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President Diana Natalicio
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The winds of change appear to be blowing everywhere in this world...and changes appear to occur with greater frequency and greater force each day. Assumptions made with confidence last year, or even last week, are challenged today by events over which we often appear to have little control. Formerly safe harbors have become vulnerable or have disappeared entirely. Although such rapid change can lead to anxiety and insecurity, it also offers the potential for enormous opportunity.

Earlier this summer, I joined others at the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. to view the first film footage from the recently completed U.S.-Russian space mission: the Atlantis/Mir docking. The U.S. astronauts and the Russian cosmonauts were present to narrate. As the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Yuliy Vorontsov, spoke about this historic occasion, I was deeply moved not only by the remarkable technological achievement we celebrated, but by the capacity of the human spirit to adjust to and capitalize on rapidly changing contingencies. The avid competition for supremacy in space had, through intense human effort and good will, been converted into a highly successful partnership. Assumptions had been challenged and remarkable progress was achieved.

Meanwhile, on planet earth, we are horrified at the human toll exacted by warring factions in Africa and the former Yugoslavia, and the mass migration of populations from one place to another, seeking to improve their lives, or merely to survive. We witness the changing face of America and divisive public policy efforts to cope with these demographic changes, as have recently occurred with Proposition 187 in California and affirmative action debates in Washington, D.C. Regrettably, our society has not yet been able--or perhaps is not willing--to accept diversity as an asset rather than a liability. Although it is no longer safe to assume that we can spend a lifetime working, living, and interacting exclusively with individuals who look, act and think like us, there are many in our society who continue to seek the false security of exclusion. With its student demographics and growing national prominence, UTEP has an especially important opportunity--and obligation--to serve as an example of the power of diversity.

The Congressional elections of November 1994 have brought dramatic changes to the dialogue in Washington, and new battle lines have been drawn over the federal government's role in such areas as health and human services, the environment, science and engineering research, the arts and humanities, and education at all levels. Many federal agencies which have been supportive of UTEP's research and training initiatives are threatened with recissions that could have a profound effect on this institution and others.

In the business world, we hear regular reports of corporate mergers, downsizing, and re-engineering activity, much of which is attributed to competition arising from the ever-expanding global village. The security that previous generations experienced as they spent entire careers working for one employer in a single location has been replaced by the challenge of a series of career changes, with multiple employers in a variety of settings around the world. UTEP and other educational institutions must not only prepare graduates for this changing career scenario, but also create more flexible educational options for the continuing professional development of those already in the work force.

When most of us think about change, technology is often what comes to mind. Consider, for example, all of the technological advances that have been made in the area of communications and how these have affected nearly every aspect of our lives. The latest UTEP directory must now include not only telephone numbers, but fax numbers and e-mail addresses as well, and many of us communicate with each other almost exclusively via voice- or e-mail, never meeting face-to-face or even talking ear-to-ear. Whatever their academic major, all students today must be well equipped with computer skills, and UTEP must continually expand and upgrade its technology capacity and the professional development of its faculty and staff to maintain the competitiveness of our programs.

Sweeping changes have occurred in other areas of higher education. The demographics of student populations on most campuses have changed dramatically, with women and minorities comprising a majority of enrollments. Unlike yesterday's counterparts, most students today are employed either part- or full-time while attending college, and many are responsible for financing not only their own educations, but the day-to-day livelihood of their families as well. For them, the university is but one factor in very complex lives. Unlike their predecessors, they do not complete their baccalaureate degrees in the traditional four years, and they often do not remain at the same institution to complete their degree programs, as employment or other factors lead them elsewhere. In this context, traditional measures of student or institutional success--such as graduation rates--are highly misleading. Comparing the graduation rates of working class students at largely commuter institutions such as UTEP or UT-San Antonio with those of privileged students on residential campuses such as Duke or Princeton makes little sense...though apparently good copy. More meaningful would be to recognize that in addition to the 25% of UTEP students who graduate within six years, another 35% continue to be enrolled either here or at another Texas institution.

Higher education finance has also undergone profound changes, as universities compete with prisons and health care for the public dollar. Policy debates justify reductions in the state's spending per student by characterizing a university education as an individual benefit rather than a societal good, and students are thus expected to pay a greater share of the cost. Although public higher education in Texas continues to be a bargain when compared with other states, tuition and fees have increased substantially at UTEP and other public universities during the past several years. Ten years ago, the cost differential for 12 semester credit hours between

UTEP and the El Paso Community College was \$116; today it is close to \$400. To our price-sensitive student body, such increases are sufficient to affect enrollment decisions.

