

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
CONVOCATION PROGRAM
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1997
3:00 P.M. UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING CENTER
UTEP DRUM LINE AT THE ENTRY PRIOR TO CONVOCATION**

As Given

We celebrate today the grand opening of this splendid facility, UTEP's Undergraduate Learning Center. Begun in 1993 with the appropriation of \$15 million by the 73rd Texas Legislature as part of the South Texas/Border Initiatives, this facility serves as a strong symbol of UTEP's fundamental commitment to meet the present and future educational needs of undergraduate students. Undergraduates represent 85% of UTEP's total student population, and in both numbers and institutional mission, they are our primary constituents. This grand new facility is a tribute to them and their educational dreams.

This is a building of contrasts. Modern materials have been employed to convey the traditional Bhutanese architecture of this building, and multi-media technology will support our traditional values and commitment to serve the residents of this region with the best possible opportunities to pursue their educational aspirations. Even this presentation today attempts to tie together a university tradition—Convocation—and the robust technology now available to enhance it.

Like most such large-scale building projects, this one has involved many more individuals than we can possibly recognize, however faithful our memories or good our intentions. At the risk of overlooking someone whose contributions to this facility were significant, I want to take a moment to recognize a number of people who have made such contributions. First, I am pleased to recognize members of El Paso's delegation to the 1993 Texas Legislature who helped provide the funding for the design and construction of the building through the South Texas/Border Initiatives. [We are also pleased to recognize members of El Paso's current legislative delegation who are with us today.]

Several El Pasoans who were instrumental in ensuring that UTEP was included in the South Texas Border Initiatives are with us today: Patricia Macias, Roberto Perez, and Dolores Briones. Other members of this group of supporters, affectionately known as the "Fab Five," were Alicia Chacon and Ric Rios, and we are pleased that René Rios, Ric's widow, joined us today as well.

This beautiful building's Border Bhutanese design was inspired by the talent and creativity of an El Paso architect, David Alvidrez, with interior design by his wife and partner, Maggy Alvidrez.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board staff assisted UTEP in gaining approval to proceed with the project. Representing the Coordinating Board today are El Pasoan Carlos

Villa, Coordinating Board member, and Dr. Don Brown, newly appointed Texas Commissioner of Higher Education. We thank you for being with us on this joyous occasion.

Many members of UTEP's faculty and staff played major roles in conceptualizing and planning this building. We thank them for their good work.

As all of us on the campus watched this glorious edifice take shape, there were a number of individuals who were watching even more closely: staff members of the UT System's Office of Facilities Planning and Construction. We would especially like to recognize today:

Greg McNicol, Project Manager

Stan Scott, Jr., Resident Construction Manager

Fernie Najera, Construction Inspector

Charles Chaumont, Senior Landscape Architect

Philip Shoemaker, Associate Director of Project Management,

and Dr. James A. Broaddus, Director, of the Office of Facilities Planning and Construction of the U.T. System.

We are also pleased to recognize representatives of Banes General Contractors and the many subcontractors who contributed to this building's successful completion.

Even the landscaping surrounding this building is special: 43 distinct species, all native to the southwestern U.S. and northern México, and not a single cactus. We thank to Wynn Anderson for his abiding commitment to make us all better aware of the variety and special beauty of desert plants.

Early on, we recognized that this building would surely be beautiful, but we also knew that to make it fully functional, faculty members would have to be engaged in preparing courses that would be especially designed to capitalize on the state-of-the-art learning technology that is available here. Steve Riter, Mike Kolitsky, Henry Ingle, the deans, and department chairs identified a group of faculty members who were invited to work during the past year on the development of courses which would incorporate the technological capabilities of this facility. Course development in most cases also involved professional development of faculty, and I am pleased to recognize and express appreciation to the faculty members who were willing to invest their time and talents on this new venture.

