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SPEECH TO THE UT REGENTS

In my last remarks to you, I discussed the issue of "Managing Our Resources." That was and remains a topic of concern at UTA. This is an issue that I have addressed before the Performance Committee of the Texas House of Representatives and, more recently, the Legislative Budget Board. My theme has always been the same:

When considering the reality of our decline in enrollment, potential loss of funding, and increasing costs, we must do everything possible to stretch our resources.

Today, I will continue the development of that theme and discuss the proactive measures that we are taking to stretch our resources, and also give you a candid appraisal of the resistance to change President Witt and I will inevitably encounter. As a historian, I know that all human institutions resist change -- and universities more than most. Our governance structures are slow moving and sometimes seem to be endlessly deliberative. UTA, no less than other universities, shares these characteristics.

When one comes to a new institution, there is a tendency to draw comparisons with prior institutions at which one has served. In my own case, those institutions include UT-Austin and Duke, and I am proud of that heritage. While I have tried to divest myself of UT-Austin and Duke as my reference points when confronting issues at UTA, I am nevertheless a product of these fine institutions. I have seen up close two institutions that legitimately can claim to be among the best universities in the world in certain areas and disciplines. I believe that experience is an important element that I bring to the post of Provost of UTA.

Despite that heritage, it is an honor for me to serve at UTA, and the special reason for it being an honor may not necessarily be self-evident to you: **I believe that UTA has a much more difficult, although equally important, mission to accomplish than either Duke or UT-Austin.**

From the very start, Duke's goal was to become a premier private institution with outstanding programs in each discipline it chooses to pursue. Unlike a public school, Duke can often weigh the cost of being involved in certain efforts, and make a straightforward financial decision to drop a program. This differs dramatically from public universities that

are often required to perform what is essentially a public service even if it is not cost effective. As a result of the flexibility available to Duke, the most recent rankings in the *U.S. News and World Report* showed Duke listed number 4, ahead of some schools that I would personally never have ranked Duke above. Of course, in addition to flexibility, Duke also has access to a resource base that UTA cannot match.

I won't elaborate on UT-Austin, because as Regents, you know better than I its goals and successes, but I do want to note a crucial difference that Duke and UT-Austin share in comparison to UTA.

I would argue that a very clear advantage for UT-Austin and Duke is that their missions -- the focus of what they wanted to be -- have not changed over the years.

By contrast, during its 100-year existence, UTA has changed from being a private high school, a military academy, a junior college, an institution with an emphasis on agriculture, to now being a comprehensive university involved in a wide range of undergraduate course offerings, professional programs, and graduate training. The latter stage only began 38 years ago, with the bulk of the change occurring in the last 20 years.

The heritage of the earlier times is not completely erased, and this is a challenge that President Witt and I face.

What is UTA's mission? The citizens of our state fund us to serve a number of purposes. Near the top of any ranking taken by our students are matters that pertain to their future **economic success**; they want good-paying jobs. Near the top of any ranking made by business and political leaders are matters that pertain to **the economic success** of the Metroplex, the state, the Southwest, and the nation. UTA must make its contribution.

But economic advancement of either students or community is not a sufficient description for a metropolitan university, because such universities also serve as a means for **social advancement** by both majority and minority students. Metropolitan universities have traditionally served the **first-generation college student** and the **transfer student** from the community and junior colleges. This role is an important one for UTA.

Finally, all universities are measured by their **scholarly achievements**, and UTA -- although youthful as universities go -- is making its mark in a number of fields.

Do all of these elements fit together comfortably in a neat package? Combining a disjointed history and its remnants, normal resistance to change, relative youth, economic development, social advancement, and scholarly achievements is not an easy task, and we have not found it to be so. Nevertheless, we are working hard to bring the pieces together.

An element of the disjointed history is a division in the faculty between those who are research active and those who are not. Such divisions are also present at Duke and UT-Austin, but it is my perception that the division is more pronounced at UTA. Some hired 20 or more years ago were not researchers then, and cannot be expected to be researchers today. They must make their contribution to the university in other ways, including carrying a greater share of the teaching load. A major challenge for those of us in the UTA Administration is to develop incentives -- and to be candid disincentives also -- that will compel faculty members to teach more courses and especially to teach introductory courses to undergraduates.

