

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

UT Austin is committed
to excellence in education,
research, and public service.



UT Austin is committed to excellence in education, research, and public service. As a direct result of the efforts of students, staff, faculty, alumni, the Texas Legislature, and the Governor, UT Austin remains a powerful research and economic engine after three pandemic years.

With the highest four-year graduation rate among Texas public institutions, UT Austin is graduating students to be adaptive educators, forward-thinking business-owners, and community leaders. **Continued state investment in UT Austin is an investment in our state's future.**

The Texas Exes works to organize, inform, and engage alumni and friends of UT Austin. Our advocacy efforts are focused on preparing engaged and influential alumni to communicate with state legislators about the issues that directly affect UT Austin.

The following are the association's priorities for the 88th Legislative Session.

CALL TO ACTION

During the 88th Legislative Session, lawmakers need to hear from alumni. Raising our voices—by emailing, calling, or visiting the Texas State Capitol—helps to maintain and strengthen support for the university and public higher education. The legislature will be considering how to best strengthen our state with an unprecedented estimated budget surplus.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

1

Become a UT Advocate at TexasExes.org/advocate or by texting **LONGHORNS** to **52886** and protect the university with fellow alumni this coming legislative session.

2

Attend the Orange & Maroon Legislative Day on **February 15, 2023**. Go to TexasExes.org/omld to learn more.

3

Learn the priorities outlined in this book and share UT Austin's strong impact on our state and nation with your fellow Longhorn neighbors, friends, and family members.

PRIORITY:

TEXAS INSTITUTE FOR ELECTRONICS

TIE is a partnership led by UT Austin, created to address the needs of both industry and national security and help recruit, educate, and train the next generation of highly skilled innovators. TIE has all the elements necessary to address the country's commercial and defense needs.

We ask the Texas Legislature to support specific funding for the Texas Institute for Electronics (TIE).

CONTEXT

In the summer of 2022, Congress passed the CHIPS and Science Act, which provides over \$52 billion for American semiconductor research, development, manufacturing, and workforce development. This funding will help secure domestic supply, create tens of thousands of jobs, and catalyze hundreds of billions more in private investment.

A state investment in this one-of-a-kind project will uniquely position Texas to effectively compete for a significant share of the \$13B in federal R&D funds and cement Texas as a national leader in the semiconductor industry.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- With semiconductor devices and systems now impacting all aspects of daily life, demand for advanced technologies is growing exponentially, with no end in sight. The consequences of falling behind are more dire today than ever before.
- At the national level, a partnership between the State of Texas, UT Austin and other educational partners, and preeminent semiconductor systems and defense electronics companies would create a best-in-class and sustainable public-private electronics ecosystem.

PRIORITY: BUDGET

We ask the Texas Legislature to strengthen funding levels for the core academic mission of the university through the formulas. Further, we ask the Legislature to fully fund enrollment growth to provide critical base funding for UT Austin and the Dell Medical School.

CONTEXT

The Texas Legislature uses funding formulas to distribute available state appropriations to higher-education institutions as the core investment from the state. This base level of funding is calculated primarily on enrollment and estimated average cost by program.

COMMON QUESTIONS

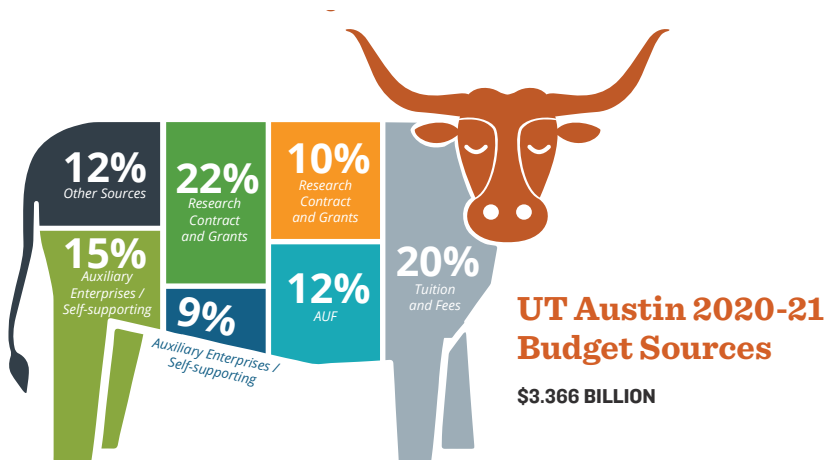
In this post-pandemic environment, why is UT Austin and higher education a good investment in our future?

- UT Austin produces teachers, lawyers, music directors, scientists, and business owners who improve quality of life for all Texans.
- The best way to promote a sustainable Texas economy—to help our state recover from the pandemic—is to invest in a strong workforce.
- Higher education helps attract businesses to our state.
- As a result of the pandemic, the need to quickly learn new skill sets has emerged. Higher education provides an opportunity for people to master new tools and abilities to leverage in the rapidly changing workforce.

UT has plenty of money. Why would the university need additional state resources?