A very special feature of this building is a stunning silk tapestry which was especially made by a group of Bhutanese monks at the request of Lt. Col. Kado, Aide to their Majesties The Queens of Bhutan, who also happened to be the father of a UTEP Electrical Engineering major, Sonam Topgay. A year or so ago, Col. Kado telephoned me from Bhutan to talk about his son's academic progress, and he asked whether there was anything that he could do for UTEP. This magnificent tapestry is the result of that conversation across 12 time zones. Eight Bhutanese monks worked five months to produce this masterpiece, and Col. Kado personally delivered it to El Paso last spring. No RFP, no bids, no contract, not even a proper handshake...just good old-fashioned trust. Col. Kado could not be with us today, but we are

pleased to welcome his son, Sonam, and two other sons, Kinzang and Phuntsho, who are new UTEP students this fall.

As we leave the Convocation ceremony today, you will receive a copy of a keepsake which contains photographs of this building and the tapestry as well as an article about the tapestry's symbolism written especially for this occasion by Dr. Michael Aris, Senior Research Fellow in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies in St. Antony's College at Oxford University. Dr. Aris, who once served as tutor to the Bhutanese royal family, is recognized as a world authority on Buddhist emblems. He is well acquainted with the UTEP campus and regrets very much not being able to be with us for today's celebration.

There are undoubtedly those who may be wondering why, at a time when UTEP has been working so hard to establish new doctoral programs, we would focus our attention and capital funding priorities on a facility dedicated to undergraduate teaching and learning. The fact is that undergraduate education is and always has been the focus of most activity on this campus. 85% of our 15,000 students are undergraduates, and three-fourths of the organized classes we offer each semester are at the undergraduate level. In terms of effort alone, UTEP faculty and staff spend most of their time, talent and energy on creating opportunities for residents of this region to gain their first university degree.

Who are these students? This fall, 15,166 students enrolled at UTEP, approximately the same number as a year ago. The good news is that freshman and new transfer student enrollments have grown, signaling that more El Pasoans are pursuing higher education at a time when they will increasingly need at least a bachelor's degree to gain the kind of employment that will enable them to lead productive and satisfying lives. 84% of our students are from El Paso County, another 8% come from Mexico, most commuting daily from Ciudad Juarez. 54% are women and 66% are Hispanic. More than half are the first in their families to attend college.

UTEP's Hispanic student population has brought considerable attention to the campus. Widely reported U.S. Department of Education statistics reveal that UTEP ranks second among all U.S. colleges and universities in the number of Hispanic graduates. In specific disciplines, UTEP ranks second in the nation in Hispanic graduates in Business, Engineering, and the Physical Sciences, and first in the Health Sciences.

This national media attention has undoubtedly contributed to a rapid rise in the number of recruiters who come to UTEP to interview our graduates, a 20% increase this past year alone. Workforce diversity continues to be a high priority for most employers, and UTEP is becoming well known to recruiters as a rich source of highly talented and academically well prepared graduates. Companies such as Intel, Xerox, J C Penney, Magnatek, and Nortel have recently designated UTEP a key institution for their recruiters because of the quality of our students and programs, joining such long-standing employers as IBM, Boeing, Exxon, KPMG Peat Marwick, and Delphi General Motors.

Thanks to the fine work of Briane Carter and her staff, Career Services has developed an active web site and other applications of technology which facilitate communication between UTEP students and their future employers.

Many UTEP students have also successfully secured co-op and internship positions during their undergraduate studies with such firms as Raytheon, Anheuser-Busch, Eureka, and Texas Instruments, where they gain outstanding opportunities for professional development and where they spread the word about the quality of UTEP students. A large number of companies have expressed interest recently in initiating or expanding their co-op opportunities for UTEP students, thereby ensuring for themselves an early association with some of our most outstanding students.

UTEP students have excelled in major national contests this past year as well.

