

Meeting No. 1,127

THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

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October 16, 2014

Austin, Texas

MEETING NO. 1,127

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2014.--The members of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System convened in an emergency special called meeting via telephone conference call at 8:02 p.m. on Thursday, October 16, 2014, in the Chairman's Office on the Ninth Floor, Ashbel Smith Hall, 201 West Seventh Street, Austin, Texas, with the following participation.

This meeting was posted with the Secretary of State as an emergency meeting pursuant to Section 551.045 of the *Texas Government Code* as an urgent public necessity existed requiring immediate action regarding preparedness and the provision of specialized health care to assist the State of Texas with an imminent threat to public health and safety posed by infectious diseases, such as Ebola.

ATTENDANCE.--

Present

Vice Chairman Powell  
Vice Chairman Hicks  
Regent Aliseda  
Regent Cranberg  
Regent Hall  
Regent Hildebrand  
Regent Pejovich (in person)  
Regent Stillwell  
Regent Richards, Student Regent, nonvoting

Absent

Chairman Foster

In accordance with a notice being duly posted with the Secretary of State and there being a quorum present, Vice Chairman Powell, in the absence of Chairman Foster, called the meeting to order in open session.

1. U. T. System: Update on Ebola, an infectious disease pandemic, including provision of specialized health care and the current state of preparedness

Executive Vice Chancellor Greenberg introduced President Callender who called on James W. LeDuc, Ph.D., Director of the Galveston National Laboratory at The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, to provide some background on the infectious disease Ebola.

Dr. LeDuc described the biology and epidemiology of the Ebola virus and the current epidemic of Ebola in West Africa, which he said is unprecedented, out of control, and, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), deteriorating. He reported that the viral species occurring in Africa is Ebola Zaire. The reservoir host of Ebola Zaire is probably the fruit bat, and humans in tropical Africa come in contact with the virus in the processing of hunted animals. Secondary transmission is by direct

contact with infectious bodily fluids, such as when an infected individual goes to the hospital and medical professionals come in contact with the patient's bodily fluids.

With no widely available treatment, Dr. LeDuc said the mortality rate for Ebola Zaire is about 70-80%. The WHO has reported 9,000 cases of Ebola to date, and the number of new cases is doubling every two to three weeks and is likely to continue at that rate for the near future. Dr. LeDuc noted the likelihood of exported cases of Ebola from West Africa to the United States and other developed countries.

Dr. LeDuc said the Ebola virus is easily killed by bleach or other common ways used to kill viruses. He spoke about the signs and symptoms of the disease, the incubation period (2-21 days), diagnosis, and preventive care for health care workers. He also spoke of countermeasures and tests being performed at the Galveston National Lab.

A. Scott Lea, M.D., Director of the Infectious Diseases Clinic at U. T. Medical Branch - Galveston, then spoke about efforts related to preparedness for patient management at the Medical Branch, including discussions being held with other entities and individuals who have relevant experiences and knowledge of lessons learned.

Regent Hall asked if the purpose of the Level IV care is to isolate the contagious person, and Dr. Lea agreed that isolation is indeed the primary purpose. Also in reply to a question from Regent Hall, Dr. Lea and Dr. LeDuc explained the incubation period for Ebola and when the outbreak may be considered to be over.

Dr. Lea and Dr. LeDuc answered questions from Regent Cranberg about lessons learned from an Ebola case in Dallas, Texas, and about diagnostic testing, which is an area where the Medical Branch can contribute.

In response to a question from Regent Hall, Dr. LeDuc said that scientists at the Galveston National Laboratory and across the country are studying the chance of mutations in the Ebola virus.

RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION.--At 8:32 p.m., Vice Chairman Powell said the Board would recess to convene in Executive Session pursuant to *Texas Government Code* Sections 551.071 and 551.074 to consider the matters listed on the Executive Session agenda.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.--At 9:53 p.m., the Board reconvened in open session for the following actions on matters discussed in Executive Session and to consider the following agenda item.

- 1a. U. T. System Board of Regents: Discussion with Counsel on pending legal issues

No action was taken on this item.

- 1b. U. T. System: Discussion and appropriate action concerning legal issues related to public health matters and the provision of specialized health care

See Item 2 below for action taken on this matter in Open Session.

- 2a. U. T. System: Discussion and appropriate action concerning the duties and assignment of individual personnel related to the provision of specialized health care

See Item 2 below for action taken on this matter in Open Session.

- 2b. U. T. System: Discussion and appropriate action regarding individual personnel matters relating to appointment, employment, evaluation, compensation, assignment, and duties of presidents (academic and health institutions), U. T. System Administration officers (Executive Vice Chancellors and Vice Chancellors), other officers reporting directly to the Board (Chancellor, General Counsel to the Board, and Chief Audit Executive), and U. T. System and institutional employees

No action was taken on this item.

#### AGENDA ITEM

2. U. T. System: Discussion and appropriate action related to assistance with State public health matters related to infectious diseases and provision of specialized health care

Under Executive Session Items 1b and 2a, the Board had an opportunity to discuss legal and personnel issues related to public health matters and the provision of specialized health care. Vice Chairman Powell then read the following statement.

#### Statement by Vice Chairman Powell

The University of Texas System is fortunate to have some of the nation's leading experts in the research and treatment of infectious diseases, and we have the largest national biocontainment laboratory in the world located on an academic campus at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Our research expertise, world-class health care, and state-of-the-art medical facilities across Texas position us among the most experienced resources in the nation and the world.

On behalf of the Board of Regents and the thousands of U. T. System health care professionals, we are fully prepared and committed to bring all of our resources to bear on public health threats to our citizens. We offer our full support to Governor Perry and his Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response and its Chairman, Dr. Brett Giroir. We continue to collaborate and discuss strategies with Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Dr. Kyle Janek and State Health Services Commissioner Dr. David Lakey, as well as other public health experts, epidemiologists, and leaders involved in responding to pandemic threats. The safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff on our campuses and of all citizens across our state is of utmost importance, and we are mobilizing efforts and taking precautionary measures to be fully prepared as Texas faces today's unfortunate health threat.

ADJOURNMENT.--At 9:55 p.m., there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

/s/ Carol A. Felkel  
Secretary to the Board of Regents

October 29, 2014