EAR READERS:

It is a distinct privilege to present the Second Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) Recommended Reading List. Seven years ago, the development and production of our first reading list was a rewarding experience. Our goal was to generate interest in reading, to promote formal and informal discussions and to broaden knowledge and intellectual thought. The response exceeded our expectations. Over the past seven years we distributed copies to PVAMU students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Surprisingly, the reading list was well received by high school students, members of the Texas Legislature, representatives from other universities and the general public. All told, we have distributed more than 40,000 copies of the first PVAMU Reading List. Often, individuals receiving a copy of the publication point to titles they have read and, after scanning the brief descriptions of listed titles that they have not read, find something that appeals to them. I am pleased with the number of people who later told me that they read at least one book and then offered suggestions for other books “that should have been on the PVAMU Reading List.” Those recommendations, coupled with the many outstanding books that have been published in the intervening years, led to this Second PVAMU Reading List. It is my hope that those receiving this release will consider it as a sequel to the first list.

The Second PVAMU Reading List consists of 70 books. Like the first one, the books include fiction and non-fiction titles, explore technology and for the first time includes children’s literature because these books are great to read to the young and adults can find enjoyment in them as well. This list, just as before, contains a large dose of history titles.

Promotion of reading is a cornerstone of my presidency. Every year, I use a book or significant article that provides a theme for discussions with various campus groups. The University community agreed to focus on reading for our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of its re-accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The QEP at PVAMU is “Increasing Reading and Engagement for Academic Development (iREAD).” Data show that after three years, iREAD students have better grade point averages and stronger persistence rates than their peers. Being involved in “iREAD” has been much more than our checking off a SACs requirement. It is fundamental to the success of our students and university.

On behalf of PVAMU, I sincerely hope you enjoy and benefit from our second attempt at suggesting books to read. We know that our list is not exhaustive and that it reflects the individual biases of those who helped compile it. Our goal, simply, is to generate a touchstone for more reading and thoughtful dialogue.

President,
Prairie View A&M University

~ Dr. George C. Wright

Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.

~ Charles William Eliot

Reading opens doors and creates ideas by broadening our knowledge of the world.

~ Dr. George C. Wright

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The doors of the world are open to people who can read.

~ Albert Einstein

The whole world opened to me when I learned to read.

~ Mary McLeod Bethune

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**My Personal Reading List**

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that one reads becomes part of what one sees and feels. ~ Ralph Ellison
This fictional narrative explores life during England’s Middle Ages from the perspective of marginalized people. The book is a gripping saga of courage, love, and revenge.

Foner examines Lincoln’s public and personal views of slavery in the midst of tumultuous racial politics. As Lincoln oscillates over the proposition of allowing blacks into the Union Army, he is forced to reconcile his beliefs of racial inequality with the goal of ending slavery.

Authors Friedman and Mandelbaum look critically at the state of America during the 20th century as the global leader. The nation is now struggling to compete with rising countries to address the global ramifications of technological advancements.

This biographical account of Lincoln’s cabinet illustrates how Lincoln brilliantly thought like a modern intellectual. Gladwell presents interesting questions and perspectives on a range of topics to encourage new conversations and insights.

This riveting account of Dr. John Kirk, a Scottish botanist, discusses his contributions to ending the African slave trade in Zanzibar. Scholarly attention is often focused on the slave trade of West Africa without including the narratives of East African slave markets, which Hazell examines as a part of the African Diasporic narrative.

The life of Louis Zamperini is a remarkable story about a man who refused to succumb to being a prisoner of war during World War II. His endurance and sheer will to live is an example of how a soldier survived harsh obstacles.

This collection of essays allows the reader to see Oprah as a feminist, race leader and entrepreneur. Oprah’s life is an example of how one can overcome adversity to achieve great wealth and influence worldwide.

The Diligent is a vivid account about the French African Slave Trade enterprise. The story provides a disturbing account of the mundane business of transporting African captives who endured horrific conditions during the Middle Passage to the Americas. This work provides new information about how slave owners normalized the cruelty of fellow humans as acceptable practices of the slave trade.

The Oprah Phenomenon
Harris, Jennifer
Contemporary Issues/Leadership

The Last Slave Market:
Dr. John Kirk and the Struggle to End the African Slave Trade
Hazzell, Alastair
History/Africa/Slavery

Unbroken:
World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption
Hillenbrand, Laura
Biography/World War II

To End All Wars:
A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918
Hochschild, Adam
History/World War I

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Over twenty million civilians and soldiers were killed in the First World War. This book discusses how some people became enamored with the idea of the war as a just and noble cause, while others saw it as sheer madness.

