



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COALITION RESPONDS TO UT SYSTEM BOARD VOTE; EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER APPARENT VENDETTA AGAINST UT AUSTIN AND ITS LEADERS

AUSTIN—Today, at a special session of the UT System Board of Regents, the Board voted 4 to 3 to hire yet another investigator to look into the relationship between the UT Law School and the independently-run UT Law School Foundation. The Board today determined that after three separate inquiries the issue had not yet been thoroughly addressed and they would seek an external review. This vote comes on the heels of yesterday's hearing of the Joint Select Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence and Transparency, at which Appropriations Chairman Jim Pitts called the ongoing tension between UT System and UT Austin a 'witch hunt.' In response to today's actions, the Coalition issued the following statement:

"Unfortunately, today's vote by the UT System Board of Regents has the appearance of a continued vendetta against UT Austin and its leaders. From all appearances, UT Austin has been open, transparent and cooperative in regards to the investigation into the UT Law School Foundation, fully complying with three rounds of inquiry—from System's general counsel, from the Attorney General and from the Board's Audit Committee. President Powers himself requested the Law School Dean's resignation. The suggestion that he or his office have not been transparent or cooperative is untrue.

"Rather than focus on improving quality and excellence at our institutions, these Regents insist on undermining our institutions' leaders and creating a culture of distrust and micromanagement. If good governance is truly their intent, they should look inward and address the conflicts of interest present on the board—including the chair of the Audit Committee, Regent Pejovich who, contrary to all recommended good governance practices, also sits on the board of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a privately-funded special interest group with a focus on higher education.

"The long-rumored discord among the UT System Board of Regents was on full display at today's meeting, highlighted specifically by Regent Hicks who declared there were times over the last two years he felt 'ashamed' to be a Regent. We applaud Regents Dannenbaum, Stillwell and Hicks for speaking publicly about their concerns and resisting this effort."

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

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