

## Questions:

1. Regents are not paid. What motivates them to serve?
2. What skills or attributes should regents have to be effective in their roles?
3. In 2018, an Abbott donor [said](#) that regents are appointed because they make political donations to the governor, and a Texas Tech donor [said](#) that that system's board is lacking in [gender](#)/geographic diversity. In 2017, Sen. West raised concerns about [ethnic diversity](#) on the UT board. Respectfully, what do you think of those statements and concerns?

## Answers:

### Chair of the University of Texas System Board of Regents, Kevin Eltife:

1. I think individuals who serve as regents are just like those who serve as trustees in other unpaid positions like school boards and other local or state boards and commissions. They view public service as both an honor and responsibility, and they want to give back to their community. They're committed to making the organizations they serve a better place.
2. Each individual brings a set of different skills to the table. Having a Board of Regents composed of individuals with different skill sets and perspectives is healthy and serves to benefit higher education. Most importantly, we must remember that we took on the responsibility with a commitment to serve the citizens of the Texas and to do everything possible to provide the highest quality, most affordable education possible. Students are the future of our state and country, and any opportunity to help them advance their education is a great honor.
3. I have had the privilege of serving under several governors. I was appointed by Governor Bush to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and I later served in the Texas Legislature under Governor Perry and Governor Abbott. I was also appointed by Governor Abbott to the UT System Board of Regents. I have witnessed governors work hard over many years to seek and appoint individuals to board positions who will do a very good job of serving the people of Texas. All three governors reached out to me to submit names when they were exploring geographical representation from East Texas. I do agree with Senator West that we need to seek more ethnic diversity at all levels of government.

### Chair of the University of Houston System Board of Regents, Tilman Fertitta:

1. It's about generosity, giving back to your school and believing in a cause greater than yourself. Regents are usually alumni who've had success in their careers or other aspects of life and they understand the role universities play in creating those opportunities for current and future students.
2. A passion to make a difference, which inevitably translates to success in life.
3. Diversity should always be a consideration. But at the end of the day it's about finding the most qualified person who has a passion to serve, has demonstrated success in life and will best represent the interests of an institution and I think the governor has made appointments to the UH board with those qualifications in mind.

**Chair of the Texas Tech University System Board of Regents, Tim Lancaster:**

1. I think we all serve because we want to give back to the university that has given us so much. I know for me personally, my education and experiences at Texas Tech set me on the path that opened doors to opportunities I would not have had without my education. I could never fully repay the university for all it has done for me. So serving on the board of regents is an honor and a privilege and one small way I can try to give back.
2. I think we all have the best interests of the Texas Tech University System and its universities in mind as we serve on the board of regents. And yet we all come from different backgrounds with interests and skill sets that help bring a different perspective on issues.
3. I think diversity on the board is important. Though we have diversity on our current board geographically, there is an opportunity to increase diversity in other areas as qualified people are identified to serve in the future.

**Chair of the University of North Texas System Board of Regents, Brint Ryan:**

1. As an alumnus of the University of North Texas, I have a passion for my alma mater. I want a degree from UNT to be valuable and meaningful, to help open doors and create opportunities for our graduates. As a businessman and as a resident of North Texas, I also see how our region and state benefit from affordable higher education opportunities with relevant degree programs that will help shape our workforce of the future. I believe that all of our board members offer unique insights and perspectives that are relevant and helpful as we lay out strategic plans for how the UNT System can best serve our region and state.
2. As regents we help shape policy and strategic priorities, while also providing broad financial oversight as part of our fiduciary duty. The Board also hires and evaluates the Chancellor and the Presidents. With those key duties in mind, regents should have experience and a track record for success in all of these areas – policy, strategic planning, financial management and personnel – and they may have achieved this through a broad variety of career experiences.
3. I can only speak for the UNT System Board of Regents, but I believe our board is effective and diverse in many ways – culturally, ethnically, from a gender standpoint and from a career background standpoint.

**Chair of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents, Charles W. Schwartz:**

1. An interest in higher education and a desire to serve the people of Texas, as well as a belief that education is the most important path to the future.
2. It takes a wide variety of skills – political and people skills, an understanding of the communities that make up a university system, a willingness to work, and a willingness to learn.
3. I have personally had dozens and dozens of discussions with Governor Greg Abbott about higher education in general and the Texas A&M University System in particular. Not once have we discussed political donations. I personally think it's not an issue.

**Chair of the Texas State University System Board of Regents, William F. Scott:**

1. I owe some of my success in business to the excellent education I received at Lamar University. I know many of my fellow Regents feel the same way about their education. Serving on a university governing board is a rewarding way for me to give back to the state, to ensure that young people have the same opportunities that I had as a college graduate.
2. Every Regent brings something unique to the board, but I think the most important attribute is a willingness to commit the time necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the appointment. Our students deserve nothing less.
3. It's not appropriate for me to comment on the Governor's appointments. I will say I am extremely proud of the diversity of our board, which currently includes three Hispanics, one Native American, and, until recently, one female African American Regent who was appointed to another higher education board.