

**1. Title**

Policy on Transparency, Accountability, and Access to Information

**2. Rule and Regulation**

Sec. 1 The Board of Regents and U. T. System Administration are committed to enhancing transparency, accountability, and access and disclosure of information to the public, the media, elected and appointed state and federal officials, and executive policy makers.

Sec. 2 To assist in achieving these goals, the Board wishes to provide maximum transparency to the public and its representatives to the fullest extent allowed by law while ensuring compliance with best governance practices and appropriate protection of confidential information and personal privacy. The Board acknowledges significant U. T. System leadership and progress in expanding access and transparency, supports these ongoing efforts, and recognizes that the efforts will require continuing and long-term commitment.

Sec. 3 Compliance with Texas Public Information Act (TPIA). The Board requires all U. T. System Administration, U. T. System institutional employees, and members of the Board to comply fully with the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA) and to respond thoroughly, appropriately, and in accordance with State and federal laws to all lawful requests as detailed in U. T. Systemwide Policy UTS139. Any substantive changes to UTS139 require approval by the Board.

The Board expects all employees to work to achieve and maintain an environment of transparency, cooperation, and compliance with applicable law and policy. The Board will support staffing levels and acquisition of resources necessary and reasonable to implement and achieve the intent of this Rule.

Sec. 4 Enhancement of Access to and Analysis of Data and Information.

4.1 Importance of Data Collection, Retention, and Analysis. The U. T. System recognizes and supports the importance of data collection, retention, and analysis for purposes such as reviewing System operations and policies, guiding

decision-making, improving productivity and efficiency, and evaluating performance outcomes.

- 4.2 Increase in the Amount of Data Available. The U. T. System recognizes that the amount of significant data being accumulated by the U. T. System and U. T. System institutions is expanding exponentially each year. The System further recognizes that current data collection and management systems in use are not sufficient to effectively manage and utilize all data becoming available.
- 4.3 Opportunities for Additional Enhancements. The U. T. System is continually looking for ways to enhance the performance of its institutions, to support access and success for all students, to improve educational outcomes, and to remain a national leader in providing access to data. As such, the U. T. System is committed to continue collecting additional data and finding and utilizing new, better and more expansive systems and software with which to manage and access these data. These improved systems and new software will greatly improve the ability to generate better informed decisions to enhance student success, to increase productivity and efficiency, and to facilitate access to and analysis of the data.
- 4.4 Framework for Advancing Excellence. The Framework, established in 2011, implemented a centralized data warehouse for the purposes of evaluating the progress of U. T. System institutions in achieving the goals set forth in the Framework. The data warehouse is a central source of information for the U. T. System Dashboard, which specifically supports the goals of transparency and efficiency as expressed in the Framework.

(Framework url:

<https://www.utsystem.edu/chancellor/speeches/a-framework-for-advancing-excellence-throughout-the-university-of-texas-system>)

- 4.5 Information Accessible through Data Dashboard. The U. T. System Dashboard provides a rolling 10 years (where available) of data on the performance of all U. T. System institutions and is available free to the public. The Dashboard provides important data and metrics

concerning students, faculty, research and technology transfer, health care, and productivity and efficiency.

(Dashboard url: <http://data.utsystem.edu/>)

Sec. 5 Processing Information Requests.

5.1 Requests by Members of the Public. To enhance transparency, U. T. System institutions and U. T. System Administration are expected to act in strict compliance with the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA) and applicable State and federal law in providing public access to governmental records.

5.2 Requests by Representatives of the Media. In addition to the public right of access to information through the TPIA, representatives of the media may utilize U. T. System Administration and institutional offices of external relations as an additional resource for questions.

5.3 Requests by Members of the Texas Legislature. The TPIA provides members of the Texas Legislature a special right of access to information needed for legislative purposes. U. T. System Administration and institutional offices of governmental affairs serve as additional resources for questions from members of the Legislature.

5.4 Requests by Members of the Board of Regents and Chancellor.

5.4.1 This process is not intended nor will it be implemented to prevent a member of the Board of Regents or the Chancellor from access to information or data necessary for the Board member or the Chancellor to fulfill his or her official duties and responsibilities.

