



The University of Texas System
Nine Universities. Six Health Institutions. Unlimited Possibilities.

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June 16, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents, The University of Texas System

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Dr. Gregory L. Fenves

Dr. William Richard Fannin, *ad interim*

Dr. David E. Daniel

Dr. Diana S. Natalicio

Dr. Havidán Rodriguez, *ad interim*

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FROM: William H. McRaven 

Governor Abbott has now signed Senate Bill 11, which will for the first time allow concealed handguns in some of the buildings on our campuses beginning with the fall 2016 semester.

The Texas Legislature also passed House Bill 910, which Governor Abbott has signed as well. This legislation will allow some Texans to openly carry their weapons in public. Please note that this bill specifically precludes open carry on our campuses, however.

I hope all of you saw my public statement on the passage of Senate Bill 11. (If not, it is available on the UT System website.) As I said at that time, I respect the decision of the Texas Legislature and appreciate the recognition by the members that specific safety considerations and the uniqueness of our campus environments need to be taken into account as the legislation is implemented. But above all else, I pledged then and repeat my pledge now to our students, faculty, staff, patients, and their families, and to all those who may visit a UT institution, that we will do everything in our power to maintain safe and secure campuses.

The process for implementation of the legislation on each campus will first involve extensive consultation of the president with students, faculty and staff. This will begin in the fall when our campuses return to full activity from the much-needed and well-deserved respite of a less hectic summer.

In preparation for the dialogue on the campuses, the Offices of General Counsel (OGC) and Government Relations (OGR) will undertake a careful analysis of the new law and its history and especially the flexibility accorded by the legislation for decisions as to where handguns will not be allowed. I anticipate that this analysis will lead to some policy decisions made at the System level. For example, non-university hospitals around the state are allowed to prohibit concealed

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The University of Texas at Dallas

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The University of Texas at San Antonio

The University of Texas at Tyler

The University of Texas
Southwestern Medical Center

The University of Texas
Medical Branch at Galveston

The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston

The University of Texas
Health Science Center at San Antonio

The University of Texas
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

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Health Science Center at Tyler

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handguns, and we may adopt a similar policy. We also know that laboratories at many of our institutions conduct life-saving research dealing with dangerous viruses and other select agents, and these may be places where as a matter of policy we restrict concealed weapons. And the bill itself anticipates that we may limit handguns in our dormitories and other student housing and provide storage in these buildings for students' weapons.

The consultative process will result in campus-specific rules, policies and practices, which we anticipate will vary from campus to campus. These will come to the Board of Regents for review and possible amendment. This review process must take place by August 1, 2016, with a report to the Legislature on the decisions we have made by September 1, 2016. Thus we have the next fifteen months to consider carefully and deliberately how we comply with Texas law and maintain our commitment to the highest level of campus safety for all who come to the institutions of The University of Texas System.

As one of his new duties, I am asking Deputy Chancellor-Elect David Daniel to assume responsibility for the development of the System's approach to implementation of SB 11. He will draw upon the expertise and insights of OGC and OGR and the Office of the Director of Police under Director Mike Heidingsfield, working with the Offices of Academic and Health Affairs. He will also be working closely with the campus presidents in crafting recommendations.

This legislation will certainly present challenges in the months ahead as we understand and implement it. What we will not allow is for it to stifle the academic freedom and robust debate that is central to our mission of educating the young men and women of our state and conducting the research that changes lives and the world around us. Additionally, we will not create an environment where signs, metal detectors, storage facilities and additional police are so pervasive that our institutions feel like a military base rather than a university campus or teaching hospital. Reasoning together, we will avoid these outcomes and continue to be home to places of safety, security and freedom for all who come to UT.

WHM:bc

cc: Raymond Greenberg, M.D., Ph.D.
Dr. Steve Leslie