

The University of Texas at El Paso
Fall 2011 Convocation Remarks
September 20, 2011

There's much to celebrate on the UTEP campus today as we mark the beginning of another academic year with this, our annual convocation ceremony.

First and foremost, we celebrate the arrival this fall of our new and returning students, entrusting us with their dreams and aspirations for a brighter future through the power of education. Enrollment increased by 2.4% this year, for a total of 22,640 students, continuing UTEP's steady growth over more than a decade. Once again, the majority of these students -- 90% -- come from this Paso del Norte region, 84% from El Paso County and 6% from Mexico. Demographically, our U.S. student population mirrors that of the surrounding region: 78% are Hispanic, 9% are Anglo, and 3% African American. UTEP proudly sets the pace nationally as the only research university in the U.S. with a Mexican-American-majority student population.

Next, there are the dedicated faculty and staff members, some of whom we've just honored for their years of service to UTEP and to our students. These colleagues and friends, together with all the other esteemed members of the UTEP team who work side-by-side with them -- that's all of you! -- are the fundamental reason that UTEP has been so successful in achieving our highly ambitious goals over the past quarter century. Together we are successfully transforming this university, pursuing a quest for excellence while strengthening our commitment to access, and thereby creating a new higher education model that is not only working in our setting, but attracting widespread respect and emulation.

Then, there's our beautiful new University Mace which today makes its debut in what will now become regular appearances at such special events as convocations and commencements. The mace was created by UTEP alumna and metalsmith Beverly Penn, now a faculty member at Texas State University and honoree at our Homecoming last year as a College of Liberal Arts Gold Nugget. Celebrated in this work of art are the University's history and our grounding in this Chihuahuan Desert region. Thanks to the many UTEP faculty and staff, including Rachelle Thiewes, Kate Bonansinga and Liz Thurmond, who supported Beverly's work, and especially to Frank Medina, UTEP Engineering alumnus and Manager of the W.M. Keck Center for 3D Innovation, who, in a wonderful example of interdisciplinary collaboration, applied his expertise in cutting-edge additive manufacturing technology to the creation of the exquisite University seal on the mace.

If you haven't yet had an opportunity to visit the exhibit which tells the fascinating story of the design and fabrication of our new mace, I encourage you to join us in the Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the reception immediately after this convocation, where you'll be able to learn more about it.

The new mace will be part of the lasting legacy of UTEP's centennial commemoration in 2014. Over the next three years, we're going to celebrate together the inspiring history

of UTEP's first 100 years and the exciting future that awaits all of us as we stride confidently into UTEP's second century of distinguished service to this U.S.-Mexico border region. Planning for these centennial events and activities is well underway with the support of the 2014 Commission, a group of 100 UTEP alumni and supporters, faculty and staff, and I invite those Commission members who are here today, as well as members of our Centennial Campaign Leadership Council and Development Board, to please stand so we can thank you all for your commitment to UTEP.

We recently added to our centennial story the attainment of another major milestone when this past May we conferred UTEP's 100,000th degree. Just think of the impact that those 100,000 degrees have had on this Paso del Norte region....and think too about what this region might have been if UTEP hadn't served over the past 100 years as the primary catalyst for its human and economic development and quality of life. These 100,000 transformed lives also serve as a powerful reminder of what a great privilege it is for all of us to be a part of this institutional success story, where access and excellence commitments have come together to create more and better opportunities for talented young people in this region to achieve their ever bigger dreams, and to contribute their abundant talents to a brighter future for all of us.

In sharp contrast to all this good news, however, the Texas Legislature met during the past year, and the outcome of its deliberations was disappointing for all public universities, whose appropriations were severely reduced. In UTEP's case, the loss of revenue amounts to \$27 million over the next two years, in addition to another \$10 million in budget rescissions during the past two years. This appropriation reduction is obviously significant and a sobering sign of what has been described by some as the "new normal" in state funding for higher education, and universities have regularly had to turn to tuition increases to fill the growing revenue gap.