Two UTEP teams tied for first place among more than 200 original entries in the Disney Imagineering competition. These six students, representing UTEP programs in Business, Engineering, Computer Science, Art, and Psychology, and mentored by Sylvia Piñon in the College of Engineering and Rafael Fajardo in the Art Department, created original designs for Disney attractions which were judged best among all other entries, the first time ever that two teams from the same university tied for first place! Since our students' designs are now the property of Disney, we may one day find ourselves riding--with our grandchildren, of course!--through attractions inspired by these talented UTEP students.

A team of UTEP Computer Science students, with Chitta Baral as their faculty mentor, won first prize in a major national robotics competition at the International Association for Artificial Intelligence conference in Providence, Rhode Island this summer. UTEP's robot "Diablo" defeated robots developed by teams of students from universities such as Swarthmore, Dartmouth and Georgia Tech in performing a complex task--for a robot at least--of vacuuming confetti from a two-room apartment filled with a variety of obstacles...I guess you could say that we swept away the competition! Congratulations to Chitta Baral and the UTEP Computer Science student team members: Luis Floriano, Aaron Hardesty, Tran Son, and Monica Nogueira.

Individual UTEP students also excelled during the past year, bringing honor to the university. Richard Pineda, a graduate student in Communication, was selected after rigorous competition as a member of the United States National Debate Team. Together with his fellow team members from Bates, Rice, and Emory universities, Pineda represented the U.S. in debates across the United Kingdom and Japan.

There are two major factors in student success at UTEP: the talents and motivation that students bring to the university, and the quality of the academic programs that we offer to them. Judging from our students' success in national competitions and in the job market, I think it is

safe to say that UTEP enrolls a large number of talented and highly motivated students. Unlike students in more affluent university settings, they successfully juggle jobs and family obligations, volunteer for community service, and compete for national prizes, while making steady progress toward their degrees. UTEP's responsibility is to ensure the quality of their degree programs through the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty, the availability of first-rate facilities and equipment (exemplified in this fine new building), and an attitude on the part of all faculty and staff that each of us plays a critical role in student success.

UTEP received strong external validation of the quality of our academic programs during the past year. After a comprehensive self-study and review process, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools re-affirmed UTEP's ten-year accreditation, and issued special commendations for a number of programs. All programs in Engineering were re-accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), programs in the College of Business by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and Computer Science programs by the Computer Science Accreditation Commission (CSAC). Although these accreditation review processes require considerable time and effort on the part of many faculty and staff members, it is important--and extremely satisfying--to measure UTEP against national benchmarks.

Major strides were made during the past year in achieving UTEP's goal of offering additional doctoral programs to residents of this region. The first Ph.D. degrees were awarded in Psychology and Materials Science and Engineering, and the first student cohort was enrolled in the new doctoral program in Educational Leadership & Administration. Approval was granted to inaugurate a new Ph.D. degree in Biology, with a specialization in Pathobiology, and the first students are enrolled in that program this Fall. In the health sciences, programs in Physical and Occupational Therapy were officially transferred to UTEP from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, and a new cooperative Pharmacy program was established in partnership with UT. Austin.

Two new centers were created to support academic programs and to increase UTEP's capacity for community outreach: The African-American Studies Center directed by Maceo Dailey, and the Public Policy Research Center directed by Dennis Soden. The activities of these centers have already achieved high visibility on campus and in the community, thanks to the able leadership, creativity and energy of their directors.

At the undergraduate level, one of the most significant achievements of the past year has been the strengthening of ties between UTEP and the El Paso Community College. As tuition and fee costs at the two institutions diverge, more and more students are likely to begin their undergraduate degree programs at the Community College, a pattern which is increasingly prevalent across Texas. As a result, UTEP has worked to develop a smoother pathway from the community college to UTEP for those students who are ready and able to progress toward a bachelor's degree. Those efforts, spearheaded by an articulation committee whose UTEP members include Maggy Smith, Sylvia Rodriguez, Bob Webking, and Andy Swift, include reinforcing UTEP's advising presence on the community college campuses, eliminating

unnecessary impediments to the transfer of credits, and completing the technological links required to transmit academic records electronically between the two institutions. In addition, with financial support from Coca-Cola and SunWest Bank, UTEP has established scholarships for El Paso Community College transfer students. The first ten of these scholarship recipients were recently selected from a pool of 89 applicants, and the large number of applicants and the quality of their academic records strongly reinforce our resolve to seek support for additional scholarships in the future.

