

James R. Huffines, Chairman
The University of Texas System Board of Regents
Remarks
at the meeting of the
Senate Finance Committee
February 12, 2007

Chairman Ogden, Vice-Chair Zaffirini, Members:

I appreciate this opportunity to speak to you today.

I have only a few comments before Chancellor Yudof and the presidents of institutions within the U.T. System make their presentations.

My purpose here is simple. I want to thank you for the funding levels in Senate Bill 1 and reaffirm my desire and that of the other members of the Board of Regents and the U.T. System staff to work closely with the committee, the state leadership, and all members during the session.

I think everyone in higher education is very excited and encouraged that the success of Texas universities and health institutions has moved to the forefront of the

legislative agenda. It is absolutely imperative for the future prosperity of our state that we continue to prosper and invest new money in Higher Education.

We are tremendously grateful for the effort that the Lieutenant Governor and Governor have put into their visionary plans for higher education. This effort is historic because we, in Higher Education have not seen anything any thing quite like their initiatives since Governor Connally was in office. Without a doubt this is the best starting point for Higher Education in at least a couple of generations.

With such a promising beginning, we believe that this 80th Regular Session will be one of most productive in many, many years. On behalf of the Board of Regents, let me affirm UT's strong commitment to Transparency accountability and improving efficiency. We will also maintain an unwavering commitment to increase graduation rates and doing our part "closing the gaps".

In addition, Chancellor Yudof will discuss in greater details the Systems Keeping Texas Competitive Initiative which the board passed last year.

We thank you for your hard work on behalf of the people of Texas and, as always, we look forward to working with you.

Now, with your permission, I will yield the floor to Chancellor Yudof.