

Remarks by
University of Texas System Chancellor Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D.
with regard to the partnership agreement between
The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College
November 10, 2010
(as prepared)

In 1991, Texas Southmost College and UT Brownsville entered into a contractual arrangement with the primary goal of enhancing educational opportunities and offering students a seamless educational process from community college to a four year university degree,

The partnership was effected through an educational partnership agreement which ultimately required a series of interagency agreements covering matters such as personnel, academic programs, real property and selection of a president by the UT System Board of Regents. The 1991 partnership agreement was a start and began to propel the institutions forward.

Since inception of the partnership, both UT Brownsville and Texas Southmost College have experienced significant increases in student enrollment, course offerings, degrees offered, real property, and budget including sponsored research grants. The partnership has evolved and over the past two decades has increased in complexity exceeding the scope of the 1991 partnership agreement.

During the 81st Legislative Session in 2009, joint efforts were made by the UT System, UTB and TSC to obtain additional funding for the lease of facilities from TSC to UTB-a recognized element of the existing partnership. The costs of these facilities is a line item within the direct appropriation to UTB, and all parties agreed that the funding provided by the Legislature had become inadequate to cover the actual costs to the Partnership.

In the absence of any additional legislative appropriation, at the culmination of the 81st Session, the UT System and TSC were directed through a rider in the appropriations act to arbitrate the amount TSC should receive for the facilities leased to UTB.

Shortly after the 81st Legislative Session, leadership from UT System, UTB, and TSC met and agreed to focus not on lease payments but rather devote full attention on enhancing the partnership agreement. Both partners quickly agreed that the 1991 agreement was outdated hindering the ability to enhance excellence into the future. We also agreed to work together to seek enhanced funding through all sources including the Texas Legislature.

Over the last 18 months at the direction of and with the endorsement of both Boards, representatives of the UT System, UTB and the Texas Southmost College discussed and drafted a new enhanced partnership agreement that offered a greater vision for higher education in Brownsville advancing excellence and protecting the mission of the community college and university.

On October 21st, the TSC Board of Trustees changed course and rejected the draft of the enhanced partnership agreement. They unanimously voted to authorize legal counsel to negotiate a new agreement and to explore a model that would create a new U.T. System University known as UTB/TSC. To date, no contact has been made to U.T. and no counterproposal in any form has been made.

It is my opinion, as Chancellor for The University of Texas System, that the current partnership agreement is hindering the advancement of excellence in the mission of the University of Texas at Brownsville.

(re Open Session item on U. T. System Board of Regents: Discussion and appropriate action related to the Educational Partnership Agreement between U. T. Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, the terms and conditions governing the current and proposed agreements and relationships between the parties, and the rights and obligations of the parties)