Major strides were also made during the past year to re-direct our attention from teaching to student learning, from inputs to student outcomes. Thanks to the leadership of Provost Steve Riter and the deans, and with the help of the NSF-supported Model Institution for Excellence program, many UTEP faculty have participated in professional development seminars and workshops on such topics as active and cooperative learning and outcomes assessment. Faculty teams are working together, not only to prepare new courses for the multi-media environment of this facility, but also to develop innovative strategies to integrate curricula and to foster a coherent learning experience for UTEP's non-traditional student population.

One of the major challenges of the past year--and indeed an ongoing challenge--is integrating programs in Academic Affairs with those in Student Affairs. For far too long, at UTEP and most other universities, there has been a disconnect between what is thought to be students' basic academic work and student development activities, which are often viewed as "extracurricular." In today's university context, especially in metropolitan settings where non-traditional students are the norm, it is the responsibility of all faculty and staff members, whatever their organizational locus, to create an institutional environment that is supportive of student success. To do that requires open communication and careful coordination across all units that directly--and even indirectly--serve students. Although much additional work remains to be done, progress has been made on this front during the past year.

Spreading the word about UTEP and ensuring that all potential students have the information they need to make intelligent decisions about their choice of institution, academic program, financial aid options, and the like, are the responsibility of the Office of Recruitment. We are pleased that this office has focused its attention on strengthening ties with the colleges through the Recruitment Advisory Committee, and we especially appreciate the intensive efforts that have been made by the staff and many dedicated volunteers from other departments to communicate with students whose applications were incomplete or who may have needed special assistance in enrolling.

Another major new communication link with students has been the world wide web, where many departments (including admissions, academic advising, and intramural sports) have developed sites for direct access by students. We have only begun to tap the potential of these new communication tools.

Scholarships and financial aid are a major factor in many students' decisions to attend UTEP. In addition to the new El Paso Community College transfer scholarships established this year,

UTEP awarded more than \$29 million in financial aid and more than \$3 million in merit-based scholarships. Thanks to the good work of the Financial Aid office in efficiently processing financial aid applications, and the generosity of scholarship donors, both of these totals represent new UTEP records.

New students at UTEP, whether freshmen or transfers from other institutions, deserve our best efforts to get them off to a good start. Thanks to the commitment of Gary Edens and a dedicated group of student leaders, UTEP's new student orientation programs have improved greatly, partly because they respond to students' feedback, and partly because they are conducted in close coordination with the colleges.

Many other units within Student Affairs have instituted program changes or innovations designed to serve students more effectively. The Tutoring and Learning Center and the Disabled Students Services Office have worked to provide adaptive technology which enhances educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Efforts to make UTEP's physical environment more accessible to disabled students have continued, and each new and renovated facility is designed with these goals in mind.

The Tutoring and Learning Center has broadened its partnership efforts, augmenting its staff with volunteer interns from the educational psychology and counseling programs. The Counseling Center has involved graduate interns in providing services to UTEP students while satisfying their academic and professional requirements.

The Student Assessment and Testing Office offered 278 different testing sessions during the past year at which nearly 9000 tests were administered, and in many cases, test results are made available within ten minutes following the testing period. The Women's Resource Center and the International Programs Office served the needs of specific student constituencies and engaged in outreach to the community. For example, the Women's Resource Center collaborated with the University Women's Club to conduct the Secret Santa program, which provided holiday gifts for more than 400 needy El Paso children, and the International Programs Office supported the UTEP Student Association and the Mexican Student Association in organizing Encounter, the first Bi-national Student Forum, which brought a large number of students from Mexican colleges and universities to the UTEP campus.

