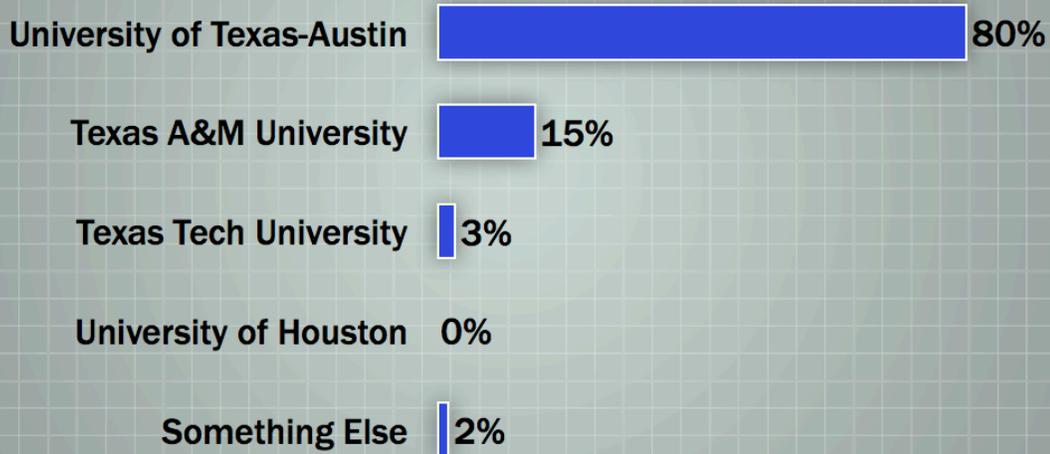


# “INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll  
for the week of November 18*

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

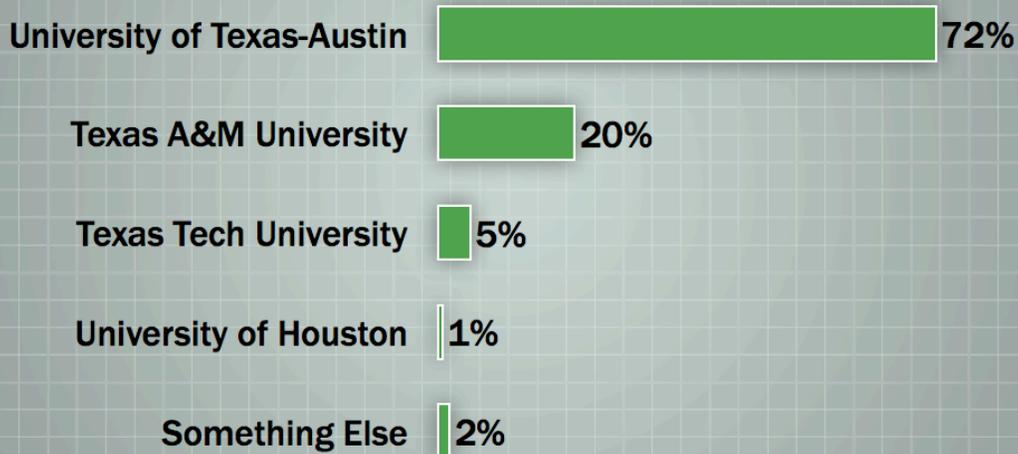
## Top public university in Texas?



Inside Intelligence is an informal survey of political and government insiders in Texas and is not meant to measure public opinion.

# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

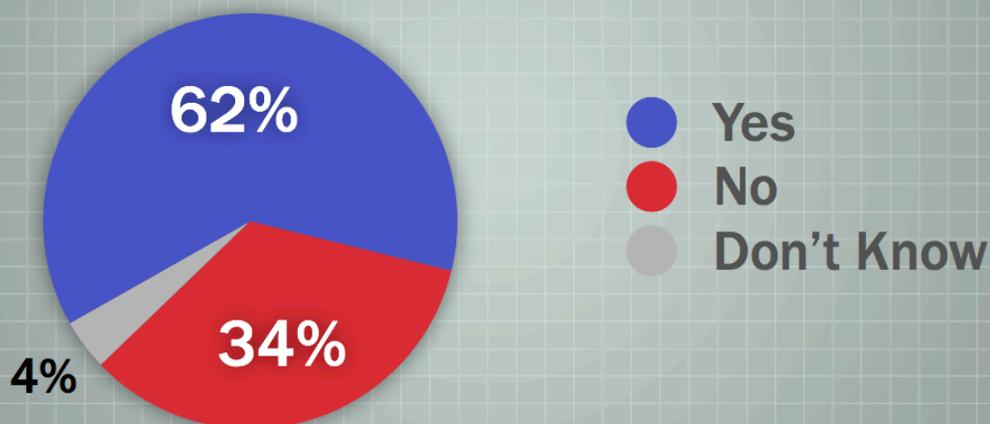
## Top university in 10 years?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