In another sense, higher education has been somewhat sheltered from the major changes that have swept through other sectors of our society, and policymakers and the general public have begun to notice. Increasingly, we hear the criticism that re-engineering has occurred everywhere--even in the federal government!--but not in higher education. Although such criticism may not be totally fair--we all know of successful efforts that have been made to achieve greater efficiency in our operations--it is nonetheless clear that all eyes are on us and the way we do our business, and the expectation is that if we do not begin to change our ways, legislatures and regulatory bodies will do it for us. Discussions in the Texas Legislature during the last session point to the growing interest in undergraduate instruction, faculty tenure, faculty workloads, length of degree programs, and other measures of performance. The message is clear: if we in higher education do not wish to be micromanaged from afar, we must manage ourselves better.

UTEP is perhaps better positioned than most institutions in Texas or nationwide to respond to such challenges. We have for many years engaged in serious self-analysis, and we have successfully defined an institutional mission that is responsive to the needs of the population of the region that we serve. We have faced squarely the criticism of those who resist change... and those for whom criticism of UTEP appears to represent a form of self-aggrandizement. We have had the courage to be true to our mission and to the values of achieving both access and quality in our academic programs. We have, in fact, been recognized as a national model of excellence, an institution whose success others seek to emulate.

1994-95 was another great year at UTEP. Our achievements continued to bring us national recognition, awards, and financial support. During the next few minutes I will try to summarize for you some of the highlights of the past year. As a preface, I should first assert the obvious: becoming nationally recognized as a model institution does not occur without the creative thinking and hard work of a large number of individuals on this campus--those on this stage and in the audience today--who have made a very special commitment to UTEP and our important regional mission. We are grateful to each and every member of the UTEP community whose dedication to this institution and the students we serve enables us to stretch our resources and increase our impact to the fullest.

The Texas Legislature was in session during 1994-95. No single event consumes more of our time and energy and has a greater potential impact on our future than a Texas legislative session. Although the initial budget projections for higher education were terrifying, the Legislature once again managed to demonstrate its commitment to higher education by restoring most--though not all--of the major cuts that had been proposed. Still, State funding represents approximately 40% of UTEP's total budget today, compared with more than 60% just 15 years ago.

Particularly disappointing this session was the fact that no funds were appropriated to provide salary increases for State employees. At UTEP, a successful effort was made to identify other

funding sources to award an average 3% merit-based salary increase to full-time faculty and staff, but dwindling reserves and students' resistance to escalating tuition and fees make such local efforts increasingly difficult. The best news emerging from the legislative session was new special item funding to invest in UTEP's infrastructure and a special appropriation to establish a pharmacy program in El Paso in cooperation with the UT-Austin College of Pharmacy. We thank the El Paso legislative delegation--Senators Montford and Rosson and Representatives McDonald, Haggerty, Moreno, Pickett and Serna--for their well-coordinated support of UTEP's agenda.

Major strides were made in academic program development during 1994-95, especially at the doctoral level. The first Ph.D. degrees in Computer Engineering were awarded; the doctoral program in Psychology admitted its first cohort of students; the Ph.D. Program in Environmental Science and Engineering was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and enrolled its first students this fall; the doctoral degree in Educational Administration passed the initial stages of Coordinating Board review and will be submitted for approval in October; and proposed Ph.D. degrees in Biological Science and History are ready for site review during 1995-96. This intense graduate program development activity has been made possible by the Legislature's support of the South Texas/Border Initiatives funding and UTEP's well-regarded research strengths in a variety of academic program areas. Although the pace of our doctoral program development might leave other institutions breathless, UTEP has the stamina to continue these successful efforts to capitalize on the window of opportunity that has opened for us.

