

An Open Letter to the University Community

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In a series of briefings on March 9, I announced a large set of changes to the administrative structure of the campus. The briefings were appropriately intended for those who have the most immediate contact with the planned changes. It is, of course, also important that all other members of The University community understand the nature and purpose of these changes, so I will be providing a series of reports for you over the next several weeks. This letter is a very brief overview. The next issue of *On Campus* will carry a much more extensive report, as will the next issue of *Alcalde*. In addition, a Website (<http://www.utexas.edu/administration/reorg/>) will be established shortly and will be featured under the Spotlight on our campus home page. You will be able to use it to download the slides that I used in the recent briefings, and you will be able to follow progress over the next several months.

Of course, the first question is "why?" The answer is that we need a better structure for at least three reasons: to serve your needs properly, to permit The University to respond effectively in a changing, fast-moving world, and to manage our resources more efficiently. The current format of the administration was established some 20 years ago. During the past two decades, there have been significant changes in the scale of The University, in the regulatory environment in which we operate, and in critical operational areas, such as information technology. Moreover, the president's external role is larger and more complex than in the past.

The reorganization is largely focused on the way in which the vice-presidential portfolios are defined and on the relationship between the president and the vice presidents. One of the purposes is to produce a better, clearer pattern of delegated authority, so that the vice presidents have greater ability to resolve and to move business in their areas. Another goal is to produce better internal consistency in vice presidential portfolios. Three new vice-presidential positions will be created and the roles of several current vice presidents will be modified. While these changes will influence many areas of campus, the most visible changes are:

- The Executive Vice President and Provost, Sheldon Ekland-Olson, will have clear standing as second to the president and clear responsibilities as chief operating officer in most academic matters. The provost is also charged with developing a more sophisticated resource-planning capability for The University.
- Charles Franklin will be named Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer with a portfolio that includes the controller's office, accounting, budget, purchasing, and other financial functions.
- The position of Vice President of Campus Services will be created with responsibility for such areas as campus facilities planning, the physical plant, utilities, police, parking and transportation, and other non-financial services that

currently report to the Vice President for Business Affairs. The portfolio will also include Human Resources, Equal Employment Opportunity, the Employee Assistance Program, and the University Child Care Center.

- The position of Vice President for Information Technology will be created with responsibility for Academic Computing, Administrative Computing, and Telecommunications.
- The position of Vice President of Public Affairs will be created with responsibility for Public Affairs, Visitor Services, and University Relations.

I am frequently asked whether this reorganization will be costly. The answer is that there certainly will be nonrecurring (one-time) costs, mainly in connection with the relocation of offices. There may also be recurring (year-after-year) costs, although it is difficult to predict exactly how large they might be. To a considerable extent the plan rearranges reporting points, and there is little or no expected recurring cost for that. In other cases, as in the creation of the portfolio in information technology, there is a consolidation of closely related functions. We will realize some efficiencies in the course of doing that. Moreover, we should keep in mind that this portfolio involves an area where expansion of scale and effort is very likely, and it is important to establish a structure that can accommodate it.

In a third direction, as in the creation of a portfolio for campus services, we are dividing and providing a new structure for an already complex existing organization. Not all of the organization required to oversee the new portfolio will itself be new. In any case, the total of recurring costs should be quite small compared to the amount that we are committing to any given segment of the recently announced academic initiatives, especially the expansion of the faculty. It will be tiny compared to the recurring funding committed to faculty and staff compensation improvements next year alone. We do need to remember that this is a university with an annual budget of \$1.1 billion and an extremely complex program of activities. It is false economy to preserve an outdated administrative structure that cannot fully cope with our current scope and that cannot position The University effectively in a changing world. Such an administration will waste (or lose opportunities to realize) more resources than reorganization to a better structure will ever cost.

I am also asked if this represents "expansion of the bureaucracy." Actually, it is intended to be just the opposite. Even though the number of vice presidents will be larger, I intend, through cleaner definition of portfolios, better delegation of authority, and a clear emphasis on improved service, to produce a smarter, faster, more capable, and less bureaucratic administration.

The overall plan was developed over a period of three months, during which I consulted extensively with the vice presidents, deans, faculty leadership, system officers, directors of units that would be most affected, and others. The reaction to the plan has been extremely positive. Nearly everyone believes that the time has come for serious change, although many naturally feel uncertainty and anxiety. I believe that the best antidote for that is timely and accurate information.

It will take several months for us to work through the changes, because we do want them to be smooth and thoughtfully executed. A transition team is meeting weekly to oversee and manage the process. If you know of matters that should be considered by the team as we proceed, please feel free to bring them directly to my attention at president@utexas.edu. Throughout, I will personally appreciate your interest, patience, and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Larry R. Faulkner
President