

**Remarks of Chancellor Milliken
CCEC Winter Meeting Dinner
February 1, 2019
Dallas, Texas**

Thank you, Chairman Eltife. I can't tell all of you how much of a benefit it is to have a Chairman who is as well respected in the Capitol as Kevin. I've already seen on many occasions what a difference it makes. We are going to be very good partners this session and beyond. And I think I know why...

Soon after we arrived in Texas, Nana and I got together with Kevin and Kelly for a purely social dinner. After we left, Nana said "I love Kelly"! The next day Kevin called me and said, your greatest asset is Nana. "Kelly loves her"! So Kelly, Nana, thanks for putting this team together.

I want to add my thanks to my partner and colleague, President Benson, and his team, for making today so successful. All of us saw today – some of you for the first time – what a great place UTD is, and everyone here understands why we're so excited about its future.

I want to say thank you to James Huffines, who after long service to the UT System, including as chairman of the Board of Regents, agreed to serve as Chair of the Chancellor's Council during my first year. It's a gift to the UT System and to me personally, and for that I'm very grateful.

Finally, I can't say thank you enough to all of you, who through your support demonstrate such commitment to the UT System and the future of Texas, which are inextricably linked.

This tremendous system:

- educates 235,000 students each year;
- does \$2.9B in research, second in the nation only into the UC System, and three times as much as any other system in Texas;
- has six medical schools – five more than any other Texas System and again, its only competition is the UC System;
- has one of the premier public research universities in the nation in UT Austin and four emerging research universities led by UT Dallas,
- has in UT Southwestern a top 10 public health science center and in MD Anderson, the number 1 cancer center in the world.

Consider our faculty – the brilliant men and women we get to call our colleagues. They include:

- 9 Nobel Laureates,
- 2 Pulitzer Prize winners,
- 47 members of the Institute of Medicine,
- 46 members of the National Academy of Sciences,
- 61 members of the National Academy of Engineering, and
- 59 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, among others.

The UT System, named last year by Reuters as the 6th most innovative in the world, is a treasure and perhaps the greatest asset of this great state.

That's enough reason for anyone to want to be associated with the UT System. But for me, it's even more fundamental and has to do with what's kept me energized through a 30-year career in four states.

I came to understand that talent is universal and equally distributed across the population. Regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, national origin or zip code.

But opportunity – who gets the best preparation for college, who gets into the best colleges, who earns a degree, who has access to a rewarding career path after college – is not equal and is still stubbornly correlated with wealth.

The difference maker, the great engine of mobility in American society that helps turn talent into opportunity, is higher education. And public higher education, which produces 70 percent of our nation's graduates, is the most important.

It is the greatest engine of social and economic opportunity the world has ever seen. It changes families forever. It changes communities, and the nation. And in Texas, and the UT System, we do more of it than almost anywhere else.

We would need more higher education even if we weren't growing. The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce – one of the best places doing this kind of work – says that by next year, roughly 7 out of every 10 new jobs will require a college degree. I believe we are fast approaching a time when that number will be 10 out of 10.

But the most recent census tells us that only four in ten Americans hold an associate's degree or higher. And unfortunately, in Texas it's a bit worse. Currently, just three in ten Texans between 25 and 34 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

So if our population were to be stagnant, we'd still need much higher educational attainment levels to be competitive. But Texas is anything but stagnant!

I recently spoke with the state demographer, a UTSA professor, who said Texas grows by about 1,000 people a day, split evenly between births outnumbering deaths and new Texans moving here.

That's an impressive number. (As an aside, it made Nana and me feel much more at home, since it means – even though we only got here in September – we've been Texans longer than about 130,000 of our neighbors.)

But the point is that Texas is growing, and experts believe the population may even double over the next thirty years.

Growth can be a wonderful thing. Ask the upper Midwest and Northeast, it's better than shrinking. But we all want Texas to grow in ways that protect our quality of life, our economic leadership, and all the other things that make this a great place to be. So we need to make the most of our most important resource – our people.

Higher education and particularly the UT System must help lead the way. Obviously we can't hope to serve a population twice as big with the same capacity as we have today. And we can't allow the educational attainment gaps based on race and ethnicity to continue – or we will, as a state, be woefully behind the states we compete with.

On the other hand, I feel safe guaranteeing you that even if the population doubles by 2050, the number of UT institutions will not. There won't be 28 of them.

It's not just about being bigger – it's about doing better.

So how do we close the gap that we have now, that will get dramatically more challenging?

It's a longer answer than I'm going to offer tonight, but it's essentially about being smarter, more efficient, more collaborative, making more and better use of technology, and forming deeper and more effective partnerships with K-12 education and community colleges and private industry.

The second way the UT System will position Texas for success is through leading with our enormous advantages in research, education and practice in medicine and health science.

We award 6 of out every 10 medical degrees and train 7 out of every 10 medical residents in the state. Last year, our health institutions cared for more than two million unique patients, accounting for more than 7.8 million outpatient visits and 1.6 million hospital days.

But despite our leadership in so many areas, the data demonstrate that as a state, while we're leaders in cancer treatment and other areas, we rank very poorly in some very important areas. Consider these sobering statistics:

In prevalence of diabetes, Texas ranks 41st in the nation – meaning we're ninth worst.

In physical activity – the percentage of Texans who get exercise that’s not part of their job – we’re even worse. 46th.

Overall, the United Health Foundation says we’re the 37th healthiest state in the country.

And while a lot of factors contribute, high on the list is the fact that we’re not producing enough doctors and other health care professionals to care for our growing population.

We rank 45th in primary care physicians per 100,000 people.

And 49th – next to last! – in mental health providers per 100,000 people.

Imagine if we don’t fix this, and the population doubles!

So we have work to do as a state, and UT institutions have a leading role to play in meeting a challenge that is going to help define the future of this state.

As with our academic institutions, we need more and smarter capacity to keep up with growth and lead in research and innovation.

Bottom line, it couldn’t be clearer that the eight academic and six health institutions that make up the UT System are going to have a tremendous amount to do with the kind of state Texas becomes.

While in many places that would seem daunting, in Texas, I believe it’s one more opportunity where we will roll up our sleeves, invest our talent and resources, and create the future we want for our children and grandchildren.

You have much to do with how successful we’ll be. So thank you for the invaluable wisdom and guidance you provide, for your loyal support, for your friendship, for being with us tonight and for your commitment to our university system and our state.

Have a great night and we’ll see many of you tomorrow morning!