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Africans in America: America’s Journey through Slavery
Johnson, Charles, Smith, Patricia
History/Africa/Slavery

Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word
Randall Kennedy
Contemporary Society/Race Relations

The Race for Timbuktu
Kryza, Frank
History/Africa

Alan Turing—The Enigma: The Book That Inspired the Film “The Imitation Game”
Hodges, Andre
History/Biography/Technology

Steve Jobs
Isaacson, Walter
Biography/Technology

A Delicate Truth: A Novel
Le Carre’, John
Literature Espionage

Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India
Lelyveld, Joseph
History/Biography/Africa

The First Emancipator: Who Freed His Slaves
Carter the Founding Father
Levy, Andrew
History/Slavery/Race Relations

Rome 1960: The Olympics that Changed the World
Maraniss, David
Sports/Politics

Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention
Marable, Manning
Biography/Race Relations

The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris
McCullough, David
History/Literature/Biography

ou live several lives while reading.
~ William Styron

The Race for Timbuktu
Kryza, Frank
History/Africa

Rival British explorers, Alexander Living and Hugh Claperton, set out to be the first Europeans to explore the wonders of Timbuktu, known to have streets paved with gold and buildings adorned with gems. Crossing the vast Sahara Desert and enduring tropical diseases while crossing the Congo River, they overcame numerous barriers.

Steve Jobs forever changed the technological and business worlds as a result of his development of Macintosh and Apple products including the iPhone. This work candidly examines his personality as the source of his genius, which also created a wedge between Jobs and others.

This narrative traces the history of African slavery from the Arab Slave Trade to the Atlantic Slave enterprise up through the American Civil War. Told from the perspective of American colonists, indentured servants, abolitionists, free blacks and enslaved Africans, their stories provide firsthand accounts of race relations evolving in American society.

This ground-breaking book, discusses the history of the “N” word, whether or not anyone has the right to use the word, and how the American legal system has ruled on the use of this highly offensive, very controversial word.

Author Andres Hodges presents a captivating biography of a genius—Alan Turing. Named as the “Father of the Modern Computer,” Alan Turing is known for inventing a computer to break the German Enigma Machine during World War II. Because of the work of Turing, millions of lives were saved and the end of the war came two years sooner. Unfortunately, he was arrested and convicted when he refused to conceal his homosexuality. It was only after committing suicide was Turing’s outstanding contributions acknowledged and celebrated.

In 1895, a white woman was murdered and a black man arrested for the crime. However, he accuses three black women of the murder, which leads to a series of trials. Lebsock’s book examines these trials and captures the personalities of the women in an engrossing story that sheds light not only on the criminal justice system but the racial climate of the times.

The legend of Mahatma Gandhi, a champion for non-violence, is the center of Lelyveld’s examination of how this leader was able to influence others to follow his non-violent campaigns. This book highlights Gandhi’s experiences as a minority during his 21 years in South Africa.

Robert Carter, born into an elite class, had close ties to the families of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. Carter is remarkable in that he freed over five hundred slaves. His decision remained an untold story during the American Revolutionary Era.

David Maraniss captured the 1960 Olympics by examining steroid use, racial controversies, and the politics of the Cold War. Among the colorful stories in the book are accounts of young Cassius Clay, Wilma Rudolph and Rafer Johnson.

Noted historian Manning Marable writes a compelling account of the evolution of Malcolm’s complex personality from a common criminal to a national leader. This work shows Malcolm X as a complete human being with triumphs and failures.

Between 1830 and 1900, hundreds of American authors, painters, sculptors and abolitionists migrated to Paris. McCullough describes how the avant-garde spirit of Paris transformed them. These transformations ultimately shaped American culture with the return of these cultural visionaries to the United States.

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Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy
Metaxas, Eric

Bonhoeffer is an example of a silent hero who emerged during a time of human atrocities. He led a group that planned the assassination of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany during World War II. This important biography by Eric Metaxas provides insights into Bonhoeffer’s faith and determination to protect the Jews from Nazi persecution.

