



Remarks by UT System Chancellor William H. McRaven at event to welcome DIUx to Austin

Mr. Secretary, thank you for allowing me to say a few words this morning.

As you know, Governor Abbott had intended to be here this morning, but last minute affairs of the state have taken him away.

He sends his regrets, but he wanted me to say this: Texas is the new frontier in innovation, and with the arrival of DIUx, the Department of Defense's best technologists will be right here in Austin. A DIUx outpost in Austin leverages two of Texas' greatest strengths – our enduring commitment to the mightiest military in the history of the world and our faith in the innovators who drive this thriving economy. I would like to thank Secretary Carter and the Department of Defense for bringing DIUx to Texas and recognizing the talent, innovation, and opportunity that the Lone Star State has to offer.

I would also like to recognize State Senator Kirk Watson, who is in the audience this morning, and who has been so instrumental in affecting amazing changes in Austin.

No state lawmaker has been more engaged in advancing the future of Austin nor appreciates the value of innovation and collaboration more than Kirk Watson.

Another great leader of this city who cannot be with us this morning is our Mayor, Steve Adler. He's a magnificent mayor who is encouraging Austinites to embrace every opportunity for innovation and research in the city.

Both men have been great partners with the UT System.

I am also pleased to have my good friend and the President of UT Austin, Dr. Greg Fenves, here today.

An engineer by trade, Greg has aggressively pursued every avenue to improve the research and innovation ongoing at UT Austin.

He and UT Austin will be tremendous partners with DIUx as you move forward, Mr. Secretary.

I first met Secretary Carter in Afghanistan in 2009. He had come out to visit the troops when he was Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics.

In DoD, AT&L, as we refer to it, is where the innovation portfolio resides. I remember distinctly -- it was about 2 o'clock in the morning, Afghan time, when Secretary Carter came to my headquarters to find out what he could do to help us be better on the battlefield.

He wanted to know, what new innovations could help with survivability of the soldier?

What new ideas could be advanced to make our soldiers more resilient, better warriors?

What could we do to help our Afghan allies?

We talked for hours, and I have rarely seen anyone so engaged in the welfare of our troops.

What impressed me most, though, was his ability to look at complex problems from both a scientist's view point—he is after all a PhD in theoretical physics—and from a soldier's view point.

A few years after that meeting, Dr. Carter became the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

By this time, I had gone on to four stars and spent a lot of time with the DEPSECDEF.

In civilian parlance, the DEPSECDEF is like the Chief Operating Officer for the Department of Defense. Essentially, he runs DoD.

Once again, Ash Carter put his stamp of innovation, not only on the technical aspects of defense, but on the strategic and operational aspects of how we would deal with a major regional conflict—hypothetically, a war with North Korea—and a more protracted war on terrorism.

Everything about warfighting was challenged, unpacked and, where necessary, reinvented under Ash Carter.

And now, as the Secretary of Defense, he once again has the opportunity to change everything about how we look at innovation.

Six months ago, Secretary Carter established the Defense Innovation Board. It is stocked with some giants in the field of innovation and research, people like Eric Schmidt of Google and Jeff Bezos of Amazon.

Of course, every important board needs someone who brings down the average GPA—that would be me.

Mr. Secretary-- I am truly honored that you asked me to be on this Defense Innovation Board.

I know that as DIUx begins to spread its wings here in Austin, the work of the Innovation Board, and the work of the hundreds of start-up and emerging and established technology companies in Austin, will help accelerate innovation in DoD.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, I want you to know that DIUx will not only have the full support of our flagship institution here in Austin, but the power of all of the 14 institutions that make up the UT System.

Doctors, clinicians, researchers, faculty, students — some of the most creative minds in the world — will be eager to tackle the tough problems that are confronting our Defense Department today.

Mr. Secretary, thank you again for your friendship over these many years.

More importantly, thank you for your service to this nation.

I know I speak for every soldier, sailor, airman and Marine in saying we are proud you are our Secretary.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the United States Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Ash Carter.