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Jenifer Sarver
512-879-0992

Jenifer.Sarver@bm.com

The Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education Launches to Advance Jobs and Growth through High Quality Research and Teaching

AUSTIN—A powerful and diverse group of Texas business, philanthropic and community leaders today launched the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education, a group dedicated to advancing jobs and innovation by supporting the highest quality research and teaching at Texas public universities. The group was formed to actively advance excellence at our state’s public higher education institutions and support a more thoughtful and transparent discussion of ways to strengthen and improve, rather than undermine, them.

The nonpartisan group is comprised of more than 200 founding members including leading philanthropists, innovators, job creators, former office holders and long-time advocates for higher education in Texas. The list includes prominent Texans who served as gubernatorially-appointed members of the boards of regents for The University of Texas, Texas A&M University and The University of Houston, as well as former university chancellors, presidents and chairs of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Coalition’s operating committee issued the following statement:

“We formed the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education because we know Texas can only lead the nation and world in creating the jobs and innovations of the future by supporting the highest quality research and teaching at our premier institutions of higher education. Texans want to lead, not follow; we want the world’s next great discovery to come from Texas, and we are committed to supporting the high quality research and teaching that will allow that to happen. High quality universities are engines of economic growth and incubators of creativity. They attract the very best researchers, innovators, scholars and thinkers to our state.

“We are alarmed that some recommendations being floated by others – from dramatically expanding enrollment while slashing tuition, to separating research and teaching budgets, to seceding from a recognized and respected accreditation organization – are a prescription for mediocrity that would have severe and negative long-term consequences for our state.

“We believe our public university presidents and chancellors have earned our support with their ongoing commitment to a culture of excellence and continual innovation, while also working to institute important reforms and cut operating costs. We also believe it is critical to continue to regularly and openly evaluate our universities, their accountability, efficiency and productivity, and do so in a public and transparent way, supporting changes that improve performance without compromising quality.”



The Coalition is comprised of volunteer advocates who believe the pursuit of knowledge must be a state and national priority. Members of the Coalition will advocate on behalf of our public universities, and encourage continued transparency, progress and reform. The Coalition will also advocate that Texas, as a diverse state, must provide a full range of diverse educational opportunities, from the lower cost and broad access of our great community colleges to Tier One research institutions such as The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University.

The Coalition is a broad cross-section of leading citizens committed to driving excellence in higher education for all Texans. A full listing of the operating committee, executive committee and founding members can be found below:

Operating Committee

Gordon Appleman, H. Scott Caven Jr., Kenneth M. Jastrow II, Charles W. Matthews, C. Patrick Oles Jr., Melinda Hill Perrin, Hon. Pamela Willeford

Executive Committee

Gordon Appleman, Fort Worth; Steve Ballantyne, San Antonio; JJ Baskin, Austin; Jim Boon, Austin; Dr. Ray Bowen, College Station; Dan Burck, Austin; Natalie Butler, Tempe, Ariz.; H. Scott Caven Jr., Houston; Ernest H. Cockrell, Houston; Hector De Leon, Austin; Ben A. Donnell, Corpus Christi; Dr. Peter Flawn, Austin; Joe Foster, Houston; Machree Gibson, Austin; Julius Glickman, Houston; Sanford Gottesman, Austin; Gerry Griffin, Hunt; Jon L. Hagler, Dover, Mass.; Adm. Bob R. Inman, Austin; Kenneth M. Jastrow II, Round Mountain; Richard L. Leshin, Corpus Christi; Wales H. Madden Jr., Amarillo; Charles W. Matthews, Dallas; C. Patrick Oles Jr., Austin; Melinda Hill Perrin, Houston; Shannon H. Ratliff, Austin; Beth Robertson, Houston; Charles W. Tate, Houston; Hon. Pamela Willeford, Austin; Darrell Windham, Austin

