

## Texas Higher Education Board Votes No in April, and something in September; Next meeting is November



Jim Westgate, Lamar University, testifies before the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

The THECB voted to deny the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) the authority to offer an online Master of Science Education degree on Thursday, April 24, 2008. The editorial blog in the Austin American Statesman says "Creationism is fine, just don't call it Science". The primary problem with the proposal from the ICR was that it mislabeled the degree as one of science education, not religious education, which is what it is. Commissioner Raymund Paredes correctly called for a second staff review of the proposal after the first flawed review recommended it and strongly recommended against the proposal following that review. After the Committee on Academic Excellence affirmed his recommendation, the Board unanimously voted no. As the Statesman editors said, Texas can breathe a collective sigh of relief. But the challenge by creationists to include creationism or intelligent design in the state curriculum is not over. We must stay informed of the process for the review of the science TEKS.

The 21st Century Science Coalition is asking Texas scientists to support strong science standards for Texas public schools. Members of the Texas Academy of Scientists might consider visiting the website of the 21st Century Science Coalition, at [www.texasscientists.org](http://www.texasscientists.org) ( <http://www.texasscientists.org/> ), and signing their statement to the Texas State Board of Education supporting effective coverage of evolution in K-12 science classes.

The Texas Science Education Leadership Assoc. (TSELA) is sponsoring an **Evolution program** strand in the CAST (Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching) Nov. 6-8 in Ft. Worth. The speakers are from the University of Utah.

**The next THECB meeting and vote will be held in San Antonio on November 20-21, 2008. TAS needs to find experts to testify at each and every meeting.**

Our membership is urged to stay involved in this process in order to protect Science education in Texas. Please contact Sandra West, Texas State University, AAAS Representative, 512-245-3360 or Ray Mathews 512-936-0822 to volunteer to testify or to otherwise lend your support.