UTEP also gained approval last year to offer several other new academic programs at the bachelor's and master's levels, and demonstrated the quality of its existing programs by subjecting them to rigorous accreditation review: both the Bachelor's of Social Work and the Master's in Public Administration were granted initial accreditation. Self-studies were also conducted in the Colleges of Engineering and Business Administration in preparation for re-accreditation review by their professional associations this year. And, a major self-study effort--led by Jon Amastae, with able assistance from Sally Andrade, and the participation of a large number of UTEP faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends--will serve as the basis for UTEP's overall accreditation review this year by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The most visible changes occurring on the UTEP campus during 1994-95 involved construction and renovation of facilities. Old Main, constructed in 1917 as the first building on this campus, is undergoing a complete interior and exterior restoration, supported by South Texas/Border Initiatives funding from the Texas Legislature. This \$2 million project is due for completion in 1996 when the Sociology and Anthropology programs will resume teaching and research activities in their beautifully refurbished home.

Two major teaching facilities, the Liberal Arts and Physical Science Buildings, are undergoing phased renovation to minimize the disruption of their heavily scheduled use. Two large lecture rooms in Physical Science have been given a new look, and renovations in the classroom wing of

the Liberal Arts Building were completed this summer, with additional work to be continued next year.

Planning has been completed and construction contracts approved to begin work on the new classroom building, which has been named the Undergraduate Learning Center. This 125,000 sq. ft. multi-media teaching and learning facility, which will be constructed on the site of the old swimming pool, women's gym, and tennis courts, was introduced to the UTEP community at a "virtual reality" groundbreaking created by our talented News & Publications staff last spring. This splendid facility--and the pedestrian mall and amphitheater between it and the Centennial Museum--will serve as a new focal point on the campus.

Ground has already been broken for construction of the new indoor swimming pool complex in Charlie Davis Park. Funded by a student recreation fee, this complex will feature both recreational and lap pools. Plans call for this new swimming pool complex to serve as the anchor for the development of additional recreational facilities in Charlie Davis Park, including softball and soccer fields, tennis courts, and running paths.

Many other major renovation projects were completed last year: the Border Biomedical Research Center biostatistics lab and the computer laboratory in Bell Hall; the English Education classroom in Hudspeth; space in the Education Building to accommodate the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence and its \$15 million Urban Systemic Initiative grant; refurbishing the Academic Services Building; and more than \$350,000 in renovations to comply with American Disabilities Act requirements across the campus. Wynn Anderson, Juan Ontiveros, Bert Navar, Charlie Devillier, and all of the Facilities Services staff are to be congratulated on the remarkable job they have done in managing UTEP's extensive construction and renovation portfolio during the past year.

UTEP was fortunate to be able to purchase the Stanton Medical Building adjacent to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, near downtown El Paso. Our fast-growing health professions education programs (physical and occupational therapy, nurse-midwifery, nurse practitioner, public health, and now pharmacy), under the fine leadership of Dean Pat Castiglia, have exceeded the capacity of the Nursing and Health Sciences facility, and we had begun to search for lease space. Acquiring this fine professional office building instead has enabled us to provide much-needed expansion space for these programs while maintaining a revenue stream from other building tenants to cover maintenance and operation costs.

Another highly visible accomplishment during the past year was our successful effort to eliminate a substantial deficit in the intercollegiate athletics budget and to lay a solid financial foundation upon which the future of this program can be built. The response of the UTEP and El Paso communities to the threat of losing UTEP athletics was swift and decisive. More than \$700,000 in special contributions were pledged within a remarkably short time, thanks to the extraordinarily creative efforts--and plain old hard work--of Jan Cavin, John Thompson, the Development Office and Athletic Department staffs, and a large number of dedicated

community volunteers. And, in the spirit of this year's athletic fundraising theme--"A Winning Team Beats with One Heart"--the entire UTEP administrative team has worked together to develop long-range strategies which will ensure that this athletic budget crisis will not be repeated...at least not on my watch!

Future challenges will include meeting our commitment to expand competitive athletic opportunities for women students at UTEP. Funds have been set aside this year to hire a women's soccer coach who will shepherd UTEP into NCAA and WAC women's soccer competition in 1996. We have also been hard at work preparing for the expansion of the Western Athletic Conference, which, with sixteen schools, becomes the largest conference in the country. This expansion offers UTEP great opportunities for heightened visibility in Texas with the addition of Rice, TCU and SMU to the WAC schedule.

