

EDUCATION

## UT Systems Launches "Framework" Plan

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[http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kut/files/201108/UT\\_Board\\_of\\_Regents\\_-\\_by\\_Daniel\\_Reese.jpg](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kut/files/201108/UT_Board_of_Regents_-_by_Daniel_Reese.jpg)

The UT Board of Regents approved a \$243.6 million [Enlarge image \(javascript:void\(0\)\)](#) framework plan that is supposed to change the way UT universities operate.

*Photo by Daniel Reese for KUT News.*

UT System Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa introduced a [nine-point plan](#) (<http://www.utsystem.edu/News/files/2011/FrameworkActionPlan-08-25-11.pdf>) to increase undergraduate access and graduation rates, emerging research opportunities, teaching awards for faculty and improving efficiency and transparency. The UT Board of Regents voted unanimously to implement Cigarroa's framework and commit \$243.6 million to it. You can watch his address [here](http://vimeo.com/23699396) (<http://vimeo.com/23699396>).

"Texas finds itself at the epicenter of the national debate on the future of higher education. I believe no university system is better poised than The University of Texas System to lead the debate and offer solutions to benefit our students, faculty and staff," Cigarroa said.

The nine points are:

- 1. Undergraduate Student Access and Success
- 2. Faculty, Administrators and Staff Excellence
- 3. Research
- 4. Productivity and Efficiency
- 5. Strategic Information Technology Infrastructure Investments
- 6. Enhancing Philanthropic Success
- 7. Ph.D. Programs
- 8. The Health of Texas
- 9. Expanding educational and health opportunities in South Texas

The controversy bubbled up this spring when the conservative think-tank Texas Public Policy Foundation introduced its version of "[seven breakthrough solutions](#)" (<http://texashighered.com/7-solutions/>) for higher education. The plan was backed by Governor Rick Perry. The solutions worked from the premise that universities were a cushion for tenured faculty and had little accountability to taxpayers and students.

Today, TPPF released a statement congratulating Cigarroa's framework plan.

"Today's action plan from Chancellor Cigarroa is an important and welcome recognition that Texas students and parents can no longer afford business as usual from our state's higher education institutions. The measures put

forward today should lead to a better academic experience for students, and improved performance of the University of Texas System.

Cigarro's plan includes \$30 million for the South Texas-Lower Rio Grande Valley Plan. It's a long-term goal of increasing education and healthcare opportunities in this part of the state. To encourage on-time graduations, students will begin receiving anticipation cost estimates for their degree plans. The Board approved \$10 million to at UT Horizon fund that will help take research from the lab to the commercial market.

Governor Rick Perry released this statement in response Chancellor Cigarro's address:

"The plan unveiled today reflects important steps toward both increasing productivity and improving academic quality in The University of Texas System, and I applaud Chancellor Cigarro and everyone involved for their hard work in this effort. Moving forward, we need to continue focusing on efficient, innovative strategies to help make high-quality college degrees more affordable and attainable for all Texans. That's a vital part of maintaining a world-class workforce, and continuing to attract employers and high-quality jobs to our state."

State Senator Judith Zaffarini, D-Laredo, who chairs the Senate Higher Education committee, told the *Texas Tribune* she will be looking at how other Texas higher education systems will respond with their own frameworks for change. She has a special committee that will address this next month.

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