

Mr. Jacob Cottingham, Chief of Staff for State Representative Donna Howard, sent these answers to talking points sent by Brian Evans (UT Austin) for the Joint Meeting of the Academic Senates at UT Austin and Texas A&M University on March 4, 2019:

1. *Your experience as a UT student and benefits from obtaining higher education degrees*
 - Arrival to Texas; ACC classes; LBJ school [Master's Degree in Public Policy at UT]
 - Capitol job. Great network, still paying student loans off.
 - Job market improves, taken more seriously, can use a degree as 2 years of work experience.
2. *View from the State Legislature on the impact of A&M and UT.*
 - Lege seems to be of two minds; on one hand the benefits of these two institutions seems obvious and apparent. On the other hand, they drive so many of the conversations - a victim of success - it's like the Patriots or Golden State. Some fatigue from other regions institutions
 - Most probably underestimate their impact to some degree.
 - See all kinds of support for Larson's bill to have them play ball again; less enthusiasm for improved pathways to graduation, for example.
 - Post-Harvey, TAMU seems to be more in the spotlight. Appropriators have some understanding of the value of extension offices and system agencies.
 - Legislators don't always like to be shown that their opinions don't match up with research; college students viewed as liberal
3. *State Budget issues related to Higher Education*
 - Not where we were a few years ago with starving the beast and 7 solutions
 - Gov Abbott clearly made higher ed something he wants to focus on; created his GURI fund to recruit faculty; wants top-notch faculty - the kind that brings research dollars here... good
 - Made some decisions already in Article III
 - More money into formulas: GAI \$104M; HRI \$55M; Comm Coll \$51M
 - Tuition assistance- \$80M TEXAS Grants- maintains 70% eligibility with the addition of new pathways. Had thought we were at 92% end of last session.
 - Maintaining investment in research: \$35M research
 - TRBs- not this time
 - Still not funding at levels prior to 2011: per student, state dollars
 - 60-80% of the cost at UT Austin past high watermark.
 - Now down to 12-14%
 - Deregulation 2003-; tuition went up; still a good deal nationally- that said, like in pub ed, shifted the cost to students and families and state-backed off investing in the thing we need, which is an educated workforce
 - An effort to reign in 'special items'; have somewhat of patchwork with hold harmless, institutional enhancement.
 - CPRIT- Zerwas House Joint Resolution (HJRw57) coauthors and 4JAs-\$3B new bonding authority for the program
 - Committed to 1.1 to 1 ratio of GME slots- struggle to keep up with proliferation - have a shortage so understandable; helping to get providers and research money

and stimulates the economy. But need to have the GME otherwise they go someplace else - a higher likelihood of that's where you will reside.

- The balance between investments and bringing in the dollars, but not oversaturating.

4. *UT & A&M Faculty Senates passed a resolution on THECB Field of Study:*

- Transfer credits big issue- on one hand, we want a top-down approach to set degree transfer guides
- On the other, schools and profs want their own unique value to influence the curriculum - so don't want to be too restrictive.

5. *Your comments on Higher Ed, including matters before the Higher Ed Committee*

a. College Affordability:

- Student loan debt and job licensing
- Limiting fees for transcripts
- Textbooks-OER, Inclusive Access
- Refinancing options wPABs
- Rural Resident scholarships for doctors...
- Improve transfer paths Reduce extra course loads

b. Campus freedom:

- Put guns on campus
- 'Free speech zones'
- Voting on campus

c. Focus politically on bigger picture, trying to get away from parochial

- 60x30 - persistence and completion...
- 60% of 2030 cohort - now at 40-42% looking at options