A result of our more recent history centers around the research-oriented faculty members. Many of our newer hires come from the most prestigious U.S. and international universities, and have been molded very

much along traditional academic lines. Upon coming to UTA they are faced with teaching students who come from diverse backgrounds, including more than half who come as transfer students. The students are earnest and hardworking, but not necessarily on their studies. They regularly have families to support and other responsibilities. Consequently, the first reaction of the traditionally-minded faculty members is that the students are not serious about scholarship and are unprepared for college. On some occasions there is a strong impulse to get rid of the students, ^{they act like Marie Antoinette} ~~which is seemingly endorsed also by our legislators as they criticize investments in remediation in higher education.~~

~~While it is true that I have not taught any courses at UTA, I love interacting with our students. They are "real people" with real life problems and concerns. It does not offend me that attending the university is just one aspect of their lives, especially at an urban university in the 1990s. And when weighing their concerns about the welfare of their children against their studies at UTA, the university might not be the most important aspect of their lives.~~ Our faculty members need to understand that an important part of their mission is to help all students aspire, to reach beyond their grasps. Incidentally, I faced these same challenges at Austin and Duke where many supposedly gifted

students refused to push themselves. I have also met UTA students who will be as successful as any students I taught at Duke or UT Austin.

In the midst of reconciling these competing forces, we have been troubled this year by, first, the recent problems in the School of Social Work and, second, with the Center for Mexican-American Studies.

In the former instance, we had the resignation of the dean and the sexual harassment allegations brought forward against a senior professor. We require that the senior Social Work faculty members take on a much-improved leadership role in addressing such matters in the future, and interim Dean Cole is taking aggressive action to ensure that this occurs.

In the latter instance, we are engaged in legal actions initiated against us when we took prompt action to correct severe management deficiencies in the conduct of the Center for Mexican-American Studies, ^{and the lack of an education program} Interestingly, a similar battle was waged on the Austin campus more than a decade ago. We were able to gain control over the Afro-American Center there because of the commitment of President William H. Cunningham and Dean Robert D. King to make the Center truly academic and an asset to the entire campus.

However, these troubles have not interfered with President Witt and I from taking a number of proactive steps to enhance service to our students and community. Under the leadership of President Witt, we are conducting a massive survey of the delivery of our curriculum with the goal of streamlining what is offered throughout all of the colleges and schools. President Witt set the example by personally devoting a Sunday afternoon to the analysis of a department's graduate and undergraduate course offerings to demonstrate how efficiencies can be achieved, while still increasing the involvement of senior faculty members in the core undergraduate curriculum.

I am leading a major study of our summer compensation practices. Our objective is to bring consistency across our campus of what had become widely disparate practices. The emphasis will be upon enhancing our efficiency of delivering courses, while simultaneously bringing about increased fairness in compensation.

CONCLUSION

At UTA we must use our scarce resources in ways that will do the most good for the State of Texas. From my reading about the types of

initiatives that have received Special Item funding, from attending Legislative Hearings, and from assessing the strengths and shortcomings of UTA, my view has become crystallized: UTA's mission is not to match UT-Austin in most graduate programs, and I am not "putting down" UTA by saying so. Nor does it mean that UTA should get out of graduate research, because in selected areas we do quite well, indeed, in some we do a well-recognized, first-rate job. UTA has and must continue to make a major contribution in professional service, in Social Work, Nursing, our School of Urban and Public Affairs, the Center for Professional Teacher Education, College of Business Administration, School of Architecture, and the College of Engineering. Our Liberal Arts and Science Colleges will play valuable roles both in their own right and as the core supporting the remainder of the university.

UTA changes the lives of our students in a very positive way and is making a very positive impact in the community. Every time I have mentioned this aspect of UTA to legislators, community leaders, and public school officials, they readily agree that this institution is as invaluable to Texas as any other institution of higher learning.

Post Tenure Review Task Force

In my career with the UT system, I have had the opportunity to think about the tenure process from both ends -- 1st as an Assistant Professor scared to death that I would be denied tenure & then as Provost, making recommendations to the President.

Key Point: as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of History at UT Austin, it was my good fortune to be "nurtured" by senior faculty who took their responsibilities very seriously.