5.4.2 Except for a request processed under Subsection 5.4.4, requests by an individual Regent for information shall be submitted to the Chancellor in writing by the requesting Regent, with a copy to the Board Chairman and General Counsel to the Board. An individual Regent's written request for information shall identify, with specificity, the need

for the information requested and shall provide a requested deadline for response if the request is time-sensitive.

- 5.4.3 Information requests from or on behalf of an individual member of the Board of Regents seeking the compilation of significant quantities of information or data from the U. T. System or from a U. T. System institution will be reviewed by the Chairman of the Board and the Chancellor and, if necessary, discussed with the requesting Regent to determine the appropriate scope of the request and timing of the response to avoid inefficiencies and duplication of effort but shall also ensure that requests are fulfilled in a timely manner consistent with applicable law and policy.
- 5.4.4 Smaller requests for existing information or data that do not appear to require significant time or effort may be processed through the Office of the Board of Regents and the Chancellor's Office.
- 5.4.5 Within 5 business days of the receipt of a Regent's information request, the Chancellor's Office will provide the requesting Regent with an estimated date for delivery or production. The Board requires all U. T. System Administration and U. T. System institutional employees to respond thoroughly and appropriately to requests for information from a member of the Board or the Chancellor, without undue delay. In the rare circumstance when the Chairman or the Chancellor has concerns about a Regent's request, the matter will be discussed with the Regent within 5 business days of receipt of the request. If concerns about a request for information or data are unresolved following discussion with the Regent, the matter will be presented to the Board as quickly as possible, but in no event later than the next regular Board meeting following the date of the receipt of the request. For the purpose of a Board vote on this issue, the vote of a majority of the members of the Board in support of the request is sufficient to direct that the request will be filled without delay.

- 5.4.6 After consultation with the Chairman of the Board, the Chancellor may adopt reasonable procedures with regard to the timing, copying, and process for review of records by a Regent, including prohibiting the copying of any confidential material. In addition, the Chancellor, in consultation with the U. T. System General Counsel, shall determine whether State or federal law restricts compliance with the request. Accordingly, the Chancellor, in consultation with the U. T. System General Counsel, shall determine whether a Regent may review information that is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([20 U.S.C. §1232g](#); [34 CFR Part 99](#)), by constitutional privacy, or by other State or federal law.

Sec. 6 Access to Requests for Information.

- 6.1 The U. T. System Administration is directed to look for opportunities to expand the existing U. T. System websites, established in 2012 to provide public access to requests for information and which include all Texas Public Information Act requests.

([Open Records website: http://www.utsystem.edu/open-records?src=uts-homepage](http://www.utsystem.edu/open-records?src=uts-homepage))

- 6.2 It is the intent of the Board that documents responsive to those requests be made available electronically to the extent legal and feasible, with the Chancellor to set timelines for implementation, in consultation with the Chairman.

**3. Definitions**

None

**4. Relevant Federal and State Statutes**

*Texas Government Code* [Chapter 552](#) – Public Information

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – [20 U.S.C. § 1232g](#)

[34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 99](#) – Family Educational Rights and Privacy

**5. Relevant System Policies, Procedures, and Forms**

Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, [Rule 10101](#) – Board Authority and Duties

Regents' *Rules and Regulations*, [Rule 10403](#) – Conduct of Meetings of the Board

The University of Texas System Administration Policy [UTS139](#) – Texas Public Information Act

[Chancellor Cigarroa's Memo to Executive Officers dated September 22, 2014, regarding compliance with Rule 10801](#)

**6. Who Should Know**

Board of Regents  
Administrators  
Employees

**7. System Administration Office(s) Responsible for Rule**

Office of the Board of Regents

**8. Dates Approved or Amended**

Editorial amendments to Sec. 4.4 and 4.5 made September 28, 2015  
May 14, 2015  
Editorial amendment to Number 5 made October 14, 2014  
Editorial amendment to Sec. 5.4.5 made August 4, 2014  
May 20, 2014  
February 6, 2014

**9. Contact Information**

Questions or comments regarding this Rule should be directed to:

- [bor@utsystem.edu](mailto:bor@utsystem.edu)