, by which time the City's population is expected to increase by one million people. As you can see from this diagram, our campus is one of 14 identified "regional centers" that are critical conductors of activity that will support this rapid growth. Our campus and the surrounding area is part of SA Tomorrow's Phase 2 planning that will launch later this month. Our recognition in this plan as a key driver of San Antonio's growth is a clear signal that the A&M system investment here in San Antonio is a valuable asset to the entire community and I encourage you all to remember that we do not act in isolation. We are recognized by others as part of a bigger network that will spark growth and economic development all around us. You'll hear much more about SA Tomorrow as Phase 2 gets underway.

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Our entire campus has also been designated by the federal government as an Opportunity Zone. Announced back in April, the U.S. Treasury Department's Opportunity Zone program identified economically disadvantaged areas in which the federal government incentivized long-term investments by alleviating the capital-gains tax burden, in order to spark economic development. Our campus sits in one of 23 such designated "opportunity zones" in the greater San Antonio area, which will attract investors who are considering much-needed development projects right here on our campus. This puts us firmly in the DRIVER'S SEAT for our continued development, creating a perfect synergy of timing and opportunity to expand our physical footprint in a way that keeps up with our student growth trajectory and supports our ambitious academic programming goals.

Let me break this down in real terms...As you know, we have a 20 year master plan—raise your hand if you were part of its development. We can right now, today, look out 20 years or more on that plan and move projects that were on the distant horizon to today...Now, of course, it's not *quite* as simple as I'm making it sound here, today. But suffice it to say, investors are curious about us. And we can match that interest with the big plans borne of our own intellectual curiosity and faculty talent, to build facilities that can catalyze our academic and student programs far beyond what we might have imagined just 6 months ago. This is where imagination really come in. Let's brainstorm for a moment about a range of possibilities available to us:

Launching a Research Park that could house a business accelerator lab and academic learning communities; creating a

Lab School that conjoins our College of Education with children from our neighborhood, with the children of faculty, staff and our adult students; A SCIF that can be used for research and engagement with the entire community; or an Active Retirement Community that could spur academic activity in aging and intergenerational living; Veterans housing that could support that could support special needs such as services for the disabled and the list goes on.

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But wait, there's more! Don't let your curiosity stop there... as we're only 2 days into the legislative session, keep in mind that we do have a project or two requested for the TRB. The new academic building is nearing final design ....and we're preparing a TRB request to support building of a second phase, to provide permanent homes for our library, College of Business and most of the departments that are now in the *very* upscale



village of temporary facilities! I realize it may not feel very temporary to those of you in them, but we *are* working diligently to move departments out of the temporary buildings—not to be confused with the custom built temporary classroom Mods A-C, which do have a limited life, but we will be with us for the foreseeable future to accommodate growth as we complete new construction projects.

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One more project that is desperately needed on campus is a new Recreation Center. We have cobbled together a range of prospective programs that will be housed in this facility and are currently exploring the project with 3<sup>rd</sup> party private developers.

This is exciting because this facility will anchor our student engagement and student life initiatives including our much anticipated Athletics program. For that, we have a lot of work ahead of us but the anticipation is mounting. After all, you can

hardly be part of the prestigious A&M system without talking about athletics, right?

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Here's what we know for certain—we will go through the Texas legislative process, because in Texas the legislature must approve the creation of an athletics program. So we're in motion to seek authorization and after clearing that hurdle, we'll then go to the students for a fee referendum and to the Regents for final approval.

If all goes as planned, we could launch by 2020; if we experience any delays, it may slip to 2021. Plans are still tentative, but we'll probably start with 4 NAIA sports, most likely Men's and Women's Soccer, Men's Golf, and Women's Softball. And we haven't forgotten that this is 2019, so we're also integrating new definitions of “sports”—such as e-sports,

which is video gaming at the competitive level. Much like “You-Tubing” is now a career, video gaming is now a competitive and in some cases, highly paid sport. We are engaging partners at multiple levels and as you think about the list of proposed tenants in the Rec Sports Center, consider that we are stretching our entrepreneurial imagination to tie together a number of needs that prepare us for the next 20 years.

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We also have two big ideas that have been brewing and are close to fruition. One is to continue to drive our own growth by developing our 10 acre parcel of raw land into Mission Village **[next slide]**, a revenue generating asset that will provide workforce housing and other much needed campus amenities and services. I plan to take this to the Regents for approval later in 2019 and launch that project. As a reminder, this was a competitively bid project that led to the selection of our

developer—so it was not generated as an Opportunity Zone project, but may actually end up being able to benefit from that financing mechanism!

