The nine-member Texas A&M University System Board of Regents selected Dr. R. Bowen Loftin '71 to lead the nation’s seventh-largest university.

In a meeting on Jan. 21, the regents named Loftin the sole finalist for president, and he officially assumed the position after a state-required 21-day waiting period and a final vote by the regents. Bowen had been serving as A&M’s interim president since the resignation of Dr. Elsa Murano in June 2009. He was one of two candidates recommended to the regents by a search committee.

Board of Regents Chairman Morris Foster ’65 said that in Loftin’s tenure as interim president, he demonstrated “a keen ability to successfully lead the complex billion-dollar teaching, research and service enterprise that is Texas A&M today. He has helped significantly enhance the University in a number of key areas, with particular success in advancing the programs that provide the essence for the imperatives of Vision 2020, the University’s roadmap to recognition as one of the top public universities in the country.

“In addition to his impressive skills as a teacher and researcher, Dr. Loftin has a proven record as an exceptional and visionary leader of character with sound financial management skills and good instincts. He is a ‘consensus builder,’ but also he is a man who knows how to make tough decisions.”

S. Shariq Yosufzai ’74, Chair of the Board of Directors of The Association of Former Students, said Loftin has a true passion for A&M and was an ideal choice to lead the University into a new decade. “The Board of Regents was unanimous in their support for Dr. Loftin, reflecting the high esteem in which he is held by all, including the administrators, faculty, staff, students and former students of A&M,” Yosufzai said. “As interim president, he has shown the strength and integrity to be a strong administrator, and has been a calming voice in times of uncertainty. I can say with full confidence that The Association of Former Students is ready and willing to work with Dr. Loftin as he takes on the difficult task before him.”

Porter S. Garner III ’79, President and CEO of The Association of Former Students, called Loftin a loyal former student and a good representative of the University’s core values of excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service. “During his term as interim president, he provided focused leadership for our University at a time it was sincerely needed and worked effectively with all University stakeholders,” Garner said. “Just as we have throughout our 131-year history, The Association looks forward to working closely with Dr. Loftin and his team to provide service and support to Texas A&M University.”

Regent Richard Box ’61 chaired the presidential search committee. He said the group whittled down the search from a pool of more than 300 to the two names forwarded to the board. The identity of the other candidate was not released.

“Dr. Loftin was able to prove his leadership,” Box told The Bryan-
College Station Eagle after the vote, saying that Loftin’s job as interim president factored into the regents’ decision “quite a bit.”

Shelley Potter ’78, the Immediate Past Chair of The Association’s Board, served on the search committee. “Throughout the process it was important for our committee, especially the former students serving on the committee, to identify leaders who exhibited the core values of Texas A&M, who could provide visionary leadership, work effectively with all stakeholders, and who would embrace the Aggie Spirit,” Potter said. “Not only is Dr. Loftin a loyal former student, but also an individual who clearly represents the core values of Texas A&M. During his service as interim president he dealt with many challenges, brought a sense of stability to our campus, worked well with students and was a great friend to The Association, helping to promote our mission and making himself available when called upon by The Association.”

Loftin said after the vote that he was “humbled and honored” and would immediately begin meeting with groups of current and former students, faculty, staff and community leaders to seek input and discuss his vision for the future of Texas A&M.

“This is an exciting time for Texas A&M, even as we navigate a period of financial uncertainty,” Loftin said. “We are extremely fortunate in this regard in comparison to many of our peer institutions across the country. This is a time of significant growth—in student enrollment and research and related functions that benefit the citizens of Texas and beyond. We are also striving to enhance our infrastructure, including construction of new buildings, and significantly addressing our existing buildings to support our ambitious endeavors.

“Of utmost importance, we will continue to attract many of the best faculty anywhere to teach and conduct important research and scholarship intended to help improve the economic vitality of Texas and the rest of the nation—and to enhance lives everywhere.”

As a physics graduate of Texas A&M, Loftin joins the ranks of a select few individuals chosen to lead his alma mater. He also holds a master’s and a doctorate from Rice University, earned in 1973 and 1975, respectively, both also in physics. Born in Hearne, Loftin grew up in Navasota, about 20 miles from the A&M campus.

Prior to becoming interim president, Loftin served for four years as chief executive officer of Texas A&M University at Galveston, where he also was professor of maritime systems engineering. He was widely applauded for his leadership during Hurricane Ike, which resulted in moving the entire Galveston campus operation to the main campus in College Station.

Before his tenure in Galveston, Loftin served at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., as professor of electrical and computer engineering and professor of computer science. He was also Old Dominion’s director of simulation programs and had responsibility for the institution’s graduate programs in modeling and simulation. He also served as executive director of the Virginia Modeling, Analysis and Simulation Center. Earlier in his career, Loftin was professor and chair of the Department of Computer Science and director of the NASA Virtual Environments Research Institute at the University of Houston.

He is a frequent consultant to both industry and government in the areas of modeling and simulation, advanced training technologies, and scientific/engineering data visualization. He is the author or co-author of more than 100 technical publications.

Loftin serves on numerous advisory committees and panels sponsored by governmental and professional organizations. His numerous citations and honors include the University of Houston-Downtown Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Service (twice), the American Association of Artificial Intelligence Award for an innovative application of artificial intelligence, NASA’s Space Act Award, the NASA Public Service Medal, and the 1995 NASA Invention of the Year Award.

He is married to Dr. Karin Loftin, an associate biosafety officer at A&M, and has two grown children and three grandchildren.

Recent Presidents Of Texas A&M University

6/15/09-PRESENT: DR. R. BOWEN LOFTIN ’71
1/3/08-6/15/09: DR. ELSA MURANO
12/18/06-1/3/08: DR. EDDIE J. DAVIS ‘67
8/1/02-12/18/06: DR. ROBERT M. GATES
7/1/94-7/31/02: DR. RAY M. BOWEN ’58
9/1/93-6/1/94: DR. E. DEAN GAGE ’65
9/1/88-8/31/93: DR. WILLIAM H. MOBLEY

Dr. Loftin with students at the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Gala.