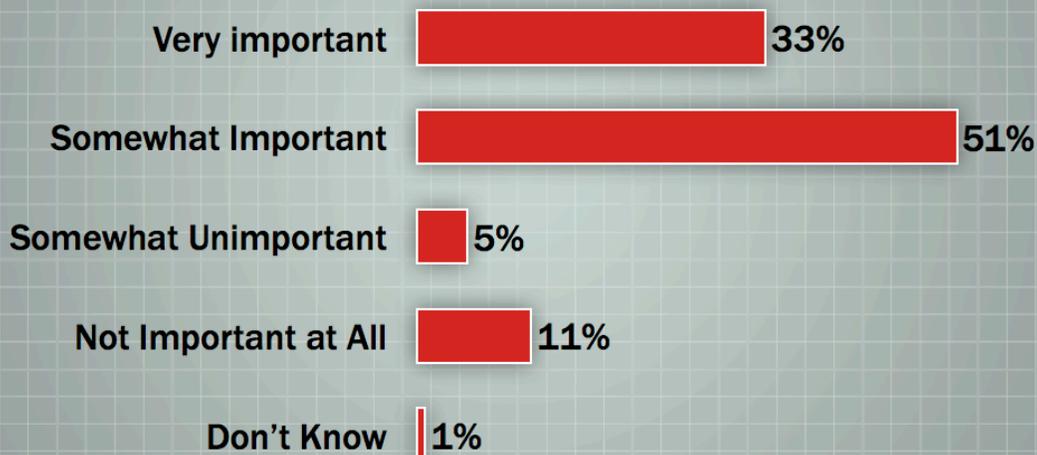
Does the UT regents vs. administration battle affect UT's quality?



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# INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

Are top athletic programs important to a university's success?



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## *What's the top public university in Texas?*

- "UT still on top, but Chancellor Sharp doing his best to have A&M catch up. However, A&M is still in catch up mode."
- "Last I checked, there are no jokes about the stupidity of Longhorns. Which reminds me, did you hear the Texas A&M library burned down? The saddest part was that half the books weren't colored in yet. The OU library burned down too. They lost their book."
- "Is this a real question? We all know the answer to this one.... even the people who answer something other than UT Austin know the answer to this one!"
- "And I didn't even attend the school..."
- "I can hear the groans & little sibling groans from the banks of the Brazos, but there's no argument here!"
- "As a Longhorn it pains me to say that UT Austin currently still has the better brand, but A&M has been doing amazing things in recent years and it's not obvious which campus today has the most high quality programs."
- "All around, not necessarily for a specific school/degree"
- "Though it's stagnating in unfortunate ways."
- "But the Aggies have significantly closed the gap..."
- "While I earned both my undergraduate and graduate degrees from UT Austin in the 1970s, I believe Texas A&M University has surpassed UT in terms of academic excellence and the overall student experience."
- "This is a pretty relative question. Folks will pick their alma mater for any number of reasons. Despite the UT and A&M propaganda machines, I would not recommend them for dog catcher training."
- "Is this a trick question of some sort?"
- "UT is the top one. Assuming you still consider it public, what with the decrease in state funding and the pushback when public servants try to hold it accountable."
- "UT is still considered the top public university in Texas from a national perspective. However, it is no longer the elite school it once was. Other universities are catching up."
- "But don't forget - UT Austin is still only #52 among national universities; #16 among public universities (behind Berkeley, UCLA and four other California schools!)"
- "A&M has surpassed UT in fundraising, enrollment, and now it has a deal with Israel. Hey Bevo, get off your..."
- "Picking Tech because someone had to make sure they got at least ONE vote. Guns up!"
- "There always has been and will be a perceived battle between UT and A&M; at the end of the day, they both

have centers of excellence and compliment one another."

- "Aggies might be riding high, but Texas is still one of the finest public universities in the nation."
- "As a transplant, the obsessive navel-gazing about UT and A&M amazes me. Texas has vast resources and could create multiple truly great universities. However, we have no

vision and will not make the sacrifices necessary to create such a system."