This changing higher education funding model is especially difficult to manage in a setting such as UTEP where students' income levels are lower than at peer institutions. This Upper Rio Grande region of Texas has the lowest median income in the State, and nearly a third of UTEP students report a family income of \$20,000 a year or less. A commitment to access in this context means that affordability considerations must weigh heavily in tuition and fees deliberations. There's been a lot of recent talk about improving efficiency and productivity in public higher education, but "doing more with less" has been a way of life at UTEP for a long time, because our commitment to an access and excellence mission has absolutely required it. At \$3,400 per semester, UTEP's cost of attendance is at least \$1,000 less than at any of our peer universities in Texas.

With affordability such a huge issue for most UTEP students, a major institutional priority has been to increase the availability of both financial aid and scholarship resources. Thanks to Craig Westman for his success in increasing efficiency in Financial Aid over the past year, enabling the processing of nearly 26,000 applications (a 9% increase over the previous year), and more than 16,800 total awards, a 10% increase. In Scholarships, nearly \$11.5 million were awarded to highly competitive

students at UTEP last year, representing a 14.5% increase over the previous year. These merit scholarships have played a key role in UTEP's success in recruiting this region's most talented and highly motivated students, including 63% of this region's Top Ten Percent high school graduates who attend a public university in Texas. Thanks to Audrey Price and Liz Justice for their good work in overseeing this program and, especially, to our scholarship donors whose generous support has enabled us to increase total annual scholarship awards from \$2.8 million to \$11.5 million over the past ten years!

Faculty and staff members across the campus are also highly aware of our students' affordability issues and seek to achieve efficiencies and reduce costs for students wherever they can. In addition to such successful strategies as installment tuition payments and the revolving book loan fund designed to help students manage their cash flow, rising textbook prices have motivated other innovations. Among them are e-textbooks and textbook rentals in the Bookstore, which saved students an estimated \$750,000 last year and promise even greater savings this year, and the English Department's publication of the *Guide to First-Year Composition* as an e-book, with custom editions available as rentals, reducing students' costs by more than half. Thanks to Fernando Padula and Beth Brunk Chavez for their leadership of these efforts.

As important as such efficiencies are, UTEP's aspirations extend well beyond simply accepting and coping with the "new normal." Combining our commitments to both access and excellence, we have embarked on an exciting institutional transformation as we pursue our vision of becoming the first national research (Tier One) university with a 21st century student demographic. Continued progress in changing our institutional culture as we proceed toward Tier One will require expanded research and doctoral program capacity and enhanced undergraduate education opportunities, which in turn require the recruitment and retention of highly competitive faculty and students, which in turn requires state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, technology and improved business practices. It's all connected!...and it all costs money! In this difficult economic climate, all of this institutional development will require even greater operating efficiencies, enhanced revenues, and re-purposing of institutional resources.

UTEP's vision of becoming a 21st century research university is deeply grounded in our longstanding commitment to the region we have served for the past century. Today, we strive to be the university that our students have every right to expect: a university that creates a broad range of educational opportunities for all residents of this region; an institution that fully engages all its students in a collective quest for excellence in all that we do; a university whose graduates are extraordinarily well-prepared to compete successfully with their peers from institutions across the U.S.....indeed across the globe. I'm extremely pleased to be able to report that despite our state funding challenges, and disappointing municipal indifference to them, UTEP has made significant strides during the past year in pursuing the research-university capacity-building required for continued progress toward Tier One.

First and foremost a university's excellence rests squarely on the quality of its faculty. Their professional accomplishments and commitment to the success of the students we serve determine our success in achieving UTEP's access and excellence mission. We've been highly successful in attracting and retaining teacher-scholars in departments across the campus whose research, scholarship and artistic work is widely recognized and respected and who, at the same time, are unusually dedicated to sharing their knowledge and passion for this work through their teaching and mentoring of both graduate and undergraduate students.

Most new faculty members are recruited from doctoral programs and post-doctoral appointments at leading research universities across the world. We welcome them to our UTEP team and we look very much forward to working with them as they become significant contributors to our research and teaching programs in departments across the campus. Occasionally, we seek to accelerate the impact of new faculty by recruiting at a more senior level. In the College of Liberal Arts, for example, we are very pleased to welcome from Arizona State University, nationally known scholar Dr. Felipe Castro, who will lead our Health Psychology program and serve as senior advisor to the Provost. In the College of Science, we were successful in recruiting distinguished chemist, Dr. Luis Echegoyen, to the Welch Chair in Chemistry. Dr. Echegoyen brought with him from Clemson University a large team of researchers including post-doctoral fellows and doctoral students, as well as the grant funding that supports their work.

