

# Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

*The Island University*

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February 5, 2009

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## **Flint Hills Resources Plans a \$400,000 Contribution to Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi**

**CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas** –Flint Hills Resources is planning to contribute \$400,000 paid over five years for scholarships in the upcoming mechanical engineering program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Flint Hills Resources officials were on campus today (Thursday, Feb. 5) to announce the plan that creates the Flint Hills Resources Fund in Mechanical Engineering. The new Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi awaits final approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

“Corpus Christi’s many industries provide significant job opportunities for engineering graduates, and the support from Flint Hills Resources helps ensure that we can help meet the needs of employers in this market,” said University President Flavius Killebrew. “Flint Hills Resources has been good for our area economy, and the company looks upon Texas A&M-Corpus Christi as being instrumental in the region’s growth.”

Dollars from the Flint Hills Resources fund are designated for student scholarships.

“Flint Hills Resources believes a strong engineering program will pay dividends for the Coastal Bend,” said Richard Harris, vice president and refining manager for Flint Hills Resources. “We are excited to be working with Texas A&M-Corpus Christi as this new major becomes part of the university’s offerings.”

Flint Hills Resources, an independent refining and chemicals company, has one of its three refining complexes in Corpus Christi. The company, which has been part of the Coastal Bend business community since 1981, employs about 900 people, including about 85 engineers.

“Like many businesses, we sometimes are challenged when it comes to recruiting engineers in this area,” Harris said. “A new pool of talent will help companies such as ours capitalize on opportunities for innovation and growth in the future.”

Several area businesses have joined the City of Corpus Christi and Port of Corpus Christi in support of having a mechanical engineering degree program at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. The University currently offers the mechanical engineering technology degree and has labs that can be adapted for the new curriculum. Last fall a \$1 million pledge was made by the city for the program.

Contributions from several corporations and individuals will be announced in upcoming weeks.

President Killebrew said that such funds are necessary to create a mechanical engineering program that meets the high expectations of both the University and the employers who seek its graduates. He added that Texas A&M-Corpus Christi has received hundreds of inquiries from prospective students seeking mechanical engineering at the campus, and many have already made application to the new degree program.

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved the bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering at its January meeting, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board could give final approval by April. The University is planning for the first classes to begin in fall 2009.

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