January 28, 2013

The Honorable Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I am writing to urge your strong support of the proposed merger of the existing University of Texas at Brownsville and the University of Texas-Pan American into a new University of Texas institution in South Texas, which would also include a new school of medicine. HACU represents more than 400 colleges and universities, including 69 in Texas.

As you know, the Rio Grande Valley of this state is continuing to experience rapid population and economic growth even as higher educational opportunities have lagged. A merger of the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses would leverage the strengths of both, eliminate unnecessary duplications, and better meet the needs of all the residents of the region. The new University has the potential to become a major research institution and a driver of economic development and innovation in South Texas.

Moreover, the creation of a full-fledged medical school in the Valley is an urgent need. The health care needs of this region are dramatically underserved, with only 124 doctors for every 100,000 residents, far behind the state average of 165 doctors and little more than half the national average of 240 doctors per 100,000 residents. The existing UTHSC-San Antonio’s Regional Academic Health Center already provides a solid foundation for the beginnings of the new medical school.

The work of the University of Texas System in preparing this proposal amply documents the economies of scale that will be realized by this merger and the educational and economic stimulus the new institution would provide to the region and to the State.

Your strong support for this proposal is critical to meeting the 21st century educational, medical and economic needs of this region and of the state of Texas. As the demography of Texas becomes increasingly Hispanic, more adequately addressing the educational needs of Hispanic students and of the Rio Grande Valley is vital to assuring the future of the state.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO

Cc: State Senator Juan Hinojosa
    State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.