

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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October 30, 2017

Luis Zayas, Dean  
Jossianna Arroyo-Martinez, Professor  
Carlos E. Ramos Sharron, Assistant Professor  
Enrique R. Rodriguez-Alegria, Associate Professor

Francisco Gonzalez-Lima, Professor  
Cesar A. Salgado, Associate Professor  
Monica A. Jimenez, Assistant Professor

Dear Colleagues:

I share your pain over the devastation in Puerto Rico from the ravages of Hurricane Maria. Your letter vividly expresses your love for your “Borinquen preciosa,” and for the island’s deep suffering. As a fellow American and as a member of the UT family, I share in the heartbreak of the humanitarian crisis, the depths of which continue to be revealed.

Your letter identifies ways in which the UT community can aid those directly impacted by the hurricane. The Provost sought to identify students from Puerto Rico who might be affected and remains open to making academic accommodations available. The university’s counseling resources are also available to UT families and students struggling to make sense of the ongoing tragedy. Your suggestions of providing tuition waivers, emergency housing, semester residencies, waiver of fees for research projects, donation of surplus equipment at subsidized rates, or access to libraries, were considered, though determined to be ineffectual for the real needs of those suffering in Puerto Rico, either because of the point in the academic calendar in which we find ourselves, state laws, or UT’s contractual obligations.

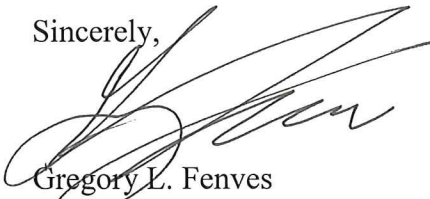
You also suggest possible interdepartmental, national, and international research efforts to focus on long-term solutions for the environmental vulnerabilities of the Caribbean. UT is open to those research collaborations. The Center for Space Research is engaged on researching Gulf and Caribbean weather phenomena to better predict and prepare for future weather disasters, and its work on weather forecasting, mapping ocean circulation, sea-level rise and ice sheet decline are key to understanding problems. This center’s important work will contribute to state and national efforts to develop solutions.

My office will continue to look for ways to be help in relief efforts and will be in frequent communication with the Steve Hicks School of Social Work to encourage student and faculty engagement to bring sustained relief to the people of Puerto Rico.

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Thank you for being involved with the university community and writing to me about this important issue for UT and the nation.

Sincerely,



Gregory L. Fenves  
President

GLF: cm