Good Morning. It is my pleasure to welcome you all here to Austin for the first meeting of the Governor’s Council on Science and Biotechnology Development. Your collective insight and knowledge will help guide our state to a more prosperous and productive future.

I formed this council with one primary goal in mind: to create a seamless system of innovation that will move inventions and discoveries from the laboratory to the marketplace for the good of our people.

I want to see ideas move from concept to consumers, so that we can create thousands of new jobs while uncovering new ways to advance our quality of life.

I am asking you to explore ways to improve health care, agriculture and technology in Texas so that new discoveries, companies and industries come out of Texas schools, Texas laboratories and Texas minds.

Texas has always been considered part of the frontier - from early pioneer explorers to space explorers, Texans have been at the forefront of discovery and development in our nation. In recent years, our technology industry has helped strengthen and diversify our economic interests.

Now we must prepare for the development of the next frontier - what Larry Ellison of Oracle called the, “next big thing” - biotechnology.

Texas has vast resources in the areas of medicine, agriculture, business and research institutions…but we have only begun to realize our potential.

The role of the state should be to foster competition, to create a climate where ideas can germinate, and to help accelerate the process by which an idea is developed into a driver of change in our lives. The goals I have outlined, and which I ask you to help us achieve, are as follows:

* We must increase public, and private, research and development expenditures in Texas from the current level of $2 billion to $3 billion over the next several years;

* We must identify and attract more federal research funds for our higher education institutions; and

* We must identify ways to commercialize intellectual property - the concept known as technology transfer.

Ideas developed in Texas labs and at Texas schools can provide nourishment for the hungry, strength for the infirm
and real hope for those looking to be cured from life-threatening diseases like cancer.

Our institutions of higher education have a major role to play in this effort. We must encourage our researchers to broaden the horizon of human knowledge and potential. Then we must allow for that knowledge to flow to the marketplace.

The future of science and biotechnology is also linked with our ability to produce a workforce capable of undertaking and expanding employment opportunities. Our efforts geared toward economic development can only succeed if our schools are producing the skilled minds capable of filling those jobs, and commercializing ideas.

Looking around this room, I know the people here share a commitment to success. I have seen it as I have visited your communities, businesses and schools. It is why you are here and it is why you are the right individuals to help guide our great state. I would also like to thank my friend Ashley Smith for agreeing to chair this council and for all of his work in preparing for this initial meeting.

Thank you all for your dedication. I look forward to seeing your work product for a better Texas.