Founding Members*

Betsy Abell, Hughes Abell, John L. Adams, Cynthia Adkins, John Adkins, Robert H. Allen, Lester L. Allison, Gordon Appleman, Michael Appleman, Scott J. Atlas, Dionel E. Aviles, Susan G. Baker, S. Jack Balagia, Anne Ballantyne, Steve Ballantyne, Jane Barnhill, John W. Barnhill Jr., Sam Barshop, Vicki Bartholow, Peter Bartholow, JJ Baskin, Joan Ragsdale Baskin, David J. Beck, John Beckworth, Laura Hobby Beckworth, John Scott Black, Willie E. B. Blackmon, Leslie D. Blanton, Jim Boon, Dr. Ray Bowen, Kyle Bradford, Sam C. Bradshaw, Lewis E. Brazelton, Michelle K. Brock, Ricky Brown, Dan Burck, Dr. Ernest Butler, Sarah G. Butler, Natalie Butler, Tony Canales, Tom Carter, H. Scott Caven Jr., Joann Christian, Ernest H. Cockrell, Hon. Peter R. Coneway, Tracy Smith Connally, Michael L. Cook, Dr. Denton A. Cooley, Jerry Cox, Dr. John W. Craddock, Mary Cooley Craddock, Jack Crosby, JoAnn Crosby, Gary Crum, Sylvie Crum, Ramona Davis, Linnet F. Reily, Ben De Leon, Hector De Leon, Frank Denius, Lisa DePaulo, Martin Dies, Kip Dixon, Ben A. Donnell, Alan Dreeben, Tom Dunning, Robert M. Ehrlich Jr., Charles Ellison, Frank C. Erwin III, Dr. Larry Faulkner, Brian Feld, Becky Ferguson, Dr. Peter Flawn, Tyrrell Flawn, Betty Sue Flowers, Joe Foster, Rudy Garza, Machree Gibson, Lela Gibbs, Robin C. Gibbs, Melbern G. Glasscock, Julius Glickman, Suzan Glickman, Lee Godfrey, Sandra Godfrey, Marc Goldman, Sanford Gottesman, Bob Graham, Jack S. Gray, Cathy Obriotti Green, Gerry Griffin, Gary R. Gurwitz, Vaughn Gross, Jon L. Hagler, John B. Harbin, Christopher M. Harte, Jess T. Hay, Kay Head, Steve Head, Dr. Frederick B. Hegi Jr., Carol Heller, Jeffrey M. Heller, Jim Herdlicka, H. David Herndon, Graham Hill, Paul W. Hobby, Bill Hobby,



David E. Honeycutt, Ann Honeycutt, David Hull, Ralph T. Hull, Adm. Bob R. Inman, Joe Jamail, Hon. John H. James, Kenneth M. Jastrow II, Susie Jastrow, Jay Jones, Lenoir M. Josey, Margaret Justus, Kyle Kalkwarf, Richard P. Keeton, Aaron Kozmetsky, Arno W. Krebs Jr., Ronald D. Krist, Weldon D. Kruger, James C. Langdon Jr., Richard L. Leshin, Jack E. Little, David D. Livingston, Lana Livingston, William S. Livingston, Joe R. Long, Dr. Teresa Lozano Long, Janiece Longoria, Tom Luce, Prudence Mackintosh, Wales H. Madden Jr., Humboldt Mandell, Elizabeth S. Massey, John Massey, Charles W. Matthews, Patrick McAndrew, Robert F. McBee, Artie McFerrin, Cappy McGarr, Janie S. McGarr, John Mark McLaughlin, Hon. Stan McLelland, Dennis McWilliams, Morton H. Meyerson, Annie Holand Miller, Richard Mithoff, Ginni Mithoff, John Mobley, John S. Moody, Ryan Moss, Jim Mulva, Mike A. Myers, Elizabeth Nash, James K. B. Nelson, Milam Newby, Jon Newton, Wolfgang Niedert, Michael Oldham, Dudley Oldham, C. Patrick Oles Jr., Dr. John D. Oswalt, Karen Oswalt, Dr. David A. Ott, Pamela F. Ott, Patrick C. Oxford, Charles R. Parker, Robert L. Parker Sr., Robert L. Parker Jr., Jeane S. Pendery, Melinda Hill Perrin, Mike Perrin, Sam Perry, Peter Pincoffs, Louise Pincoffs, Scott Polikov, Dr. James Prentice, Keshav Rajagopalan, Matthew S. Ramsey, Lisa Henken Ramirez, Hon. Bill Ratliff, Shannon H. Ratliff, Harry Reasoner, Macey H. Reasoner, Daron Roberts, Beth Robertson, Eduardo R. Rodriguez, Patrick Rodriguez, Dr. Glenn A. Rogers, Louan P. Rogers, Stanley D. Rosenberg, Tameka Sadler, Rodney Schlosser, Randi Shade, Doug Shankle, Debra Shankle, Allan Shivers Jr., Anne Shepard, Robert W. Shepard, Martha E. Smiley, Sandra E. Snyder, Susan Pitzer Stasney, Roderick D. Stepp, Ronald G. Steinhart, Barbara Stuart, John T. Stuart III, Steve Susman, Jeffrey L. Swope, Charles W. Tate, Judy S. Tate, Charles Teeple, Mary H. Teeple, Larry Temple, Jere W. Thompson, James E. Thorp, Terry O. Tottenham, Carolyn Townsend, Peyton Townsend, Duer Wagner, Darren Walker, J. Thomas Ward, Joe Bill Watkins, Rad Weaver, Charles Martin Wender, Marlen Whitley, Dr. George Willeford III, Hon. Pamela Willeford, Dr. James Willerson, Del Williams, Robert C. Wilson, Darrell Windham

**Listing as of June 16, 2011*

About the Coalition:

The Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education is a group of concerned citizens who believe strongly in the power of higher education to transform lives, build our economy and shape Texas' future. We believe a great university is an incubator of knowledge and creativity. It fuels discovery, and marries research with enhanced classroom teaching, learning, and hands-on experience. It also serves as an economic engine bringing in millions in research and development dollars, new businesses and industries, creating jobs and economic opportunity throughout Texas.

For more information on the Coalition and information on higher education in Texas, please visit:
www.TexasEducationExcellence.org