

Remarks of Rad Weaver
UTSA Science and Engineering Building Groundbreaking
June 9, 2017

Thank you, President Reyes, and good morning everybody.

It's a pleasure to be here, and on behalf of my fellow Regents and Chancellor McRaven, I want to congratulate and thank everybody who helped make this exciting event possible.

That includes the legislators who helped secure the tuition revenue bonds that provided the bulk of the financing for this new facility.

I know some of them are here with us this morning, so let me extend my deepest appreciation.

Those bonds amount to a vote of confidence in the faculty, staff, and administration of UT San Antonio – so I hope they are as proud as I am, and as excited about the great things that are going to take place right here, starting in 2020 and for many, many years after that.

I should acknowledge that the UT System Regents devoted \$10 million of Permanent University Funds to this project.

I have been a member of the Board of Regents for just a few months, so I can't claim any credit. But what I can tell you is that my fellow regents and I don't commit PUF funds lightly.

When we invest, we want to be sure we're investing in things that we know will make a real, tangible difference in the lives of Texans.

You might think that's a high bar to get over, and most of the time it is.

But when you have witnessed what UTSA has meant to the great city of San Antonio – which I'm proud to say is my hometown ...

And you think about the growth taking place and all the young people we'll have the opportunity to put on a path to success ...

And you see the state of Texas crying out for more engineers and scientists ...

the decision to strategically invest in a world-class facility like this strikes me as a pretty easy one to make.

I did not attend UTSA, I went to that other great UT institution just up I-35.

But as I said, this city is my home, and I feel like I've had a front row seat watching the catalytic effect UTSA has had – economically and culturally, driving civic engagement and community spirit.

Along with the Health Science Center, the university has helped transform San Antonio, and probably the biggest reason I'm excited to be a new regent is my belief that we have only scratched the surface.

We've come a long way, but in the spirit of the day, it's fair to say we've just broken ground.

Working with my fellow regents, I am going to do whatever I can to help sustain – and accelerate – the momentum UTSA so clearly enjoys today.

With the continued support of the legislature and the community, I believe we will make UTSA a tier one university.

The state of the art Science and Engineering Building will certainly help.

It is going to help us attract the best and the brightest students and faculty.

It is going to help us attract research funding.

It is going to help us launch generations of young people on productive and rewarding careers.

The work that will take place inside this facility will, I believe, reverberate for decades, and make millions of lives better.

Big questions will be answered.

Problems will be solved.

Mysteries unraveled.

Right here in San Antonio, our hometown.

I hope you can tell how excited I am. Not just excited, but deeply appreciative of all the hard work and commitment it took – from so many people – to get us to this point.

But let's not forget, this is the beginning, not the end.

I see a lot of friendly faces here this morning. Lots of folks I know from the Chamber of Commerce.

I want to thank them but also challenge them to sustain, and even increase, their engagement with the university.

And I want to challenge everyone at UTSA to engage right back with them, and with everyone in the community.

I know everyone here this morning “gets it.”

But too many people continue to see universities as somehow apart from the community as a whole.

We need to remind them, to show them that their lives are better because there is a public university in their city – and not just any university, a great university that happens to be connected to 13 other great UT institutions.

At the same time, let’s not forget, this is still a young university.

To reach its potential – and maximize its contribution to this city, the state of Texas, and the world – it needs support.

It needs to earn support, to be sure, but I believe it has already done that in spades.

So as we celebrate the collective effort that led us to this groundbreaking ceremony, I hope we can all resolve to keep the engagement and mutual support going in the years to come.

This university, this town, and the generations of women and men we’ll be counting on to lead this state, deserve nothing less.

So on their behalf, and on behalf of the Board of Regents and everyone at the UT System, thank you all again for being here.

Now I’ll turn things back over to President Reyes.