

UT officials lobby for education appropriations

Associated Press
 AUSTIN — University of Texas System officials tried to convince Senate budget and education leaders Wednesday of a link between Texas' economy and high quality education. Jess Hay, chairman of the UT Board of Regents, along with UT System Chancellor Hans Mark, UT President Peter Flawn, and Dallas businessman and education benefactor Peter O'Donnell appeared before an unusual joint session of the Senate Education and Finance committees.

Hay told the legislators that the UT system is in the process of making annual cost reductions of \$18.6 million but would still need a 4.9 percent increase in its 1985 appropriations to maintain "momentum" during the next two years. There actually would be a \$4.4 million decrease in spending from general revenue, he said.

He praised Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby's plan to give the system 96.3 percent of its requested appropriations.

Hay said he spoke for the UT System but the same terms might apply

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to other colleges and universities in the state.

O'Donnell, who recently contributed \$8 million to help endow 32

new professorships at the university, compared Texas and Massachusetts.

He said Massachusetts has no oil, no gas, no coal and a poor business

climate but "received about five times more defense research and development funds than Texas."

O'Donnell said for Texas to be competitive with California, Massachusetts and New York, the Texas Legislature needs to demonstrate to industrial and academic communities "that Texas has a long-term commitment to develop and sustain a world-class system of higher education."

"This is the time to invest in the universities of our state," said Flawn.

"It is not a time for retrenchment or austerity if we aspire to national leadership. If we become a higher education backwater, we will also become a business backwater."

Mark said Texas could become competitive with California and Massachusetts by investing in the "most important resource we have and that is the native intelligence of our children."

... But, we cannot do it unless we continue to invest our own resources in higher education."

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