



To the University of Houston System Board of Regents,

Each one of you sitting on this esteemed Board recognizes the value of a good education. Public universities, like those included within the University of Houston System, have opened the doors to a bright future for many thousands of graduates.

More needs to be done, however, to ensure that the resources, the opportunities that are accessible by earning a degree through the University of Houston System are made available to a wider segment of the population in southeast Texas. I believe that approval of a downward expansion of the University of Houston Clear Lake by your Board and the 82nd Texas Legislature will answer this need.

Texas' business-friendly environment has made it the state of choice for many companies that are seeking to relocate or to grow their operations. A huge selling point is also this region's highly educated and skilled workforce. As our economy continues to rebound, the demand for such a workforce will rebound, as well. The widening of the Panama Canal, which will be completed in 2014, will create a considerable demand for skilled personnel at every level of the maritime industry. Bay Area Houston's medical community continues to expand. This region is leading the way to economic recovery for the state if not the nation. Will our workforce in these industry clusters and others be ready to meet the inevitable requirements of current and future growth?

As the parent of three grown children, I know that continuity and loyalty to a school are two factors that carry more than a little bit of weight when graduating high school seniors are looking at colleges. I believe many potential students in the Bay Area Houston region want to enter the doors of an institution of higher education at the freshmen level and leave it four or more years later with a bachelor's or graduate degree.

Due to transportation or scheduling conflicts, it is often difficult for these students to travel to either of the University of Houston's campuses "in town." Former upper-level universities, including Texas A&M – Corpus Christi and the University of Texas at Tyler, have made successful transitions to a four-year university and increased the overall college-going rate in their communities. UHCL can do the same while continuing to work closely with area community colleges and school districts.

The need exists for the downward expansion of UHCL, and I believe that it makes good economic sense not only for the future of our children and our workforce but also for the future growth of Texas, as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Mitchell", is written in a cursive style.

Bob Mitchell
President