- A. I learned how to teach: was provided with feed back by my colleagues.
- B. They read & commented on my scholarship. Wrote letters that led to grants.
- C. These are activities that senior faculty must continue doing even after their colleagues are tenured.

As Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, from 1990-93, & now as Provost, I have reviewed faculty for Promotion & Tenure.

A. UT Austin has a very thorough review process.

B. I feel comfortable with the process at UT Arlington.

A key point I have learned: scholarship is rewarded within the profession & in the department. Teaching is becoming more & more rewarded: that happened to me at Austin.

A. I am proud of my research; but I know that my students, their parents, & especially the public know me 1st & foremost by what I do -- or fail to do -- in the classroom.

Why do we need Post-Tenure Review? Even though the vast majority of faculty are hardworking, there are some who are not but have responded like some professional athletes who have long-term contracts. Whether we want to admit it or not, at UT Austin

and UT Arlington are typical of other campuses - - & they are for I saw this at Duke University as well - - there are some senior faculty who are no longer productive & who refuse to contribute in other ways.

A. I recall the UT Most "Best & Worst" Faculty Poll.

B. It is very very important that once Periodic Review becomes institutionalized that UT Arlington & others do like Austin & have a center for Teaching Effectiveness.

C. all of our schools need to find ways to assist faculty in their scholarship.

D. Key point for me: "Why Can't Faculty Be Re-Directed?" Those not active in scholarship can do more in the area of undergraduate teaching, working with graduate students, & ~~service~~ service.

My Personal Thoughts on Steps we must do if we start Periodic Review of Tenured Faculty.

1. Once it is institutionalized, UT Arlington & others must do like UT Austin & create & fully fund a center for Teaching Effectiveness.
2. All of our schools must find ways to assist faculty with this scholarship.
3. Key point for me: "Why Can't Faculty Be Re-Directed?" Those not active in Research can make an invaluable contribution in the area of undergraduate teaching, graduate teaching & mentoring, & above all in service.

Conclusion

1.

For those of us in higher education - & especially public higher education - - the level of accountability we face is very high. I first discovered this as an administrator at UT Austin, where we were often compelled to admit some - - to be sure - - a few marginal students but we were then held ~~accountable~~ accountable if these students failed to make sufficient progress toward their degrees.

As Provost at UTA, I and the President have appeared before legislative groups who have some "Performance Measure" to judge us by.

2.

University Faculty need to understand that even though the number of "outliers" in our midst is small, everyone of them reinforces in the public mind the belief that all of us ~~are~~ are above being evaluated. We have often been our own worst enemies by ignoring or covering

for our faculty members who fail or simply refuse to do their jobs.

3. I want to conclude on the "positive aspects" of the start of Post Tenure Review.

A. The case will be even clearer about the strong committed faculty we have.

B. Suspect that the "discussion" has already had an impact on administrators realizing that their "problems" will not go away but must be addressed.

C. With an emphasis not only on Research but on Teaching, Effectiveness, & Service, ~~the~~ Post Tenure Review will reinforce ~~the~~ my strong belief that outstanding research scholars are probably good to great teachers & are committed to serving in various ways.

- 3.
1. Bill Cunningham made an important point: "Periodic evaluation is intended to enhance & protect not diminish the importance of tenure & academic freedom. Evaluation is to provide guidance for continuing & meaningful faculty development, to assist faculty to enhance professional skills & goals; to ~~refocus~~ refocus efforts.
 2. Periodic evaluations, while distinct from the annual evaluation process, may be integrated with the annual evaluation process to form a single comprehensive faculty development & evaluation process.
 3. The faculty member's performance shall be reviewed by a committee of tenured peers, which ~~shall~~ shall evaluate the resume, student evaluations, annual reports, & other materials submitted by the faculty member.
 4. For individuals whose performance indicates they would benefit from additional institutional support, i.e., teaching effectiveness, this will be provided. Unsatisfactory could lead to review for termination.

5. The acceptance & success of periodic evaluation for tenured faculty will be ~~dependent~~^{dependent} upon an objective, critical process & an institutional commitment to assist & support faculty development.

Note to me: if Francis
Fredericks does not discuss
it, it might be appropriate
for me to mention several
of the points made by
Dr. Cunningham & then
incorporated by our
committee.