

## Make UH a Tier One university — here's how

JAY H. STEIN, M.D.

In upstate New York, the University of Rochester realizes the dream nurtured by George Eastman, founder of the Kodak Corporation. In 1923, Eastman gave \$5 million to start what is now the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, moved the undergraduate campus from downtown to a site adjacent to the new medical school and began plans to start a new music school.

Further, on the day of his death, Eastman changed his will and gave his entire estate to the university. As a result of this bequest, for many years the university ranked in the top five 5 percent of private endowments. Today, the University of Rochester has federal research support of \$276 million a year and has passed Kodak as the city's number one No. 1 employer. Rochester offers an intriguing example of how what is now called a Tier I university was initially funded. These institutions award fifty 50 or more doctoral degrees a year, place high importance on research and receive \$50 million or more in annual federal research grants. In this country, we have about ninety 90 of these universities, both public and private schools. Recently, in Houston and throughout the state, there have been discussions about the importance of developing more Tier I institutions. Currently, the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M and Rice University are the only schools in Texas that warrant this designation. California and New York hold a substantial lead over other states, including Texas, in the development of Tier I universities. California has twelve 12 such

schools. The state made a huge investment in the University of California using public dollars, and as a result, nine of their ten 10 campuses meet the Tier I criteria. Five of these nine schools have an affiliated medical school as well. Three outstanding private institutions — California Institute of Technology, Stanford University and the University of Southern California — supplement the UC System. New York boasts six Tier I schools, all built with private funds. Except for the University of Rochester and Cornell, the other schools are in New York City, and each has an affiliated medical program. Up to now, Texas has not done well in developing Tier I universities. Now is the time to catch up. For that to happen, we need a cooperative, statewide approach, not a political or competitive winner-take-all contest. I suggest by the year 2020, there be four more Tier I institutions in Texas: the University of Houston; Texas Tech University; the University of Texas at Dallas; and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

To ensure success, strategic planning and new sources of funding will be needed. Going back to the Rochester example, George Eastman donated large amounts of money to that university 85 years ago. That's quite a head start. Today, most of the research dollars awarded to the University of Rochester go to the medical campus, as is often the experience with the other exceptional research universities in New York and California. With the exception of Texas Tech's Lubbock campus, none of the other Texas

schools has a medical school integrated into the main campus. Yet, there are fine medical schools in Houston, Dallas and San Antonio. Something needs to be done to change this alignment.

In Dallas and San Antonio, Permanent University Fund dollars should be the major source of funding. I also believe the California model — combining the undergraduate school and a medical school on the same campus — deserves consideration in San Antonio.

In the case of Texas Tech and the University of Houston, two public schools not eligible for PUF money, an alliance of the two could obtain new funds for growth from the Texas Legislature. I also suggest incentives for funding be coupled with private philanthropy in both institutions. Finally, a few more comments concerning the University of Houston, which now receives almost \$40 million a year in federal support, and already is on the cusp of being a Tier I university.

With success in the field of superconductivity and other areas, UH is the Texas university best positioned to advance to the next level.

New York City has five Tier I universities, while Chicago and Los Angeles each has three such schools. The time is now for Houston to move toward this goal and claim a second Tier I university.

Stein has held executive positions in medical schools in Texas, Oklahoma and New York. Most recently he served as executive vice president and executive dean at Baylor College of Medicine.