New Bill Funds UTD’s Top Priorities

Legislative support is critical to the continued excellence of UTD and our efforts to keep tuition as low as possible. A recently passed bill, HB 153, demonstrates our local state legislators’ continued commitment to supporting our growth. Provisions within this bill will help ensure funding for facilities to enhance our research capabilities in the future.

As we reflect on the results of the recent legislative special session that led to the passing of this bill, we are grateful to our local legislators and the leadership of the House and Senate of the State of Texas for carving out time to address UTD’s top funding priorities. This is especially significant since they have been busy leading and shepherding important pieces of legislation during the past few sessions to resolve the issue of public school finance, yet they never lost sight of UTD’s needs and concerns during the process.

This month, as we approached the end of the third special session, the legislature addressed the issue of tuition revenue bond authority, which has been the primary vehicle for the state to fund capital projects at public universities. UTD had its priorities and immediate needs addressed with the new bill, which provides funding for nearly $100 million in projects at UTD, including $85 million for the Natural Science and Engineering Research Laboratory (NSERL), one of the world’s most advanced science and engineering research buildings. Funding for the NSERL is part of a commitment made by the state to secure a new $3.2 billion Texas Instruments wafer manufacturing plant in Richardson.

HB 153 also appropriated $5.3 million for UTD to cover the interest due on the debt service of the NSERL and $12 million for a vivarium, a state-of-the-art animal care and research facility that is critical to our research plans in the areas of biology, life sciences, bioengineering and related fields.

This is just the beginning of capital improvements planned for UTD. We are currently adding parking and improving road access to UTD, and very soon we will launch our privately funded landscape enhancement project. A $25 million Student Services Building is also being considered. So watch for those construction cranes on campus—they will remain here for the foreseeable future.