Athletics was not the only beneficiary of generous donations from friends and supporters of the University last year. Overall, the Development Office accepted nearly \$8.5 million (\$8,401,232 million) in new gifts, representing a 67% increase in private giving to UTEP, and a 41% increase in alumni gifts. Twenty-two new endowments were established, totaling nearly \$2 million. For this outstanding achievement, UTEP received a CASE Excellence Award for Exemplary Performance in Fundraising, the only comprehensive university in the U.S. to be so recognized. The help of our many friends and supporters in such organizations as the Development Board, Alumni Association, President's Associates, Matrix Society, Thelma White Network, Miner Foundation, and Woman's Auxiliary is gratefully acknowledged.

The Alumni Association continued to grow with the establishment of chapters in San Antonio and Los Angeles/Orange County. Future growth will be enhanced by the development of a computerized alumni database, the issuance of an Alumni Association credit card (which generates for UTEP a percentage of every dollar charged), the creation of an Alumni Association home page on the World Wide Web; the publication of an Alumni Directory, and the leadership role of alumni in such major events as the Season of Lights, Homecoming, and Minerpalooza. We thank Marcia Cohen for her outstanding work in staffing alumni affairs, and we welcome Yolanda Ingle, herself a UTEP alumna, who will assume these responsibilities as Marcia takes on the challenge of annual fundraising, including athletics.

UTEP's sponsored project activity during the past year was also record-breaking: more than \$37 million new dollars were awarded to UTEP during 1994-95. In FY 1994, UTEP ranked fourth among Texas universities in overall sponsored projects expenditures, with only Texas A&M, UT-Austin, and the University of Houston ahead of us. This ranking is all the more remarkable because we have had to overcome a history of external impediments to our progress, including Coordinating Board restrictions on graduate program development at UTEP and related State funding disparities. Thanks are due to all of the UTEP faculty and staff members whose excellent proposals--more than 350 last year!--enable UTEP to compete successfully for grant funds, and to Julie Sanford, Claudine Riccillo, Florence Dick and others in the Office of Sponsored Projects for their excellent technical assistance and support.

Among major grants awarded to UTEP during the past year is a \$6.5 million, five-year grant from NASA to establish on this campus the Pan American Center for Earth and Environmental Science (PACES). Based in the Center for Environmental Resource Management and supporting UTEP's doctoral programs in Geological Sciences, Computer Engineering, and Environmental Science and Engineering, PACES will contribute to NASA's Mission to Planet Earth by maintaining a database of remote sensing, geophysical, geological, and environmental data focused on the southwestern U.S. and northern Mexico region. Scott Starks in Engineering directs PACES, and Randy Keller (Geology) and Dan Cooke (Computer Science) are primary collaborators in this exciting interdisciplinary effort.

The Colleges of Science and Education recently received a five-year, \$4.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation to establish the El Paso Partnership for Excellence in Teacher Education which will transform the preparation of mathematics and science teachers in this region. The cooperation between these two colleges is exemplary, and Deans Jack Bristol and Arturo Pacheco are congratulated for their fine work and the national recognition that it has achieved.

UTEP has been awarded a grant of more than \$2 million from NASA to serve as one of seven Network Resource and Training sites in the nation. The purpose of this project, under Mike Kolitsky's able direction, is to substantially increase the use of Internet resources by faculty and students at UTEP and five partner institutions. Research and teaching will be enhanced through media such as e-mail, electronic forums such as newsgroups, and World Wide Web home pages for courses and research topics.

UTEP's History Department received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to work with their colleagues at the El Paso Community College to revise the required U.S. history survey course around the common theme of immigration to the U.S. and the struggles of diverse peoples to define a place for themselves in the larger society. Although this approach to U.S. history seems naturally suited to the El Paso context, predictions are that its appeal will extend far beyond this region. Charles Ambler, who leads this effort, and history faculty at both institutions are to be commended for the spirit of innovation and cooperation which characterizes this project.

Through a major grant from the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, faculty in Civil, Metallurgical and Materials, and Electrical and Computer Engineering are establishing a FAST Center for basic research to improve the reliability and maintainability of aerospace structures--"aging aircraft" to you and me. Collaborating with UTEP in this Center are NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories, and Texas A&M. Civil Engineering faculty members Roberto Osegueda and Carlos Ferregut are director and co-director of this new Center.

UTEP is a charter member of the newly established Center for the Study of Western Hemispheric Trade, together with U.T. Austin, Texas A&M, and Texas A&M International universities. A \$10 million grant from the Department of the Treasury supports faculty and student research into hemispheric economic policy; commodities, manufacturing, and services; and tariffs and customs. Thanks to the good work of Dean Frank Hoy in the College of Business Administration and Manny Pacillas in the Texas Centers for Border Economic and Enterprise Development, UTEP is playing a major role in this multi-university consortium. In addition to supporting research, this grant will enhance UTEP Library collections and permit the establishment of endowed professorships in Western Hemispheric trade policy and economic development.

