

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board of Regents:

I feel, and I believe I speak for the faculty, that the University has made significant progress over the last six months. And, I believe that together we are beginning to forge a real relationship among all of the constituent elements that are working on growth for the University. Let me briefly touch on a couple of these necessary elements that are fostering the development of UH.

But first, let me express my sympathy to you on how much tougher your job has become. Most of you had a relationship with UH before being appointed to the Board, but the relationship with UH from the perspective of a Regent is fundamentally different than what you have experienced before. The institution now absolutely depends on your critical role in raising revenue to further our joint aims. The Regents have always been an essential element in our relation to the Legislature, and remain so today. The Regents have also traditionally assisted in fund raising, but this role is growing quickly in magnitude and importance, because of the confluence of relatively flat legislative support coupled with increasing demands and ambitions of UH. And now, on top of this, you are being asked to make very important decisions regarding tuition levels.

Tuition is a very tricky topic, because it is so visible to virtually all of our constituents, including first of all students, but also parents, legislators, and those employees of the institution that care about its direction- which is basically all of the faculty and staff. We all fully appreciate the trade-off you all need to make between sufficient revenue to advance the institution compared to being gentle to current and future students. I won't hide from you that I believe the Regents and faculty will always differ slightly over the extent to which these various aims influence your decisions. There are two ways, however, to make sure we all understand where we are going, and how we are going to get there. The first is communication, and the second is to carefully and completely outline the path by which UH will become a premier research University. I would like

to discuss both of these aspects of our relationship.

Communication between you and the University at large is important. To be convinced you are doing an excellent job, the faculty and staff need to appreciate your understanding of the institution, and need to understand we are not just a political football. In the last two years, we have started the dialogue required to convey the views of both faculty and yourselves. The faculty highly appreciate that you all sent your chair, Regent Hermes, to speak with us at the Senate. His appearance builds on the even braver appearance by Regent O'Connor the previous year. I believe we need to go farther to foster this dialogue, and I hope we can find ways to engender more conversation between faculty and you on the Board. Let me also add that we appreciate that communication takes time and energy, but effective communication will, I believe, continue to advance UH in the direction it needs to go.

The second part of what I want to discuss are the steps you, the administration, and the faculty are making to build a plan to advance UH to be a serious research University. You have seen and commented on the building and facility plan presented by the consultants. I was so impressed by this plan that we have already had this plan presented to the Faculty Senate as a whole, and people are talking about it and are fully engaged in the implications of this plan, although it is not yet fleshed out. One aspect of the plan is to considerably increase the number of residential students, and most faculty and staff seem genuinely excited by the implications and prospects of a critical increase in residential students.

Another aspect of a growth plan is a financing plan. Clearly, this is not yet in place, and we are counting on you all for significant input into this process- although there a lot of expectations on the administration and faculty as well. And finally, the facilities plan has started in an embryonic way a discussion of the academic elements that are needed to make such a plan happen.

To talk about the academic plan, I thought I would sketch out how other universities look compared to us. This is not a scientific comparison, but is nonetheless informative, I think. The last time I spoke with you all, I said we should compare ourselves to Big 10 schools. The Senate staff person, Mary Brantley, was able to find information on Iowa, Iowa State, Illinois, Michigan, Michigan State, plus Texas and A&M.

On average, these universities are bigger than us. They average about 27,000 undergrads, and 10,500 graduate students. Using the same data sources, UH has about 18,500 undergrads, and 9,000 graduate students. But size is by far not the most important criterion, and I want to at least present a couple of other criteria that affects what you've discussed today.

One aspect is that these seven schools have, on average, over 77% of their departments offering Ph.D.s. Only about 68% of the departments at UH offer Ph.D.s, which suggests we need to develop four more of our departments into Ph.D. departments to be comparable. Such a prescription entails a significant expansion in those four departments.

Also speaking to faculty size is that these seven universities have on average over 87% of their teaching staff as full time faculty, UH has only 68% of its teaching staff as full time faculty. We would need to add 336 full time tenure track faculty just to meet their average. If you look at undergraduate and graduate students per full time faculty member, you find that UH has over 26 students per full time faculty, while the seven schools average only 17.9. To get to their average on this dimension, UH would have to add 493 full time tenure and tenure track faculty.

These numbers are part of the basis for my reporting to you last time that we need about 400 new tenure track faculty- the average of those two numbers, even before we add more students. Later next semester I'll report to you an analysis we have done on faculty size using national research council research rankings. It also points to a need for about 400 faculty.

Faculty growth, however, has other consequences, including physical space as in the facilities plan, as well as administration and student support staff. One clear consequence of all of these additions, moreover, is tuition. The seven comparison universities average in-state full time student tuition is 82% higher than ours. Now, such an increase could be offset somewhat with endowment income. We were not able to find that data, but I predict that our endowment income is behind these seven universities as well. Thus the growth plan that you and I are outlining would require about a doubling of tuition unless you, with our help, are able to build other financing sources.

Going back to the original theme, another really important step you all took to build UH into a premier research institution was the decision to expand the faculty by about 30 people. These new lines will significantly add to the scholarly output of UH as well as to student access to faculty. It will not be news to you if I report that neither faculty nor staff were not that pleased with the size, or the timing, of the compensation adjustment you recently approved. Nonetheless, the additional lines you approved have generated genuine excitement that UH is starting to move forward in a systematic manner. The nicely done facilities plan, especially since it was accompanied by the news of new building from private gifts, is another really important step. You all will face considerable pressure next year to build a sense of forward looking momentum, despite that the legislature will be in session. In support of your role as the guiding board for UH, I hope that you all can find some ways to come on campus and see what we are about, and that these interactions will give you a feel for the excitement you have generated in the faculty. If I can help you do this in any way, I would be more than pleased to do so.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak with you.