

Approved by Unanimous
Consent 11/23/10

AR 26 In Support of Increased Funding from the Texas State Legislature

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Section I: Overview

WHEREAS, The University of Texas at Austin is the flagship institution of The University of Texas System;¹ and,

WHEREAS, As of spring 2008 the University reported an enrollment of 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students, the largest enrollment of all colleges in the State of Texas, and employs 16,500 faculty and staff;² and,

WHEREAS, The London Times (2004) ranked UT-Austin as the 15th best university in the world;³ and,

WHEREAS, In a survey by the National Research Council, seven UT-Austin doctoral programs ranked in the top 10 in the nation, and 22 departments ranked in the top 25 of their respective fields, while the University was ranked number 1 among Texas colleges and universities in 30 of the 37 fields in which it was evaluated;⁴ and,

WHEREAS, In 2009 Kiplinger's Personal Finance ranked UT-Austin 19th among 100 best values in public universities, compared to 24th best value in 2008;^{5 6} and,

WHEREAS, UT-Austin faculty members generated \$447 million in externally funded research in 2005-2006, which is more than all the other state universities in Texas combined, not including Texas A&M;⁷ and,

Section II: Financial Aid

WHEREAS, Roughly 45% of the UT-Austin student body receives financial aid, compared to the national average of 55%, though recipients of financial aid at UT-Austin are 5-6% over the national average of all public four-year universities in terms of average debt at graduation;⁸ and,

WHEREAS, The average cumulative amount borrowed at UT in 2001 was \$16,912. This amount has increased yearly, and for 2008, the average debt was \$21,211, a 25.4% increase;⁹ and,

WHEREAS, TEXAS Grant, one of UT-Austin's largest grant programs, has not received any new money

1 <http://www.txhighereddata.org/Reports/DocFetch.cfm?DocID=1434&Format=XLS&Confirmed=1>

2 <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/pubs/facts/enrollment.php>

3 <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/pubs/facts/rankings.php>

4 <http://www.utexas.edu/opa/pubs/facts/rankings.php>

5 <http://content.kiplinger.com/tools/colleges/pubcollege.php#9414>

6 <http://www.utexas.edu/president/speeches/tuition2008.pdf>

7 <http://www.utexas.edu/president/speeches/tuition2008.pdf>

8 Conversation with Dr. Tom Melecki, Director of the Office of Student Financial Services

9 "Student Financial Aid at UT Austin," Presented to the Task Force on Enrollment Strategy, Dr. Tom Melecki and Mr. Henry Urick, June 2008

since the fall 2006; and,

WHEREAS, In 2007-2008, 5.16% of financial aid for UT-Austin students was comprised of TEXAS Grants, while scholarships amounted to 18.04%, and all loans totaled 59.24%;¹⁰ and,

Section III: Funding

WHEREAS, The 2007-2008 total core academic budget of \$1 billion was funded primarily from tuition (\$469 million), State general revenue (\$322 million), the Available University Fund (\$143 million), indirect cost reimbursement (\$67 million), and other income (\$30 million);¹¹ and,

WHEREAS, The state appropriated fraction of the total core budget for UT-Austin was 31% in 2007-2008;¹² and,

WHEREAS, In 1975-1976, the state funded 75% of the cost of running the educational side of UT-Austin;¹³ and,

WHEREAS, The 80th Texas Legislature appropriated UT-Austin \$36.4 million, though \$23.2 million was earmarked for specific uses, leaving \$13.2 million total (1.8%) each year to pay for the basic core operations of the University; and,

WHEREAS, The aforementioned 1.8% annual increase in state appropriations for general operations is the average size increase the University has received from the Legislature to pay for core operations for over a decade, and is not sufficient to keep pace with inflation;¹⁴ and,

WHEREAS, Annual state support for UT-Austin's academic budget since 1990, when adjusted for inflation, has decreased by 1%;¹⁵ and,

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) for 2008 increased by 3.6%;¹⁶ and,

WHEREAS, UT-Austin is ranked seventh of its twelve member national comparison group for state appropriations per student, though the University of North Carolina, a peer institution, has significantly lower tuition, and received 106% more per student in state support in 2005-2006;¹⁷ and,

WHEREAS, For every state tax dollar invested in the University, more than \$18 are generated in spending in the state economy;¹⁸ and,

WHEREAS, The 82nd Session of the Texas Legislature is facing a state budget deficit estimated at \$20-25 billion;²⁰ and,

WHEREAS, The rate of tuition charged to students is dependent on the amount of state support received by the institution, and tuition has continued to rise as a result of the decrease in appropriations to the

10 UT Austin Office of Student Financial Services, December 2008.

11 http://www.utexas.edu/news/attach/2007/2550_tuition_q_and_a.pdf

12 http://www.utexas.edu/news/attach/2007/2550_tuition_q_and_a.pdf

13 http://www.utexas.edu/news/attach/2007/2550_tuition_q_and_a.pdf

14 http://www.utexas.edu/news/attach/2007/2550_tuition_q_and_a.pdf

15 <http://www.utexas.edu/president/speeches/tuition2008.pdf>

16 http://www.commonfund.org/Templates/Generic/RESOURCE_REQUEST/target.pdf?RES_GUID=1F533A51-5AC1-463A-9F32-77BF14F87F23

17 <http://www.utexas.edu/president/speeches/tuition2008.pdf>

18 An Investment that Pays Off for Texas; a report compiled by the Office of Public Affairs

²⁰ <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/7292306.html>

University; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin believes that cuts from the University's state appropriated budget would be detrimental to its maintaining its current level of excellence; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin believes that UT-Austin must be funded at a level competitive with its peers in order to continue functioning as a premier institution, and as one of the top public universities in the nation; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin believes that the University must receive an increased level of state funding in order to keep up with the cost of growth, for example, at a level consistent with the Higher Education Price Index; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Student Government of The University of Texas at Austin believes that the state legislature must appropriate more money for financial aid, and specifically to the TEXAS Grant Program, in order to relieve students' increasing dependency on loans and underfunded grant programs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be delivered to the members of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate, the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Clerks of the House and Senate Committees on Higher Education, the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Governmental Relations.