- Since 1984, when adjusted for inflation, UT Austin has seen a more than 40% decrease in state funding, yet it maintains the lowest per-student, per-year cost when compared with 12 other major research universities.
- The money coming from the Available University Fund to UT Austin is only 12% of the budget and is allocated to specific resources, such as library enhancement and scholarships.





PRIORITY: RESEARCH

We ask the Texas Legislature to enhance the Texas Research University Fund (TRUF), providing a stronger investment in life-saving research aimed at solving challenges facing the state.

We ask the Legislature to maintain funding levels of the Governor's University Research Initiative (GURI), which supports UT Austin's efforts to recruit and retain top-tier faculty who provide innovative educational experiences for students.

CONTEXT

The **TRUF** provides a roughly \$1.2 million investment for every \$10 million in research expenditures at UT Austin and Texas A&M College Station. The **Core Research Support Fund** supports emerging institutions, and the **Comprehensive Research Fund** covers remaining colleges and universities in Texas.

Additionally, the **GURI** invests \$40 million to help universities attract world-class researchers. These three funds provide critical support for undergraduate and graduate level research.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Research does not add substance to higher education.

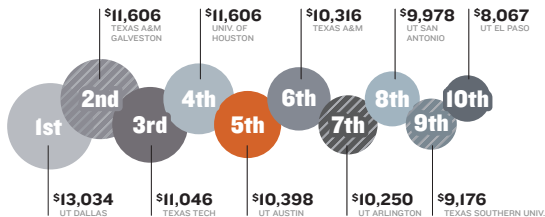
- Research at UT Austin not only results in discoveries to improve quality of life for Texans, it allows students to get practical, hands-on research education and the real-world experience they need to succeed.
- Undergraduate research is an accessible and integrated aspect of a UT Austin education.

Nothing useful comes out of university research.

- Examples of UT Austin research that has impacted quality of life include:
 - Innovative medical tools to spot cancer instantly (MasSpec Pen)
 - Racking natural disasters and providing on-the-ground intel to emergency responders (Stampede2)
 - Reducing opioid deaths for Texas mothers by revising childbirth protocols (Dell Medical School)
 - Creating the first 3D model of the COVID-19 spike protein and helping enable a vaccine to be developed more quickly.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Sponsored research at UT Austin has enhanced quality of life and brings royalties, tax revenues, and new business to the Lone Star State.
- UT Austin strengthens the Texas economy through an estimated \$8.8 billion in spending each year or the equivalent of 132,695 jobs.
- Research at UT Austin has resulted in more than 700 U.S. and international patents over the past decade.



Texas Public University Comparison

TUITION AND FEES PER YEAR

SOURCE: THECB TUITION AND FEES DATA FROM INTEGRATED FISCAL REPORTING SYSTEM

PRIORITY:

TEXAS GRANT PROGRAM

We ask the Texas Legislature to fully fund the Texas Grant Program to meet student need.

CONTEXT

Core academic funding for higher education continues to decrease in relation to the costs of providing a quality education. Additionally, inflation has increased costs for universities and student costs of living.

Texas has retained the TEXAS Grant program as the primary mechanism for state financial aid; the program supported 82,697 students at Texas public institutions in Fiscal Year 2020 . For the 2022-23 academic year, eligible students may receive up to \$5,379 per semester, yet, according to The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the continued increase in the number of eligible students, in addition to increased tuition and fees at public universities, has outpaced the program's ability to cover students' tuition and fees.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

If the cost of tuition wasn't so high, students wouldn't need financial aid.

- Among the top Texas public institutions, UT Austin maintains one of the lowest tuition rates.

Financial aid should be covered at the institutional level.

- With decreasing base funding, institutional financial aid becomes a trade off with quality that Texas simply cannot let happen. Numerous studies have shown that increased state student aid does not drive up tuition prices.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- State support for financial aid is critical; there is currently a gap in funding.
- The Texas Advance Commitment is working to make UT Austin accessible for students of all income levels. Additionally, UT Austin leadership is striving to lower costs and increase efficiency.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW (cont.)

- The university's administrative cost is one of the lowest in the system, while maintaining a four-year graduation rate of 73%—the highest of any public university in Texas during the last academic year.

PRIORITY:

NON-FORMULA EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

The Texas Advance Commitment program started in 2018 and ensures that UT students with family incomes of up to \$125,000 who have financial need, will receive some guaranteed tuition support. Students with family incomes of up to \$65,000 receive, at a minimum, support to completely cover tuition.

UT AUSTIN'S CRITICAL FOCUS PROJECTS

- The **Texas Hub for Applied Cybersecurity** will provide Texas with a diverse and highly trained pipeline of cybersecurity professionals by offering minors, certifications, and apprenticeships in applied cybersecurity for traditional and non-traditional students in a world-class learning space.
- The **Texas Digital Molten Salt Reactor** will ensure that Texas becomes a leader in the design, development, innovation, and commercialization of molten salt reactors to provide flexible, reliable, on-demand electricity and water desalination.
- **Long COVID Research at Dell Med** will expand clinical work at the medical school and support research into the underlying nature of and potential treatments for long COVID.

Learn more about UT Austin's other important non-formula items at
TexasExes.org/LegeSession