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Senator Zaffirini, Representative Branch, members of the committee.

My name is Dan Burck. I graduated from The University of Texas at Austin, after which I spent 29 years working worldwide for Getty Oil Company before joining The University of Texas System as Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs in 1988. I subsequently was appointed Executive Vice Chancellor and then Chancellor.

When I retired from the U. T. System in 2005, I told my wife that I would never ever again testify at the Capitol – however, recent alarming events in higher education in our great state have caused me to change my mind and I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share with you some of my concerns.

We have a very unhealthy environment surrounding higher education in our state today and we need to correct this before it does further damage. It has taken many years to build the top quality educational structure that we have in Texas, but that can be badly damaged or even destroyed if we do not alter the course.

It concerns me when I see some people with little or no experience in higher education appointed to responsible positions who march in on day one with a hostile attitude sending a message that things are broken, that faculty are “dodgers” and “coasters”, that we need more transparency, that operations are inefficient – and on and on. Some of these people, and I emphasize some, deliver the message that they have arrived, that they have been tasked to “fix things” and that they are well armed with seven breakthrough solutions given to them by the Texas Public Policy Foundation and

others. That has to be very demoralizing to higher education leadership and to faculty members.

I, along with many, many others have worked hard to make the U. T. System and higher education in Texas the best that it can be.

It is painful to receive phone calls from out of state higher education leaders and faculty asking “what in the world is going on in Texas” and stating that the hostile environment will not make it easy to recruit good leadership and faculty. It hurts to hear and read comments referring to higher education in Texas as being the “laughing stock”.

Higher education is not broken, but it can always improve – just as any operation can be made better. I know of no one at our university who resists good change. We have some outstanding leadership in Texas higher education who are working hard to deal with the challenging issues facing us today. We have great faculty teaching and doing research - which go hand in hand. We need to take a deep breath, calm the waters, support, encourage, and work with these people to make what we have better and better.

I would love to see a return to the days that I enjoyed when we had healthy vigorous open exchanges of ideas in a positive environment – after which leadership was given space to implement the agreed upon programs and initiatives and then held accountable.

I want us to return to the days when we encouraged, supported, and spoke well of our great faculty.

We have to return to the days when good governance is back in place and politicizing is stripped away with the best interest of the universities placed first - when full disclosure and transparency rule from the board room to the basement. I am Chairman of the Board of a New York stock exchange company and I can assure you and our shareholders that good corporate governance is of paramount importance to us. It helps integrate good culture into the operation.

The committee members know the issues. You have read and heard all about the debate. I hope that through the work of this committee we can heal the wounds and, all working together, return to a positive and productive time.

Thank you for what you are doing.