One indicator of the success of our faculty recruiting and retention efforts is the steady growth in UTEP's funded research portfolio. This past year, faculty and staff submitted an all-time record of 618 proposals, up from 559 last year, seeking \$358 million in grant funding, nearly \$50 million more than in 2010. Grant funding of successful proposals also increased during the past year, with receipt of 188 awards totaling \$54 million, an increase of 10% over the previous year, and, annual research expenditures this past year are expected to exceed \$70 million, setting another UTEP record. This continued progress in securing increased research funding and expanding the scope of externally funded research activity is especially remarkable in the current context of shrinking federal and state agency budgets and increasingly intense competition for research support. Our congratulations and thanks to all of the faculty and staff members who contributed to this continued progress in securing grant funding, and to Vice President Roberto Osegueda and the ORSP team for their outstanding support of these efforts. Yet another good sign of UTEP's growing competitiveness for grant funding appears in research productivity data compiled by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. At \$77,000 in annual research expenditures per FTE faculty member, UTEP ranks second among our seven peer Emerging Research Universities. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to yet another great example of UTEP's success in consistently "doing more with less!"

Although it would be a long afternoon if I were to acknowledge all 188 of the very interesting individual grants awarded during the past year, I hope a few examples will capture the flavor of the active research climate on our campus, and its alignment with the priorities articulated in UTEP's Strategic Plan for Research.

- In Health and Biomedical Sciences and Engineering:
 - Professor Sid Das in Biological Sciences received a \$2.2 million, five-year RO1 grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to develop new therapies to control *Giardia lamblia*, a waterborne parasite that is responsible for intestinal infection affecting millions of children worldwide.
 - Three Biological Sciences faculty members -- Manuel Llano, Jianying Zhang and Jianjun Sun -- received MBRS SCORE awards from NIH totaling \$3.6 million for work on HIV, liver cancer and anthrax therapeutics, respectively.
 - Timothy Tansey, Director of UTEP's Rehabilitation Counseling Program received a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a long-term training program, including incorporating distance learning into the master's curriculum.
 - With \$2.1 million in National Institute on Drug Abuse funding, Project VIDA (Vulnerability Issues in Drug Abuse) is a multi-disciplinary effort led by Psychology Chair Eddie Castaneda and including faculty from Psychology, Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, and Languages and Linguistics, to create a collaborative research and training environment that advances knowledge about drug addiction and drug use prevention in a border community.

- In Energy and the Environment:
 - The team led by Tom Davis in the Center for Inland Desalination Systems (CIDS) generated \$1.7 million in support from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and industry for projects focused on developing technologies for mining the brine concentrate, and developing small-scale desalination processes to maximize efficiencies.
 - Bill Hargrove, Director of the Center for Environmental Resource Management secured more than \$3.4 million in funding, including an NSF grant focused on sustainability issues along the border, and with Elaine Hampton in Teacher Education and Wen-Whai Li in Civil Engineering, an EPA grant to foster greater public understanding of environmental health and justice issues relating to air quality.
 - Civil Engineering's Center for Transportation Infrastructure Systems, under Soheil Nazarian's able leadership received nearly \$1.7 million to support projects ranging from highway and airfield construction to geotechnical testing from sponsors including the Texas Department of Transportation, the U.S. Army and the National Academy of Sciences.

- In National Defense and Border Security:
 - Ricardo Von Borries in Electrical and Computer Engineering was funded by the Department of Defense for research on the detection and imaging of improvised explosive devices or IEDs.

