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## Texas House of Representatives Subcommittee on Performance Based Budgeting

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**Texas House of Representatives**

**Committee on Appropriations**

**Subcommittee on Performance  
Based Budgeting**

**Thursday, August 22, 1996**

**Capitol Extension, Room E1.030,**

**10:00 a.m.**



The Representatives based their<sup>2</sup> information about the University of Texas at Arlington from a document entitled, "Summary Assessment of Agency Performance, First Six Months, Fiscal Year, 1996."

Page III-14: "The University of Texas at Arlington showed a significant decrease in enrollment from fiscal year 1994 to fiscal year 1995 and a smaller decrease from fiscal year 1995 to fiscal year 1996." At the same time, the FTE count has been steadily increasing, but the ratio of students to faculty has also increased. The three trends do not appear to correlate as expected."

page III-17, Number of Students Enrolled on the 12th Class Day

[see enclosed sheet]

page III-18, Number of Minority Students<sup>3</sup>  
Enrolled

[see enclosed sheet]

page III-19, Student/Faculty Ratio

[see enclosed sheet]

page IV-20, Number of Course Completers

[see enclosed sheet]

page III-22, Full-time Equivalent Employees

[see enclosed sheet]

I want to thank you, Representative Henry Cuellar, and the rest of the committee members for allowing me this opportunity to testify on behalf of the University of Texas at Arlington. As has already been mentioned, our President, Robert E. Witt, because of a long-standing committment, is unable to be here today.

I am George C. Wright, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and along with me is Mr. Dan Williams, our Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration.

### **Total Enrollment**

Since the Fall Semester 1991, when UTA's total student enrollment reached 25,135, our enrollment has declined. From that high in 1991, the enrollment declined to

24,727 in 1992, to 23,749 in 1993,<sup>5</sup> to 23,280, in 1994, to 22,121 in the Fall Semester of 1995.

Given the large number of UTA students who register for courses at the last minute, it is always very difficult for us to estimate what our enrollment will be. Right now, we believe that we will have somewhere around 21,000 students for this Fall Semester, which if correct, will mean that our enrollment is down somewhere around 6% compared to last year.

While we want to be cautious, we believe that this will be the last year that our enrollment declines. We expect it to be 5% higher next Fall.

Copy of  
Ernest Boyer,  
Book on Teaching  
& Research.

Briefly, before going into why<sup>6</sup> our enrollment has declined over the years, I want to mention a few facts about our student body. The number of graduate students has been relatively stable over the last five years, going from 4,246 in 1991, to 4,224 in 1995. Given the declining number of students overall, this means that the percentage of graduate students in the student population has increased to where they comprise more than 20% of our student population.

Native Texans comprised the bulk of our students: 20,256, to 517 out-of-state, and 1,348 from foreign countries.

## **Factors Contributing to Declining Enrollment**

1. Increased cost of higher education coupled with TCJC. A freshmen or sophomore level course is considerably less expensive there. Influx of junior and community colleges with lower costs associated and less attention placed to residency guidelines. (Note to me: turn the page for information on Tuition and Fee Comparisons).

2. Reduced grant availability.

3. Dependence on loans. (Note to me: turn the page for various charts).

4. Marked change in public school demographics, i.e., greater percentage of our potential students are minorities who have historically not attended college at all.

5. Decline in high school graduation rates.

6. Perceived image of the University: This is our fault.



## Summary

### Number of Students Enrolled on the 12th Class Day

- The enrollment measure is important to monitor as an early predictor of shifts in formula funding for the 1998-99 biennium corresponding to significant shifts in enrollment.
- The University of Houston at Victoria showed a substantial increase in total enrollment in fiscal year 1995. A&M - Corpus Christi and the University of Texas at Brownsville both had significant increases in the two-year period from fiscal year 1994 to fiscal year 1996. The increases at these universities appear to be at least partially attributable to increases in minority enrollment. A notable increase of 46 percent in total enrollment at Texas A&M International University is due to expansion of the university from an upper-level to a four-year institution.
- The greatest declines in total enrollment from fiscal year 1994 to fiscal year 1996 were at Texas Southern University (12 percent), which has had significant declines in each year, Lamar University at Beaumont (11 percent) and Lamar University at Port Arthur (10 percent).
- Other institutions showing a two-year decline in enrollment of 8 percent or more were A&M Kingsville (8 percent) and East Texas State University at Texarkana (8 percent).
- The University of Texas at Arlington showed a significant decrease in enrollment from fiscal year 1994 to fiscal year 1995 and a smaller decrease from fiscal year 1995 to fiscal year 1996. At the same time, the FTE count has been steadily increasing, but the ratio of students to faculty has also increased. The three trends do not appear to correlate as expected. A similar situation exists at Lamar University at Orange, although the university experienced a partial recovery in fiscal year 1996 from the enrollment decrease in fiscal year 1995.