Ogilvie, Marilyn Bailey
American Gospel: The Founding Fathers, the Making of a Nation
Meacham, Jon

Meacham presents an historical portrait of the Founding Fathers’ spiritual foundation. This book explores how Christian faith became intricately woven into American life, ultimately forming the basic structure of religion and political freedom in this country.

Pausch, Randy
The Last Lecture

Computer Science professor at Carnegie Mellon, Randy Pausch, shared with the world reflections on his life and approaching death. This book captures his last lecture in which he questions what matters most in the wake of his condition. In sharing the wisdom gleaned over his life, Pausch recounts how his childhood dreams were fulfilled.

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Rice, Condoleezza
It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership

Colin Powell’s autobiography shares life lessons and personal stories about how he became a military hero and a diplomatic leader. This book, written by America’s first African American Secretary of State, is a must read for anyone preparing for a career in political leadership.

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Told from the perspective of the urban black youth who are usually blamed for their own victimization, Rich's narrative challenges America to understand the cycle that young black men face, as they search for a better life.

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Highly successful football coach Nick Saban has written a motivating guide that serves as a formula for success. The book outlines how hard work, passion, and a winning philosophy can help develop leadership skills on and off the athletic field. Saban offers insights on such topics as values, self-knowledge, consistency and time management.

My Beloved World
Sotomayo, Sonia
Autobiography/Leadership/Women
Diagnosed with diabetes at the age of eight, Sonia Sotomayo emerged from poverty in the Bronx projects becoming the valedictorian of her high school class. These early achievements propelled her to an Ivy League education. As a result of her hard work, she became the first Supreme Court Justice of Puerto Rican descent. This forthright memoir illustrates her determination and character to achieve and to serve as a national role model.

Andrea Stuart uncovers a detailed account of her family’s survival in Barbados as part of a larger history about how the cash crop, “sugar,” financed the European Industrial Revolution. The history of slavery and sugar is a complex social, cultural, and economic narrative that Stuart brings to light as both personal and political. This book is a must read in understanding the conditions of sugar plantation slavery established in the Caribbean Islands.

The Spanish conquest and enslavement of the Bahamas and South America is a fascinating story about greed and religious zealousy. Hugh Thomas presents a rich narrative of a critical period in world history that traces the travel routes of famous Spanish explorers from Christopher Columbus to Ferdinand Magellan.

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The story of America’s West is revealed in the narrative of Kit Carson, an illiterate U.S Scout and Indian fighter. Sides describes Carson’s relationships and exploits with Native Americans, especially the Navajo. This book shadows important events from the Doctrine of Manifest Destiny to the American Civil War.

The Warmth of Other Suns
Wilkerson, Isabel
Autobiography/Leadership/Race Relations
Isabel Wilkerson uncovers the epic story of the Great Migration, the exodus of 6 million blacks from the Jim Crow South to the North and Midwest. A decade of research went into conducting over 1,200 interviews in which Wilkerson was able to condense into a narrative of three compelling stories.

Compiled to celebrate dimensions of love in the African American community, I Hear A Symphony is an assortment of letters, poetry, essays, art, short stories and fiction. This work pays tribute to the African American experience of love and family.

~ Alan Bennett
The following individuals were instrumental in the creation of the Prairie View A&M University Recommended Reading List:

Dr. George C. Wright, President
Dr. Lauretta F. Byars, Vice President for Student Affairs and Institutional Advancement
Dr. James A. Wilson Jr., Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and Director of the Honors Program
Dr. Rosie L. Albritton, Director of University Library Services and Professor of Educational Media & Technology
Dr. Clarissa G. Booker, Professor of Reading, Coordinator of Reading Programs and a Sid W. Richardson Fellow
Ms. Candace Johnson, Public Relations Specialist and Photographer
Ms. Delphia Esters, Administrative Assistant
Mr. Terence Walker, Administrative Assistant

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Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation
Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

Graphic design: Ms. Molly Murphy

Great books help you understand, and they help you feel understood.
~ John Green

No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance.
~ Confucius
Prairie View A&M University was founded in 1876 and is the second-oldest public institution of higher education in Texas. With an established reputation for producing engineers, business leaders, nurses and educators, PVAMU offers baccalaureate degrees, master's degrees and doctoral degree programs through eight colleges and schools. A member of The Texas A&M University System, the University is dedicated to fulfilling its land-grant mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research and service. During the University's 139-year history, more than 60,000 academic degrees have been awarded.