- "Duh."
- "Perry has managed simultaneously to build up A&M and tear down UT/ Austin, but Austin is still the better academic institution."
- "Amazing what Tech accomplishes with limited state funding."

### *What do you think will be the top public university in the state ten years from now?*

- "Texas Tech may make a run in its goal to be Tier One. But UT and A&M will always work to make sure they remain on top...and then there's everybody else."

- "Despite Perry and Sharp efforts, hard to have your flagship institution with Agriculture in the title."

- "Money, prestige and name do matter!"

- "Assuming that Texas citizens can purge the bad actors from the UT Regents, UT Austin will be able to make good use of its natural advantages and respond vigorously to the pace being set by the Aggies."

- "In 25 years, the top university will be 'something' else, with public universities unable to compete with private."

- "University of Texas at San Antonio (in terms of Tier I research institutions)"

- "Texas A&M has arrived! Chancellor John Sharp is putting the university on an exciting trajectory which will carry the school for many years to come."

- "See above"

- "SEC WILL CONTINUE TO BRING A&M to the top. UT will continue to wane. Their jealousy will grow as well"

- "As a prof at the soon-to-be-named UT university in the Rio Grande Valley, will be interesting to see how the integration between an 'emerging' research institution & the traditional commitment to a 'unique' student population will work."

- "See above"

- "UT will always be better than A&M. Sorry Aggies. I assume someone was making a funny when they included Tech and U of H on this list."

- "The sleeping giant in this case is U of H. The University of Houston will continue to rise as long as Houston continues to be the energy capital of the world, and the US continues to strive for energy independence."
- "UT has too much of a head start on the others."
- "UTSA"
- "Hopefully, in ten years, we will have begun the process of dismantling all the state's over-priced but low-performing universities and be moving toward post high school education sources that better meet the needs of students, communities and the job market. These universities are dinosaurs."
- "See response to question #1 re: Tech."
- "If you're located in College Station, that's a deal breaker on being the top university. Otherwise the Aggies are doing everything right and UT could learn quite a bit by following John Sharp's example of leadership and management."
- "Football in the SEC does not trump academics"
- "A&M has become far more aggressive in terms of expansion and international focus. UT needs to work hard to catch up."
- "It's unlikely that a regional or cow college will ever match the quality or prestige of the real Big State U."
- "Oops! The taint of Rick Perry shall haunt Texas A&M for a generation."
- "There won't be a 'top' public university in this state in ten years, just several 'middling' public universities."
- "Double duh."
- "A new governor will gradually replace the anti-UT Texas Regents appointed by Perry."
- "Increased state investment will propel Tech to the top nationally."

***Do you think the tension between UT's regents and UT-Austin's administration has any effect on the quality of the school?***

- "Does the tension between the Tea Party and the Business Republicans effect the quality of the Republican Party? Turds in the punch bowl always play a part in quality."
- "It has no impact on a day-to-day basis for now. However, if it continues, it could have some long term effects."
- "There is no doubt that the tension has effected the perception of the university and attracting top quality talent to work at UT."
- "Hard to keep good professors and top admin if there is this much fighting."

- "Don't know why you would appoint people to the board that are not interested in improving the institution, but apparently that is exactly what Perry is doing."
- "When you have so many Aggies on the board, the Aggie joke is finally about UT."
- "It reflects poorly on an institution that should be free of real or perceived political influence!"
- "It is impossible for the friction not to impact faculty recruiting."
- "What should have been an exercise in academic improvement became an Aggie war 'hymn' about the Longhorn Network."
- "BUT it's not a one way street as many in the media think. UT is not as efficient or as excellent as it thinks it is. A little more hunger, knowing it needs to stretch to a higher bar wouldn't hurt. The regents aren't all wrong here."
- "Not yet."
- "Seems Impossible for attempts by misguided board members to reduce quality of instruction and instructors not to have negative affects."
- "The effect on quality is negligible until the tension results in resignations/turnover at the University, especially if the current president is replaced. Then, the national and state perception is that education at UT will be co-opted by the Sandefer/Hall/Cranberg/Pejovich/Perry ideology."
- "This tension is always there, it only surfaces when the governor is not a big fan."
- "Little doubt the conflict has deterred some very qualified academics from applying to UT (or, for that matter, to other Texas universities)."
- "Heavens no. The school is the same as it has always been."
- "The political atmosphere at UT has forced the alumni to take sides. Professors are more concerned about keeping their jobs instead of teaching. Political wars at higher learning institutions always end up hurting the student body and the reputation of the university."
- "It brings down morale and it needs to stop."
- "What qualified faculty member would choose to come to a school with problems like UT's?"
- "The interference by certain members of the BOR has negatively impacted the public perception of the quality of UT."
- "The national perception that it is affecting quality is damaging by itself."
- "It hasn't effected the quality, but it had made all involved look foolish."
- "No real impact on the quality of the educational product being delivered. But a real distraction for the top administration."
- "Tough to know now whether it will effect quality; however, the headlines

and committee hearings certainly won't help in recruiting the most talented professors and researchers."