Two major decisions were made during the past year which affect campus life: consolidating the residence hall population and renovating the Commons Cafeteria. The number of students living on campus has remained relatively stable for the past several years, while the cost of operating and maintaining two half-occupied facilities rose considerably. Moreover, the apparent excess capacity in the apartment market has resulted in aggressive competition for customers, with offers of a variety of incentives. To reduce overhead costs, a decision was made to consolidate all residents in Kelly Hall and to close Barry Hall until there is an increased demand for campus residential living or until an alternative use for this facility is identified.

Construction is well underway to convert the Commons Cafeteria into an attractive restaurant and conference center. The location of this facility, adjacent to this Undergraduate Learning Center and across from the Library, makes it a convenient meeting place for the entire campus community. Although traffic patterns stimulated by this new building are not yet set, it is anticipated that this area will become a focal point of campus activity.

Campus recreational and athletic facilities took a major leap forward this year with the opening of the swimming and fitness center, a shimmering diamond in the desert terrain of Charlie Davis Park. The near-by soccer field was leveled and sodded, a new scoreboard was installed, and the parking lot was paved, improvements important to UTEP's new women's soccer program. A sparkling new track surface was installed at Kidd Field, and new turf has greatly enhanced the appearance of the Sun Bowl...as well as the safety and comfort of the football squad. The Baltimore Field is being extended, leveled, and re-surfaced, and the racquetball courts were refurbished

In all areas of Student Affairs, and indeed elsewhere on the UTEP campus, an ongoing effort is underway to make the university more user-friendly. Richard Padilla, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Frank Hoy, Dean of Business, are leading a "customer service" initiative which is charged with examining current policies and procedures to determine whether they can better serve our students' needs. Like many large organizations, we must continue to focus on our primary constituents--students--and work to ensure that their needs are met and their opportunities maximized. I wish that all of us at UTEP campus could share the pride and satisfaction of contributing to students' success that I heard recently from Efrain Lopez, an electrician in Facilities Services.

The setting was an ESL literacy development class for Facilities Services personnel, and Mr. Lopez read an essay that he had written about his responsibility for ensuring that all clocks on the campus run, run on time, and run on the same time. He pointed out that students, faculty and staff all depend on his doing his job well, and he particularly focused on his role in helping students get to class on time. He's quite right, of course, about the importance of his contribution to the university's primary mission of serving students, and right to remind us that it really does take all of us working together as a team to achieve our full institutional potential. We can all be very proud of Mr. Lopez and all other members of the UTEP community who care deeply about serving our students.

Improved customer service has also been a priority among units in Finance and Administration. Vice President Juan Sandoval and the directors who work with him engage in regular review of their policies and procedures in an effort to streamline and simplify them, and apply technology where appropriate. Like most of us, they serve multiple "customers," providing direct and indirect services to students, to faculty and staff on the campus, and to the public. Balancing the needs and expectations of these diverse constituencies is a constant challenge.

The Facilities Services team, under Juan Ontiveros' able leadership, continues to make us all proud of this campus, its beautiful buildings and grounds. Numerous facilities were renovated this past year, including the sleek new Academic Center for Engineering and Science (ACES) in the Classroom Building, space for the Development Office and the Pharmacy and Public Health programs in the Stanton Building, and space for student organizations in the Union. The exteriors of a number of older campus buildings including Miners, Worrell, Hudspeth, Cotton Memorial and Magoffin Auditorium were given a much-needed face-lift, and over \$2. million in modifications were made to UTEP facilities to comply with ADA mandates. In addition, a major upgrade was made in the Facilities Energy Management system that will provide better climate control and optimize energy consumption. And, all of this was accomplished with one of the best worker's compensation records within the U.T. System. We can also be very proud of more than 40 Facilities Services employees who obtained their GED diplomas during the past year, and the many others who, with Efrain Lopez, participated in ESL literacy development classes this summer, directed by Dr. Sandra Hurley in the College of Education.