### Number of Minority Students Enrolled

- Several universities showed significant increases in the number of minority students enrolled between fiscal year 1994 and fiscal year 1996. The University of Houston at Victoria increased by 94 percent, A&M Corpus Christi by 29 percent, University of Texas at Brownsville by 28 percent, and Sul Ross State University increased by 20 percent.

7. Limited recruitment efforts. This is<sup>8</sup> our fault.

## **Response to Declining Enrollment**

A Key Point: the realization on our part that we must recruit students--not merely wait on them to arrive at our door, and to treat them as customers who have choices, that they do not have to put with our being ineffecient, rude, and the like.

1. Created the position of Vice President for Student Enrollment Services and the hiring of Shirley Binder, from UT Austin, to assume that position. She is an expert, the best in the business, a person who is well known throughout Texas.

2. Hired a Director of Admissions, Michelle Bobadia, a person who had worked with UT Austin and Texas A & M Outreach Centers. Michelle is aware of how recruiting should be conducted in the minority communities.

<sup>After</sup>  
~~With~~ the hiring of Michelle, Vice President Binder ~~also~~ did extensive reorganization and restructuring of the Office of Admissions

3. Add support staff to manage increased customer service requests, <sup>especially</sup> at the front counter, to answer phones, mail, etc.

5. Upgrade the transcript evaluator's position which is vital to process applications.

6. Staff and train a team comprised of Admissions Counselors dedicated to recruitment.

7. Employ students to assist with the front counter, conduct campus tours, and in general to take part in the recruitment of potential students.

### **New Programs**

A Key point: to be successful in recruiting students, we realize that we need to develop new programs and that we need to be pro-active and get the word out about UTA. A few of the new initiatives are:

1. Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. College Day and Night Programs, September-May.
2. Faculty Outreach with the public schools.
3. Interaction with High School Counselors.
4. Admission/Financial <sup>Aid</sup> Workshops in Dallas and Ft. Worth, will be done this school year for the first time.

5. Developing a positive relationship<sup>11</sup> with the junior and community colleges. A seamless web regarding transfer.
6. Shirley has various programs to invite potential students and their parents to our campus.

### **Technology/Software/Publications**

This is an important aspect of recruiting students.

1. Developed UTA Viewbook for use as a recruitment tool with prospective students.
2. Developing a pre-college planning guide for use with prospective students in grades 8-12 and their parents.
3. Purchased and will continue purchasing student searches from the College Board.
4. Developing articulation agreements with junior and community colleges.

5. Developing and updating transfer equivalency charts for feeder junior and community colleges.

## **Managing Our Resources**

While Vice President Dan Williams is prepared to speak on the subject of "Managing Our Finances," I want to briefly touch on some steps we are taken to be better stewards of our finances. This would be crucial under any circumstances but it is especially so given our declining enrollment and that much of our funding is enrollment driven.

The President and I are working with our Academic Deans in the area of scheduling classes. A large percentage of UTA students

work and have families, and as a result there are specific times when they cannot take courses. While it is impossible to satisfy each and every student every semester, we want to make certain that classes are taught during the times that are best for students, not just for faculty. For instance, why can't some classes that always meet on Tuesday and Thursday at 2:00 be taught on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8:00?

At UTA, there have been far too many occasions when classrooms were not available for larger classes. While this might suggest that UTA needs additional buildings constructed, we have discovered that a major problem is in how class room assignments have been made. The problem centers around the fact that Colleges/Schools control the

class rooms in their buildings. Beginning with this Fall Semester, we have adopted a new policy, where for part of the time period when class room assignments are made, the respective College/School will make the assignments, just like they have in the past. Then, these decisions will be made centrally. We are confident that this will lead to better utilization of our existing class rooms. We are aware that some faculty might not be happy with this new arrangement: they will be compelled to leave their own buildings and travel across campus. But, this will result in more classes being available for students. And, the worst that might come out of this will be that some faculty will get some much-needed exercise by walking across campus.



Once we are assured that everything has been done to meet student demand for courses and there is still a high demand, we have allocated additional resources for courses, such as French, Spanish, and other introductory courses, to make sure that no students are turned away from UTA because we could not accommodate them in classes.

The President and I are fully aware that in some instances we are attempting to change the "culture" of how things have historically been done on this campus. President Witt has remarked on numerous occasions that it seems as if each College/School has been allowed to operate independently, that the only thing connecting them is a common heating and cooling system! To bring about these

changes--to manage our resources better--we need to work with the entire UTA community to build consensus and support.

A final point about "Managing Our Resources": it is much more than "simply tightening our financial belt" and making courses available to students: it also means a commitment to improving the quality that already exist at UTA. Our institution has a number of very outstanding programs--High Energy Physics, Women's Studies,--just to mention two. We must invest in areas of excellence so that the reputation of UTA is further enhanced.

I want to end where I started: we are extremely concerned about our declining enrollment. We have taken steps to institute

new procedures; we are recruiting for the first time; while I do not have the time to fully discuss it here, we understand that retention is a major part of recruitment, that through advising, tutoring, and other programs, we can help students succeed at UTA. We are committed to increasing our number of students!