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One last thing to share when it comes to our future and how we use our land... About a year ago, we began conversations with the San Antonio River Authority, or SARA, and TJX, the corporate structure that owns TJ Max. Through a series of subsequent twists and turns, we are on the precipice of accepting a conservation easement, in partnership with SARA, to receive approximately 400 acres that can be used for parks, recreation and environmental stewardship research and instruction. This is another long-term asset that will eventually, over a 20 year period, support our academic program expansion and research in multiple disciplines. And this was not an opportunity that we were actively looking for—it found us! It took a lot of

imagination to really see its full potential, and to figure out the ways in which that land could be used to best serve our institution and our long-term goals, but I'm excited about where we're going with it.

I encourage you to think about our 20 year horizon with a vivid imagination and through the lens of intellectual curiosity. We need all of the best ideas that you have to contribute...because what we do today will leave an impact beyond what any of us can fully imagine today. **[PAUSE]**

It's safe to say that 2019 is going to be a BIG year for us. It's going to be special for many reasons, and one of the most special to me is the fact that we will be celebrating our 10-Year Anniversary. I'm know I'm not the only one thinking about this important milestone and reflecting back on the past years that

brought us to this point. In fact, our CIO Bill Griffenberg and Chief Davidson were able to get their hands on some of the latest eavesdropping technology from the FBI... and they shared with me a texting conversation that it recently turned up.

**(10-Year Anniversary texting video)**

One of these students could clearly use an A&M-SA history lesson or two! And by the end of this year, I challenge all of our faculty, staff and students have a much firmer grasp on the history of this amazing University.

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### **10-Year Anniversary**

Many people trace the establishment of our University back to Governor Rick Perry's historic signing of Senate Bill 629 in May of 2009. But the story of our remarkable University was

actually decades in the making... thanks to the vision and diligence of larger-than-life figures such as the late Senator Frank L. Madla.

Throughout 2019, we'll celebrate our 10-Year Anniversary with a whole host of events and activities, starting with the launch of an A&M-SA history exhibit in February and culminating in a final celebration at the 2019 Lights of Esperanza in early December, with all kinds of fun in between. Many of these family-friendly events will be open to members of the San Antonio community. Later this semester, we'll celebrate the release of an A&M-SA history book published with A&M Press and unveil a history wall in the Central Academic Building. And if nothing else, we'll ensure that our campus community knows much more about the history of this great institution than that poor student did!

Throughout our anniversary year, you can keep up with the latest available information at our 10-Year Anniversary site—the URL is featured on the back of your programs today. You'll also see listed there some key upcoming dates for Spring that I'm sure you'll want to make note of.

It's so important that, like San Antonio did with its Tricentennial, we pause this year to honor and celebrate our past. But in closing today, I'd like to turn your attention back to our future—to the Texas A&M-San Antonio of 2040.

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What we all do today will change our outcomes and how our institution is viewed on a national or global stage in 2040 and beyond. We have four integrated strategic goals that are moving



us to the point of maturation that will put us in an enviable position of A&M prestige. Everything you're working so hard on— student retention and success, doubling down on recruitment, creating new academic programs, enhancing financial literacy, engaging with the community, growing experiential learning and co-curricular programs— these things matter. They matter now and they will shape the institution we are in 2040 and beyond.

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As you think about the university we are building for the future, I challenge you with a quote that I've shared before, but that I think is so fitting at this moment. To borrow Peter Drucker's words, **The best way to predict the future is to create it.**

We are doing that together.

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So on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of our 301<sup>st</sup> year as a City, it's fitting that we celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> year with an audacious spirit, and continue to demonstrate a willingness to take risks, to advance our ideas.

In the spirit of our military embracing university, I end with the story of an a life well lived Army veteran Richard Overton born in 1906, passed away in Austin, his funeral is set for this Saturday. When he turned 107 he was asked about his secret to longevity and he shared his vices "I drink whiskey in my coffee. Sometimes I drink it straight," "I smoke my cigars, blow the smoke out; I don't swallow it."

Gov. Abbott called him Quote "an American icon and a Texas legend." "Richard Overton made us proud to be Texans and proud to be Americans. We can never repay Richard Overton for his service to our nation and for his lasting impact on the Lone Star State." END QUOTE Overton was there in Pearl Harbor

surrounded by smoldering battleships, he was also at Okinawa and Iwo Jima. Back in 2013 he said QUOTE “I only got out of there by the grace of God.” He was 112 years and 230 days old. We should all be inspired and influenced by the change Overton experienced over his lifetime.

I invite each of you to join us for lunch now in the Pavilion.

Thank you.