Renovations in space occupied by Human Resource Services in the Administration Building served as an appropriate back-drop for the major new activity in that area this year. Rebecca Salcido was appointed director, bringing her talent, energy, and enthusiasm to bear on a variety of policies, procedures, and practices. Considerable progress has been made in automating a variety of personnel procedures, including appointments and vacation and sick leave reporting. In close cooperation with Facilities Services and other campus departments, Human Resources coordinated successful efforts to greatly reduce worker's compensation costs. A new classified employee orientation program is now conducted on a quarterly basis to acquaint new staff members with the campus and with those with whom they will have contact. Norma Cortez' creativity and tenacity were richly rewarded this year when a new HMO option was approved for UTEP employees, and new services such as on-campus health screenings were offered to all HMO participants.

The technology that we celebrate today in this building reflects but a small portion of the activity that has been underway to automate, upgrade and enhance operations across the UTEP campus. Whether it is technology in support of teaching and learning, or networking to improve campus communication, or training staff in technology applications, staff members in Information Technology Services, Customer Technology Services, and Networking and Telecommunications Services have been working closely with every UTEP department to help us do what we do more efficiently and cost-effectively. The examples of their good work are too numerous to mention, but it is important to recognize on this occasion Mike Kolitsky, Kati Gerdau, Hermann Masser, Kwan Law, Guillermo Casas and the Multi-media Teaching & Learning Center students, and Don Roberts and Steve Rosenfeld of Networking & Telecommunications Services, who made special contributions to the design and installation of the technology that energizes this exciting new facility. I'm going to ask them to stand to receive our thanks for their commitment, talent and hard work.

The Texas Legislature met this past Spring, and that meant an increased workload for Juan Sandoval, Cindy Villa, and others in Financial Services. Whether providing "fiscal note" estimates for an endless stream of legislative initiatives, or "running the numbers" on the latest appropriations bill draft, this team never failed to provide the support that we needed to plan and respond effectively to ever changing contingencies...while simultaneously preparing this year's annual budget, and streamlining a variety of procedures and practices. There were entire weeks when it seemed like no one in that shop ever went home. Despite a downturn in enrollment and related declines in local revenues, they even managed to help us strengthen the University's fiscal position during the past year.

The outcome of the recent Texas Legislative session was generally positive for UTEP and other public universities in the state. Although higher education was not funded at the requested level, we were very pleased that provision was made for \$100 per month salary increases for all university staff members, which, when combined with reduced HMO costs, represents a significant net gain for many of our employees. A change in the funding formula provided sufficient funds for an average 2-1/2% increase to meritorious faculty members as well. Although we were unsuccessful in securing for UTEP and other PUF institutions the capital funding parity we sought with HEAF institutions, we did receive tuition revenue bonding capacity which will enable us to continue the renovation of facilities and to purchase equipment and library materials.

1996-97 was a bittersweet year in Intercollegiate Athletics. In addition to major facilities improvements at the Sun Bowl, Kidd Field, and the soccer field, the good news was that UTEP student athletes in Track and Field achieved national rankings: our men's track program was ranked second in the nation, and our women's track program 24th. We are especially proud of UTEP sprinter Obadele Thompson who set a world record in the indoor 55 meters this year and who ran elbow-to-elbow with the fastest runners on earth recently in the World Track and Field Championships in Athens, Greece. Even more impressive is Oba's success in the classroom: despite a rigorous training and travel schedule, this Accounting major has maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.89.

Perhaps the best news of all out of athletics during the past year was the long-awaited election of Coach Don Haskins to the Basketball Hall of Fame. A number of us will accompany The Bear to Springfield, Massachusetts later this month to celebrate his induction, and as a warm-up, many more of his El Paso fans and friends will join him, his family and his former players and assistants in the Special Events Center a few days before to toast--and roast--his long and distinguished coaching career. I am looking most forward to seeing Coach in a black tie at the induction ceremony...do you suppose it will be a clip-on?

