

**Joint Committee on Oversight of Higher Ed
Governance, Excellence & Transparency**

Dr. Richard A. Box, D.D.S., Chairman
Board of Regents
The Texas A&M University System

October 17, 2011

- The Texas A&M University System has been aggressively addressing for some time the stated priorities of the Joint Committee and doing so in its own way.
- The A&M System shares with your Joint Committee many of the same concerns, and like this committee, we believe that higher education in Texas is neither broken nor corrupt. Our commitment is to the pursuit of excellence, developing future leaders, and serving the State of Texas.
- The Board of Regents of the A&M System has taken aggressive action in its appointment and charge to our Committee on Academic and Student Affairs to evaluate issues such as accountability, transparency, efficiency and productivity. This committee's formal charge came on July 20; however, the Board and our member institutions have been working on these issues for over a year.

- Committee chaired by Regent Elaine Mendoza, previous vice chair of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
 - Committee has met twice outside of regular meetings of the Board of Regents and a third has been scheduled for November 2.
 - Committee meetings have been public and posted according to state protocols, while also including the presidents and provosts of all 11 universities within the A&M System in an open and robust dialogue.
- The A&M System’s Committee on Academic and Student Affairs subsequently established two task forces, each of which includes a representative from all 11 universities and the health science center within the A&M System, with each co-chaired by a President and Provost:
 - Metrics for Determining Success Task Force: charged with identifying and recommending a common set of student success metrics for institutions within the A&M System.
 - Common Success Metrics
 - Graduation Rates
 - Fall-to-Fall persistence
 - Fall-to-Fall retention predicted vs. actual rates
 - Growth in degrees awarded
 - Growth in degrees awarded for high-need fields (STEM, nursing, allied health, STEM field teachers)
 - Degrees awarded to high-risk students

- Suggested Institutional Metrics
 - Average time to degree (by major)
 - Average credits to degree (by major)
 - Student Engagement
 - High-Impact learning experiences (participation % of graduates)
 - Learning communities
 - Study abroad
 - Service learning
 - Student research
 - Internship/practicum
 - Learning Outcomes Task Force: charged with developing a set of common global learning outcomes for each member university; a suggested set of learning outcomes for each common learning goal; and a sample set of rubrics for each learning objective.
- As a full Board, we look forward to a formal report of the committee's work, as well as that of the task forces.
- Other priority actions of the Board:
 - Affordability – The Board, as a matter of policy, decided not to consider any across-the-board designated tuition increases for A&M System universities for FY2012.

- Efficiencies – The Board in 2009 decided to reduce administrative costs by combining positions between the A&M System and Texas A&M University for support functions such as finance, information technology, research administration, communications and safety/security. The Board is continuing to search for ways to preserve core services – teaching, research and public service – by achieving higher efficiencies in administrative operations.

- Shared Governance – The Board has maintained ongoing, open dialogue with university and faculty leadership groups, as well as with individual faculty members. Additionally, as a testament to our commitment to shared governance, we employed a diverse, 18-member advisory committee in our most recent search for a vice chancellor and dean of engineering, that included administrators, faculty, and alumni, as well as a representative of the Board.

###Note: Dr. Box will be back in the state on Thursday, October 13th . He has reviewed and approved the submission of this outline of his Testimony; however, he reserves the right to add to this testimony after further consideration.