The Computer Science and Computer Engineering programs received a five-year, \$1.2 million grant to enhance student learning opportunities through the establishment of affinity groups in such areas as software engineering, communications and signal processing, and image processing applications. And, the Psychology Department has received a major multi-year grant from the National Institute of Mental Health that will support research on a broad range of mental-health issues of special interest to the bilingual and bicultural environment of the US-Mexico border region, and enhance infrastructure support for the department's doctoral program.

Particularly satisfying have been individual grants to new UTEP faculty members such as Ann Quiroz Gates in Computer Science, for her work on monitoring software through integrity constraints; Rene Villalobos in Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, to develop an integrated environment for the assembly of surface mounted devices; Scott Michaelson of the English Department, for his work on indigenous American anthropologies; Chitta Baral in Computer Science for investigations into a systematic approach to reasoning about actions and change; and Michael Topp of the History Department, for research on Italian immigrant syndicalists.

UTEP's grant activity during the past year extended to our many community outreach efforts and cultural programs as well. UTEP helped commemorate World War II on the home front in El Paso, with events sponsored by the National Endowment and the Texas Committee for the Humanities, including a public radio series, museum and library exhibits, a documentary video, and public lectures and discussions. The Texas Committee on the Arts supported the Dinner Theatre's production of Tycoon and the Playworks Festival in Theatre Arts. In addition, we received AmeriCorps grants for two community service projects.

UTEP's outreach efforts to the surrounding region continued to grow in 1994-95: the school-based primary care clinics we have established in Ysleta, Fabens, San Elizario and Montana Vista through the Institute for Border Community Health Education, in cooperation with Texas Tech and other partners; the highly successful Mother-Daughter program, which this year expanded to Canutillo, Fabens and San Elizario School Districts, and--in collaboration with the Rotary Club of El Paso--added a Father-Son component; the environmental education programs conducted in various colonias by UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management and students in Civil Engineering and other academic programs; the Upward Bound program which affords high-risk high school students the opportunity to strengthen their academic skills; the

archaeology field school in San Elizario which complements the Mission Trail and other Lower Valley development efforts; and the highly successful Center for Lifelong Learning whose membership growth and program development are sure signs of the importance of this program to El Paso's senior community.

Each year, UTEP offers area residents a broad array of cultural and arts programs through the Music, Art, and Theatre Arts Departments, the Centennial Museum, the Library, the Union Programs Office and the Dinner Theatre. This year, numerous programs were also presented in the Special Events Center, including such popular latino recording artists as Juan Gabriel, Vicente Fernandez, Luis Miguel, Santana, Julio Iglesias and Mana. The Rolling Stones rolled through El Paso much to the delight of the 40,000 fans who attended their concert in the Sun Bowl, and intercollegiate athletics offered sports fans exciting football, women's volleyball, and men's and women's basketball and track events throughout the year.

The Division of Professional and Continuing Education has expanded to three trimesters per year, and course offerings and enrollments continue to grow. The rapid expansion of its business and industry training programs underscores the major role that UTEP plays in fostering this region's economic growth and development. Other UTEP programs which serve as resources to regional development include the Family Business Forum and the Franchise Center in the College of Business Administration, and IM³ and the Texas Centers for Border Economic and Enterprise Development.

The UTEP campus hosted numerous national conferences during the past year, with coordination provided by Nancy Wacker in Professional and Continuing Education. We were especially honored to have been asked by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to host a regional conference on science education and scientific literacy, which brought to the UTEP campus, Dr. Jack Gibbons, President Clinton's Science Advisor; Neal Lane, Director of the National Science Foundation; France Cordova, Chief Scientist at NASA; and other nationally prominent figures in the science/technology community.

Texas Western Press had an outstanding year, with several very successful publications and the highest sales revenues in its 45-year history. The press's beautiful book, Jose Cisneros: An Artist's Journey, was selected by Chancellor Bill Cunningham as his 1994 holiday gift to friends and supporters of the U.T. System, and we are delighted that he has chosen our recent publication, Tom Lea: An Oral History, for his 1995 holiday gift. Congratulations and special thanks to Jack Bristol, who directs the press during lulls in his deandy duties, and to Marcia Daudistel, the Press staff, and editorial board members who bring increasing distinction to UTEP through their fine work.

