



Texas Coalition *for*
Excellence *in* Higher Education

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**REMARKS BY COALITION MEMBER, MELINDA HILL PERRIN
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS**

AUSTIN—Melinda Hill Perrin, a member of the operating committee of the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education, today addressed the University of Texas System Board of Regents. Her comments followed the unveiling of Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa’s plan for implementing the ‘Framework for Advancing Excellence’ designed to bring increased accountability and transparency to our universities and health institutions.

“Good morning, Chairman. My name is Melinda Hill Perrin and I am a proud graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. I’ve held many roles here and worn many hats here, including being Chairman of the Longhorn Foundation, the Development Board and the Chancellor’s Council, the executive committee of the Commission of 125 and the UT Foundation.

“I was a member of the “not so shy” Ken Shine team that developed what is now known as the “Code Red” report, a blueprint for the legislature, addressing the healthcare needs of our citizens. I was on the Presidential search committee for UT Health Houston, and most recently M.D. Anderson, finding a replacement for the esteemed John Mendelsohn and bringing you the extraordinary Dr. Ron DePinho. And I have worked closely with at least six of our institution presidents.

“As you see, my life has been dedicated to the System, and I’ve been personally invested in and passionate about its success. ... I would hardly characterize myself as an ‘ill informed former student.’

“I stand before you today as a member of the Texas Coalition for Excellence in Higher Education. We are a grassroots organization of concerned citizens who have formed to ensure the vitality, the quality, and the very future of our universities.

“Not one of us is intent on preserving the status quo ... not one. We know that in a global economy, the competition does not stand still. Nor must we. And we actively encourage our universities to get better.

“However, we will not—and we have not—stood idly by while outside interest groups with no history of dedication of service to this System, attempt to influence the direction of our institutions and diminish the hard work and dedication of thousands of dedicated people over the decades.

“At a time when we have the opportunity to build a lasting legacy, we instead find ourselves battling against radical ideas that would undermine decades of success. We have experienced unprecedented times and have been deeply troubled by the current state of affairs.

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“As I sat and listened to Chancellor Cigarorra’s wonderful framework I suddenly was filled with hope. Hope that just perhaps we have an opportunity to turn a corner.

“The Chancellor’s action plan is one more visionary step in a long line of groundbreaking leaps made by the UT System. Under President Powers’ leadership, UT has thrived. This action plan outlines tangible goals to continue that enviable track record of excellence.

“Regents, I thank each and every one of you for your service. Not just merely for your own behalf, but you are governing for my parents, my fellow baby boomers, my children and hopefully my grandchildren.

“Each of you is accountable to the state of Texas, and the future of our System is in your hands. All of these many generations of UT graduates did their part during their time to improve quality and excellence. Now it’s your turn.

“My hope is that you will truly support the Chancellor and our institutional leaders. You must give them the freedom, the flexibility and time to execute this thoughtful plan.

“Wouldn’t it be a wonderful outcome, if plan—the Texas plan—could push the UT system to become the #1 system in the country?

“Let’s work together to make that happen.”

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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