



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 13, 2012

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## **COALITION OPPOSES RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRIVATIZE UT AUSTIN AND TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

*On eve of one year anniversary of Coalition, need for vigilance and voice in higher education  
debate remains increasingly necessary*

**AUSTIN** — On the eve of its first anniversary, the [Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education](#) is increasingly concerned about continued threats to the quality of higher education in Texas, especially at the state's two Tier One public research universities, the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University. Marking its one-year anniversary, the Coalition issued the following statement on the state of higher education:

“We are especially alarmed by recent statements by two frequent detractors of Texas’ great public universities who boldly and explicitly admitted that their ultimate goal is privatization of higher education. High quality higher education is a public good that benefits all Texans and should be accessible to all Texans, and we oppose efforts to turn public higher education into a for-profit venture.

“This recent admission strengthens our resolve and reinforces the importance of the Coalition’s vigilance and advocacy. One year ago the Coalition emerged to provide balance to what had been a seemingly one-sided debate in the state of Texas. Concerned about the fate and future of higher education, business, philanthropic, academic and public policy leaders from around the state and from all backgrounds and perspectives joined together to protect and improve Texas’ public academic institutions. Today, the Coalition has more than 400 Founding Members. The Coalition remains focused on ensuring that all Texans have access to a variety of quality higher education opportunities and that our state’s public research institutions of national stature continue to be at the forefront of discovery and innovation.

“Catalyzed by concerns that certain untested recommendations would devastate the quality of our state’s flagship institutions, the Coalition formed to fight against a one-size-fits-all approach to higher education. In doing so, the Coalition successfully forced those intent on undermining public universities to back away from a destructive proposal to separate teaching from research, from the proposed withdrawal from the nationally recognized system of accreditation, and from simplistic measures of performance, moves that would have devastated Texas’ ability to attract top quality faculty and students.

“Strong public teaching and research universities enhance Texas’ economy, attract quality employers, and advance innovation and American competitiveness; an educated and enlightened society helps maintain the foundation of our democracy, and provider for a higher quality of life for all. America’s system of higher education is one of its great strengths, and it remains a magnet for the world. We will continue to defend the Texas Constitution’s mandate for ‘a University of the first class.’

**-More-**



The Coalition will continue to:

- Support the idea that high quality higher education is a public good that benefits all Texans and should be accessible to all Texans, not just those who can afford to pay private school tuition;
- Support enlightened, independent leadership at our flagships and call for real transparency and accountability from Boards of Regents;
- Support efforts to encourage and strengthen best practices in governance and to prevent conflicts of interests amongst governing boards;
- Oppose short-sighted measures such as a dramatic expansion of enrollment that would damage the educational experience and the credibility and quality of our institutions, and undermine the value of and attraction to their degrees;
- Oppose all efforts to turn public higher education into a for-profit venture.

“These institutions are critical to Texas future, and therefore the Coalition will continue to provide constructive ideas, be an outspoken voice and offer critical support to the efforts of our institutions to become ever more efficient and effective, while maintaining and enhancing the highest standards of excellence.”

#### **About the Coalition**

The Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education was launched in the summer of 2011 by a group of concerned citizens who believe strongly in the power of higher education to transform lives, build our economy and shape Texas’ future. Formed in response to a growing concern over recommendations being floated that could have long-term damaging effects on our institutions of higher learning, the Coalition hopes to advance a thoughtful, constructive and transparent dialogue around higher education in Texas, seeking to improve the quality educational opportunities for all Texans.

***For more information on the Coalition and information on higher education in Texas, please visit:  
[www.TexasEducationExcellence.org](http://www.TexasEducationExcellence.org)***

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