



We need to increase higher education capacity, and we need to fund excellence at the state's existing national research universities.

Dear Friends:

As I travel around the state, I frequently meet Texans and UT alumni who want high-quality public education and higher education for their children and grandchildren. They often ask, what will it take for our state to improve?

We cannot escape the fact that Texas spends less of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education than other states. In 2006, Texas' spending on higher education and public schools amounted to 3.35% of our GDP. Michigan spent 4.49%, California spent 4.24%, and North Carolina spent 4.05%.\* These differences may seem slight, but as an illustration, if we added 1% of our state GDP to education spending, it would generate \$8.5 billion. Adding 1/10 of 1% would provide \$850 million annually.

It is also worth noting that California spends almost twice as much on higher education than Texas, and it has done so consistently for many years, even though its population is only a third larger. That investment has surely played a role in California's GDP, which is 75% greater than ours.

Simply put, our competitors are investing more in education, and they have systematically done so for years. We are far behind.

I understand that our elected officials are working hard to control state spending, but Texas is ranked 35th out of 50 states in the percentage of citizens with a college education. Only 24.5% of Texans age 25 or older are college graduates, and the current projection by the Texas State Data Center is for that figure to decline by 2040. Texans deserve better. We need to increase higher education capacity, and we need to fund excellence at the state's existing national research universities. In the months ahead I'll be repeating this message around the state.

Many people have asked how they can make their voices heard. The Texas Exes, our alumni association, can tell you how you can make a difference; email [utadvocates@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:utadvocates@alumni.utexas.edu). I want to express my gratitude to the hundreds of you who have already joined UT Advocates for Higher Education, which is sponsored by the Exes. Another way to help is to participate in the email survey the Exes will be sending in the weeks ahead.

Thank you for all you do for The University of Texas at Austin.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Powers  
President  
The University of Texas at Austin

\*Figures are based on reports of the National Association of State Budget Officers and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Education spending data may not be entirely parallel for every state.