Athletics cannot offer us exclusively good news.

To keep us from enjoying all this success too much, the department's record-keeping problems associated with academic eligibility and compliance concluded with NCAA penalties that seem

excessive when compared with findings at other institutions. Our appeal of these penalties is underway, and we are cautiously optimistic that at least some of them will be reduced. One very positive outcome of the review and analysis that we undertook in conjunction with the NCAA investigation was the transfer of responsibility for all student athlete academic support to Enrollment and Student Services. Our thanks to Sylvia Rodriguez, Gladys Shaw, Ralph McCrae, Diana Guerrero and Mike Sifuentes for their cooperation in effecting the transfer and to Barbara Hunt, David Flores, Elizabeth Dahl, and Terri Hibbert for making it work. Another positive outcome was the recruitment of a number of new and experienced staff members to Intercollegiate Athletics, including Senior Woman Administrator Barbara Burke, and Compliance Coordinator Mike Gentile.

During the past year UTEP has continued to record a steady increase in expenditures for research (4%) and for all sponsored projects (8%). The Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, under Julie Sanford's able direction, currently administers an all-time high of 343 grants and contracts, representing a combined total commitment to UTEP of over \$99 million.

With an eye toward to the future, faculty have been especially active this year in submitting proposals for new projects. A total of 363 proposals were submitted, representing a 97% increase in dollar volume. Most of those are pending, and we look forward to many exciting new initiatives in the coming years. At a time when state funding continues to be both lean and uncertain, this robust activity and our success in seeking external funds is extremely important to UTEP's future.

Among interesting new research grant awards is support from the Federal Highway Administration to establish a NAFTA Intermodal Transportation Institute which has involved Manny Pacillas in IM3 and Frank Hoy in the College of Business, and a Department of Defense funded thin film deposition and characterization laboratory for research in electroluminescent displays led by Greg Lush and Vijay Singh in Electrical Engineering and John McClure in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering. The Army Research Office has provided support for Bill MacKay's work on the impact of wheeled vehicle maneuvering in desert soils, and Larry Murr's work on the characterization of thick copper and aluminum targets. Terry McLendon in Biology is supported by the U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory to refine a computer simulation model to determine ecological responses to various environmental stressors, and the Environmental Protection Agency has awarded UTEP \$2.5 million to coordinate efforts of the Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy (SCERP) in partnership with San Diego State, Arizona State, New Mexico State, the University of Utah, and several Mexican universities and technological institutes.

UTEP's environmental programs have a strong outreach component as well. Faculty, staff and students dedicate their professional expertise and time to a variety of community projects, including considerable work on developing strategies to bring potable water and sewerage services to El Paso's Lower Valley colonia residents. Together with the health promotion and education efforts undertaken through the four health clinics that UTEP's College of Nursing and Health Sciences and Texas Tech operate in El Paso County, these environmental initiatives

are creating a strong presence and a significant impact on the public health of this community. An interesting new community outreach initiative is UTEP's leadership role in developing the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in partnership with the City of El Paso, the International Boundary and Water Commission, and Ducks Unlimited. When fully developed, this park, located along the Rio Grande in Socorro, will use treated effluent from the Bustamante Water Treatment Plant to create lakes for migratory birds, much like those in the Bosque del Apache. In addition to providing birds with a greatly needed water supply during their winter flight along the mostly dry Rio Grande, this park will serve as an educational and recreational facility for the residents of this region, and we expect activity to begin this fall.

The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence continues its good work in fostering academic achievement among all children in this community. Working with our partners in the school districts, UTEP has been able to phase in new admission requirements which parallel more demanding high school graduation requirements. Although much of the credit for increased TAAS test scores must obviously be given to the teachers, principals, counselors, and administrators in the school districts, UTEP has a stake in these accomplishments through our contributions to the Collaborative and enhanced teacher preparation programs in the College of Education.