- "Anytime they are feuding inside, means they are not working together to make UT great."
- "Hopefully this changes with the new Governor."
- "It's not all football coaches. Professors will stay away if the political infighting continues."
- "These regents, at the encouragement of their governor (an aggie) have made EVERY attempt to undermine the University of Texas! They have come up with CRAZY ideas (place UT under Sunset review??), force UT to offer more ONLINE classes and a \$10,000 degree, FIRE our President! Wallace Hall is NOT the first wacko regent appointed by Perry! Prior to him we had a regent

who was a DISGRUNTLED FORMER PROFESSOR - a guy who wanted to DESTROY UT because they would not offer him tenure (by the way - he has openly BRAGGED that this was his reason for wanting to destroy UT as he perceives they destroyed his life!!)."

- "Harming our reputation and will make it much harder to attract top students and researchers and replace Bill Powers when he retires."
- "It seems like it would have to eventually."
- "It's difficult to quantify, but these internecine battles are not at all productive at best, and divert time""
- "Resources away from academics."
- "Could have long-term, corrosive effect on UT's ability to hire the top professors and researchers."

### *How important are top-rated athletic programs to the success of public universities?*

- "More so in the South than anywhere else in the country."
- "You cannot dismiss the impact of athletics on a college campus. Is it the most important thing? No. But it does play a role I the overall campus demographics and environment."
- "Winning athletic programs might boost the number of applicants to a university, but that doesn't necessarily mean those are higher quality applicants. Winning on the football field isn't the same as winning in the research lab."
- "Important, but not all encompassing like at UT."
- "Nothing brings more positive attention to school than a good athletic program."
- "Unfortunately, it's very important because it's all about money."
- "Definitely more important than they should be"
- "Sadly, sports overshadow academics. But let's not compound that fact by paying players. Yes, we pay coaches. And we pay professors."

But we need not pay students or student athletes."

- "Less important than they think they are. But what's worse is to put all the emphasis on them AND then tolerate mediocrity the way UT has done for the past several years. That's the worst!"

- "Athletics is an important component of an institutions branding and student life."

- "Unfortunately"

- "Reality is that title nine / women's athletics and other collegiate sports benefit tremendously"

- "The athletic programs help give the schools national attention, which is a good thing. And for UT, they also provide money to the school, which is also a good thing. For those schools that can't break even on athletics or don't field winning teams...sorry guys."

- "We go to college to learn not to play sports."

- "Duke, Gonzaga and others have benefited from the publicity around their basketball teams. But a public university has a captive pool of applicants, so should limit the priority given big-dollar athletics."

- "The role of athletics in education is unfortunate. The key ought to be about research."

- "Given the diminishing amount of state funding for state universities, private fundraising is key to maintaining the quality of public universities. A top rated athletic program enhances fundraising."

- "Its a huge side business that has almost no direct connection to learning. But damn it sure is fun to be big time!"

- "Success is largely dependent on two variables - (1) Can you attract students - and athletics helps, tremendously. (2) Can you keep you alums happy and involved - and athletics helps, tremendously."

- "Important, but A&M needs a defense!"

- "Very Important, but I think the Longhorn Network has done a lot of harm to UT's image."

- "Athletic success is more important than we would like to admit. It's the only frequent contact many alums have with the alma mater."

- "Swagger, press, prestige! Our academics are second to none! Sadly, a lot of ink is used to cover the football team rather than the Chemistry department (oh, that it was the other way around!)."

- "No one ever talks about the fearsome Golden Bears of Berkeley or the terrifying Chapel Hill Cavaliers, and yet these schools continue to thrive."

***Our thanks to this week's participants:*** Gene Acuna, Brandon Aghamalian, Jenny Aghamalian, Victor Alcorta, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Louis Bacarisse, Charles Bailey, Dave Beckwith, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore,

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