

Regent Pejovich
Task Force Board Report

First, I'd like to thank Chairman Powell for his vision and leadership in the formation of the two advisory task forces charged with providing the most efficient means for producing graduates, while at the same time, increasing the quality of education across the UT System. I also want to thank him for the privilege of serving as Chairman of this Task Force. It has been a pleasure to work with Regents Cranberg, Stillwell, Kalkwarf and Rutkauskus, Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa, Executive Vice Chancellors David Prior and Scott Kelley, UT Dallas President David Daniel, UT Pan American President Robert Nelsen, and UT Austin Provost Steve Leslie. We also had valuable staff support from Dr. Pedro Reyes, Dr. Sandra Woodley, and Mr. Art Martinez.

Over the past 5 months, we asked members of the Task Force to work under a demanding schedule and they have my heartfelt gratitude for all they brought to the table: an extraordinary level of commitment, energy, and creativity. It has been no small feat to study the complexities of excellence and productivity of the individual campuses and propose initiatives to take them to the next level. But the Task Force members did just that: discussing significant issues, identifying serious challenges, and supporting the importance of transparency in the decision-making process. The end result came from key contributions by the task force members, and I'd like to note just a few examples of the great ideas presented:

- * This group readily embraced President Daniel's recommendation of documenting graduate student goals and expectations and reducing time to degree;
- * President Nelsen provided us with an understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities for institutions such as UT Pan American in several areas including student success, e-advising and funding; and
- * Provost Leslie's comments have highlighted the importance of providing decision-makers and the public with clear and transparent information on the contributions of faculty in the areas of teaching and research, drilling down to the departmental level.

When the Task Force was established, our goal was to study ideas and make recommendations for consideration to the Board's Academic Affairs Committee. We are very pleased that, as you have just heard---the Chancellor during these past months, significantly accelerated the process by taking the Task Force's issues, and suggestions, the findings we were ultimately to roll up into a report, and incorporated them into his very thoughtful draft Framework for Action. Today, we voice our support for the proposed framework with emphasis on the data necessary for decision making, transparent measures, and initiatives and note that no additional formal report or recommendations need be issued by this Task Force. The Task Force's final step is to hand over implementation to the Chancellor and to stand in support of him and his team as they move aggressively on the goals proposed. This is a significant first step in what will be a lengthy but

rewarding process and I look forward to continued engagement as the work proceeds.

In closing, let me say that the Chairman's vision in establishing the Task Forces has served to reassess the traditional higher education model and the UT System is well positioned to take its place at the forefront of student success, teaching and research excellence. We are truly at a historic moment -- a turning point for higher education, and of course Texas should be and will be the leader in this movement.

This concludes my report. Thank you Mr. Chairman.