Just as UTEP has extended its expertise and energies to this community, we have received enormous support from it. Academic and athletic programs have benefited greatly from the generous gifts that members of this community have designated for them, and scholarship funds grow each year as El Pasoans invest in our students and this region's future leaders. Major facilities improvements--the Sun Bowl turf, resurfacing Kidd Field, and renovation of the Commons Cafeteria-- have been made possible by donors who stepped up to help when and where there was a need.

1996-97 was a very special year in fund-raising at UTEP's as we launched the Legacy Campaign, the first-ever endowment/capital fund-raising campaign in this institution's history. Recognizing that UTEP's endowment of \$25 million was increasingly inadequate in the context of uncertainties in state funding, the Development Office and a dedicated group of community volunteers worked tirelessly for the past three years to analyze the university's needs and our capacity to meet them through an aggressive and well-organized fund-raising campaign. The success of their efforts was celebrated at a grand dinner in May when we announced publicly that we intended to raise \$50 million by August 31, 2000, and that \$30 million of that goal had already been committed.

I am extremely pleased to tell you today that since that time we have raised another \$5 million, and our campaign total now stands at \$35 million. What an extraordinary achievement!...one that many people on this campus and in this community were convinced was impossible. It would certainly not have been possible without the outstanding work that Jan Cavin has done in planning and organizing this effort and the dedication of Peter DeWetter and the many volunteers who have enabled El Paso to prove something very important to itself--that if we work together and really believe in something, we can accomplish almost anything.

There were some who worried that annual giving to UTEP might suffer as a result of the Legacy Campaign. In fact, there has been an increase in funds raised through the Alumni Fund for Excellence, and a major increase in first-time local business donors. Recognition for UTEP's continuing progress in annual fund-raising was an unprecedented third consecutive Circle of Excellence Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, a national organization that monitors educational philanthropy. This is a fitting tribute to Jan Cavin, her capable staff, and all of the other members of the UTEP and El Paso communities who dedicate their time and talents to this university.

Much work remains to be done between now and August 31, 2000 to achieve the goals we have set for the Legacy Campaign. We will continue to work with our community volunteers to gain additional local support from individuals and businesses. We will seek the support of national foundations and corporations. We will resume the UTEP Family Campaign that we began last spring, hopeful that a large percentage of those closest to the university--our faculty and staff--will respond generously to our request that they be a part of building its foundation for the future. And, we will soon announce a special alumni challenge, which will enable those who have benefited from the educational opportunities created for them at UTEP to reciprocate by creating opportunities for others who follow in their footsteps.

For more than 80 years, this University has served the residents of this region. For more than 80 years, students have come to this campus with dreams and aspirations that we and our predecessors have helped them achieve. Today, as we celebrate the grand opening of this glorious new building, we also celebrate the deep foundation of traditions and values which have contributed to this university's special identity. Whether it is our distinctive Bhutanese architecture, so splendidly rendered in this fine facility, our many outstanding graduates who have honored--and continue to honor us--with their achievements, or our fast-growing national reputation, we recognize that all that we accomplish today rests on the solid foundation built by those who have come before us. And, just as new technology and traditional Bhutanese architecture rest comfortably together in this beautiful building, so too do our traditional values, our soaring achievements, and our future aspirations.

Before closing, I want to take a moment to recognize again, Dr. Robert Webking and the students who worked with him to prepare the multi-media dimensions at this Convocation presentation: Robert Acosta and Alex Vidales, Political Science students, and Guillermo Casas of the Multimedia Teaching and Learning Center. We thank all of you for your outstanding work.

Thanks to all of you for being with us today. Your presence has made this Convocation and grand opening very special indeed. Please join us now for refreshments, music, and tours of the building. Thank you again.

STAGE PARTY EXITS AND JOINS THE RECEPTION.

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