

Meeting No. 1,092

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

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October 15, 2012

Austin, Texas

MEETING NO. 1,092

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2012.--The members of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System convened this special called meeting via telephone conference call at 9:04 a.m. on Monday, October 15, 2012, in the Conference Room on the Ninth Floor, Ashbel Smith Hall, 201 West Seventh Street, Austin, Texas, with the following participation:

ATTENDANCE.--

Present

Chairman Powell (in person)
Vice Chairman Foster
Vice Chairman Hicks
Vice Chairman Dannenbaum
Regent Cranberg
Regent Gary
Regent Hall
Regent Pejovich
Regent Stillwell
Regent Purgason, Student Regent, nonvoting

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

RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION.--At 9:05 a.m., Chairman Powell announced a quorum present and 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 9:33 a.m., the Board reconvened in open session. No action was taken on matters discussed in Executive Session.

- 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 Board of Regents: Discussion regarding legal issues concerning a proposed master agreement with edX Inc. related to online and blended learning

See the Open Session item below for action taken related to an agreement with edX Inc.

2. 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

U. T. System Board of Regents: Approval to enter into a master agreement with edX Inc. related to online and blended learning

Chancellor Cigarroa outlined the history and interest in entering into a master agreement with edX Inc. related to online and blended learning as a platform to enhance the mission of The University of Texas System.

On February 25, 2011, Chairman Powell established a Task Force on Blended and Online Learning that recommended establishment of the Institute for Transformational Learning. The charge given to U. T. System was to hire a director of the Institute, to establish best-in-class blended and online learning programs, and to foster an environment to incentivize faculty to develop online and blended courses to improve student learning, student success, and lower the total academic cost of higher education.

Chancellor Cigarroa said Dr. Steven Mintz was hired as Executive Director of the Institute, first to review available platforms for online and blended learning nationally and globally. Chancellor Cigarroa outlined the following attributes of such a platform:

- align with the mission and vision of the U. T. System and with the Framework for Advancing Excellence throughout The University of Texas System;
- protect faculty intellectual property;
- allow faculty to customize online courses for students and utilize best practices for blended courses;

- develop a relationship to have a voice where the U. T. System could be part of the process and adapt research data on student learning to determine how to best deliver courses;
- have a revenue sharing policy; and
- be a part of the environment of best-in-class courses and institutions.

Related to the last point, Chancellor Cigarroa congratulated President Powers on The University of Texas at Austin's placement as 25th in the list of the world's elite universities in the 2012-2013 *Times Higher Education World University Rankings*.

Chancellor Cigarroa said that due diligence has been completed, and he stated his recommendation is to enter into an agreement with edX Inc. as the platform of choice for the U. T. System.

Vice Chairman Dannenbaum asked about the operational aspects of implementation and if a portion of the revenue could assist faculty in development or implementation of such courses. President Powers replied that an individual faculty member or a department would evaluate these aspects and would understand the business model of this well-supported educational effort as they do for all courses. He said he believes the income would support the efforts.

Vice Chairman Hicks asked the presidents in attendance if this proposal receives their full support. The University of Texas at Dallas President Daniel stated his support of the recommendation. President García said The University of Texas at Brownsville is exploring initiatives for a 21st century campus, and this proposal will help to maintain and increase the quality of learning and provide opportunities for gateway courses at a more reasonable cost. President Powers said the proposal will offer a platform for U. T. Austin to expand opportunities, and he mentioned the importance of flexibility offered by the legal aspects of a partnership with edX Inc. President Callender stated his support on behalf of the U. T. System health institutions, specifically in that it will provide options to broaden outreach efforts of The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

President Powers discussed managing classified research in response to a question from Vice Chairman Dannenbaum.

In response to a question from Regent Cranberg about the faculty's reaction and about the quality and number of courses that could be offered through this arrangement, President Daniel said that so long as the enterprise is of the highest quality and the faculty has the flexibility to develop courses consistent with that quality, he believes the proposal will be well received by the faculty at U. T. Dallas. Dr. García said faculty members are actively exploring ways to reconstitute teaching to broaden access and increase quality, and she believes the faculty at U. T. Brownsville will endorse the recommendation. President Powers suggested that

faculty at U. T. Austin might contribute a variety of materials, such as a set of lectures, as an outlet for an individual faculty member's material. Block or gateway courses or online and blended courses will take more effort, such as financial support, but many faculty members are interested in retooling how they deliver learning materials. Access to the low-cost, high-quality courses that would be offered through the edX platform could result in significant cost savings for students and for the U. T. System institutions.

In reply to a question from Chairman Powell, Dr. Mintz described how the Institute for Transformational Learning will provide assistance toward the cost of supporting faculty in developing best-in-class courses. Dr. Mintz added the Institute is already working with U. T. Austin to make sure these innovations will make learning effective and student success achievable.

President Callender said that U. T. Medical Branch - Galveston could use the edX platform to provide opportunities for faculty to gain experience with the tools and to collaborate with other health institutions. He noted enthusiasm for opportunities that pertain to global health and, generally, to health professions education. Executive Vice Chancellor Shine also spoke about the opportunities for the U. T. System health institutions, such as in public health and in continuing medical education.

Vice Chairman Hicks then moved that the U. T. System Board of Regents delegate to Chancellor Cigarroa the authority

- a. to enter into a master agreement with edX Inc. relative to online and blended learning; and
- b. to take all further actions deemed necessary and reasonable related to execution and implementation of the agreement.

Vice Chairman Dannenbaum seconded the motion, which, following a roll call vote, carried unanimously. Regent Purgason also voiced her support for the proposal.

edX Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to provide excellence in online and blended education for the purpose of transforming and enhancing the quality, efficiency, and scale of education through technology and research for the benefit of campus-based students and the worldwide community of online and blended learners. Working collaboratively with edX Inc., the U. T. System will provide courses, through the edX website, that will reflect sound instructional design and active and collaborative learning, such as embedded diagnostics, personalized adaptive learning tools, and learning analytics.

A partnership between edX Inc. and the U. T. System will benefit all U. T. System institution students by expanding access to courses of the highest quality taught by noted experts and by accelerating time-to-degree while reducing costs. The partnership will also augment research to better understand student learning aimed at enhancing student success.

Additionally, the U. T. System will join Harvard, MIT, and the University of California at Berkeley in launching the X University Consortium. The Consortium will consist of institutional members who will gather to share best practices in online and blended education and to disseminate new knowledge focused on enhancing student learning and outcomes.

ADJOURNMENT.--There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

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

October 30, 2012