The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, under the able direction of Susana Navarro, continues to expand its efforts to reform K-16 education, particularly in math and science, and to strengthen the pre-collegiate preparation of El Paso area youngsters. Inasmuch as 86% of UTEP's students are from El Paso, and an estimated 70% of area teachers have received one or

more degrees from UTEP, this partnership will benefit us all, as it achieves its promise of raising the academic performance level of all young people in this region.

The culmination of several years' work with school districts and the El Paso Community College occurred in 1994-95 when new admission requirements were adopted, together with a commitment from all school districts to offer all students the full range of courses which will be required for admission to UTEP. Although some critics have advocated the instant and unilateral imposition of admission requirements, the approach that has been taken to partner with the schools from which we draw a large majority of our students is clearly more responsible...and far more likely to lead to long-term positive outcomes. In an isolated and undereducated community such as El Paso, this University must work with our colleagues in K-12 education to increase the academic achievement of all young people, and that is precisely what the El Paso Collaborative is working so hard--and so successfully--to do.

Far less visible--but no less important--than the accomplishments that I have just summarized are the many behind-the-scenes efforts that are constantly undertaken at UTEP to improve the quality of our service to students, to our public, and to each other. Last year, for example, a number of innovations were introduced in Enrollment Services, including the expansion of the capacity and functions of the touch-tone registration system. We acknowledge with appreciation the leadership provided by Robert Stakes who served as the first Dean of Enrollment Services, and we welcome Sylvia Rodriguez, his successor. The Student Health Center entered into a partnership with Texas Tech and Thomason Hospital to expand medical and laboratory services for UTEP students; the Disabled Student Services Office developed a number of new programs for UTEP's growing disabled student population; Career Services automated its operations to facilitate communication between UTEP students and the large number of employers who wish to recruit them; and Information and Telecommunications Services has worked to extend e-mail access to all faculty, staff, and students.

There are many unsung heroes and sheroes on the campus. UTEP's telephone operators deftly handle some 17,000 calls per month from all parts of the world, either answering inquiries themselves or referring callers to appropriate offices for further information. The benefits staff in Human Resources provides personalized service to ensure that all staff, faculty and retirees' health insurance and related needs are addressed. The Campus Police Department not only provides us a safe and secure environment in which to work, but responds to a variety of service calls--more than 2800 last year--for help with such problems as dead batteries and keys locked in vehicles. Our well-being is also the primary concern of the Environmental Health and Safety staff who were recently commended for operating one of the best such programs in the State. Our Facilities Services staff work tirelessly to ensure that our beautiful campus is clean and well maintained, and their extra efforts to make our many special occasions, such as the Season of Lights, even more special are greatly appreciated. And, speaking of special occasions, the UTEP Catering Department continues to be a source of great pride to all of us.

All of the 1994-95 accomplishments that I have attempted to summarize here have one common purpose: to create a robust learning environment for the students who come to us with their dreams. From the veteran members of the UTEP family whom we honored today to the new faculty and staff members whom we welcome this fall, all of us must be committed to serve students representing a wide variety of backgrounds, interests and needs, with an educational experience that meets the highest competitive standards. This commitment requires not only quality educational and research programs, and up-to-date facilities and technology, but also an understanding of UTEP and its mission, and an attitude of respect toward our students, their challenges, and their aspirations. All of us here today are privileged to have had many opportunities ourselves; we are especially privileged to be able to participate in the human development that occurs every day on this campus. We, in turn, have an obligation to do all that we can to ensure that others have similar opportunities.

A few weeks ago, I received a letter from a UTEP graduate, who is now a professor of history at The University of Georgia. His letter, which conveyed to me a copy of his most recent book, stated:

"My mother, who still resides in El Paso, has occasionally sent me articles about the on-going debate over open admissions and academic opportunity, and I wish you every success in formulating policies that will benefit as many members of the community as possible. At one point in my undergraduate career I was on academic probation, and I consider myself very lucky that I attended an institution that was willing to provide me with a second chance."

That, my friends and colleagues, is precisely why we are here, and why our work at UTEP is so tremendously important. . . and satisfying.

Thank you for being here.