- The FBI provided support for research by Christian Meissner and Harmon Hosch in Psychology on the mechanisms associated with gathering diagnostic information.
- Political Scientist Gaspare Genna received a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education to study the connections between migration and security and their impact on North American integration and cooperation.
- In the area of 21st Century Education:
 - A \$3.5 million NSF grant renewal to CAHSI, a national consortium of ten Hispanic-Serving Institutions and their partners led by UTEP Associate VP for Research and Professor of Computer Science Ann Gates, validated the successful first phase of this project in which Hispanic graduates in Computer Science increased by nearly 25% at CAHSI institutions while nationally they declined by 39%.
 - A team led by physicist Eric Hagedorn and including colleagues Laura Serpa in Geology, Amy Wagler in Math and Olga Kosheleva and Ronald Wagler in Teacher Education, received more than \$1 million to support recruitment of science and mathematics undergraduates into high school teaching, in a collaboration among the UTEP Colleges of Science and Engineering, EPCC and the El Paso and Ysleta School Districts.
 - A team led by Heidi Taboada Jimenez and including Connie Gomez and Jose Espiritu Nolasco from the Department of Industrial, Manufacturing and Systems Engineering received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop a model for promoting minority talent development in engineering beginning at the secondary school level.
 - Ben Flores, interim Dean of the Graduate School, successfully secured a \$600,000 grant to increase the number of senior engineering and computer science students, particularly Hispanics, who successfully pursue doctoral degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields; and in collaboration with Pat Witherspoon, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of Hispanic doctoral students at UTEP.

Grant funding also provides many attractive new job opportunities on campus for UTEP students. Most students must work while attending UTEP, and creating on-campus jobs has become a very effective strategy to enable them to learn while they are earning. Undergraduate research experiences have also been shown to increase both the confidence and motivation of first-generation students to pursue graduate degrees. To expand these opportunities for our students, UTEP has successfully launched a new Office of Undergraduate Research Experiences under the able leadership of Dr. Lourdes Echegoyen. We thank her and Dean Anny Morrobel-Sosa for their strong commitment to this initiative.

We are also continuing to work hard at building capacity for and gaining U.T. System and THECB authorization to offer additional graduate degree programs at UTEP,

especially at the doctoral level, because they have a highly synergistic role to play in UTEP's transformation into a national research university. The potential of doctoral programs and the students enrolled in them to support faculty research aspirations helps us attract highly competitive faculty members to UTEP, and those faculty members then add their research strengths to UTEP's growing capacity to expand doctoral programs...that's leveraging!

During the past year, UTEP succeeded in gaining authorization from the Coordinating Board to offer two additional doctoral programs. The first, a Doctor of Nursing Practice, adds to our growing health professions programs which are contributing significantly to improving the quality and availability of health care in this region. We thank Dean Elias Provencio-Vasquez and the Nursing faculty for their success in securing approval for and implementing this important new degree program. The second new doctoral degree, in the Department of Biological Sciences, is a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, which has as its focus arid and semi-arid regions across the world, including of course the Chihuahuan Desert region in which we live. Thanks to Dean Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Chair Rob Kirken and the Biology faculty for spearheading this important program, and to CIERP Director Roy Mathew and Provost Junius Gonzales for their tireless support. These two new doctoral programs bring UTEP's total to 19, with several others in development, and overall doctoral enrollment at UTEP has grown this year to 656 students, a nearly 10% increase over last year.

Graduate programs in the College of Health Sciences have experienced especially rapid growth in response to the demand for healthcare professionals in this region and beyond, with 145 additional graduate students enrolled since summer 2010. A number of programs achieved major milestones in their development as well, including the successful accreditation of six of them in a single year! Among other accomplishments: the first Interdisciplinary Health Sciences doctoral degrees were awarded; the newly approved Doctor of Physical Therapy program graduated its first student cohort; and new master's degrees in both Public Health and Social Work are well on their way to accreditation. Especially interesting was the new Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling which set a speed record for program development at UTEP: new director Tim Tansey joined us in 2009; the program was initially approved in late 2009, admitted its first class in May 2010 and has already secured not only accreditation but also grant funding to support the students who enroll in it. Thanks to Dr. Tansey and to Dean Kathy Curtis and the directors and faculty of all these programs for their leadership.

What's exciting too is that as our graduate programs help move UTEP toward Tier One, they are also attracting increased national recognition for their role in changing the educational and professional profile of Latinos nationally. For the second straight year, *Hispanic Business Magazine* ranked UTEP's MBA the #1 graduate business program for Hispanics in the U.S., and our graduate programs in Engineering were again ranked among the top ten, for the 6th year in a row. Congratulations to Dean Richard Schoephoerster for Engineering's sustained success, and to Business Dean Bob Nachtmann and Assistant Dean Laura Uribarri who quickly converted their vision of community-based graduate business education into a nationally ranked program.

Graduate programs are growing at UTEP in response to increased demand driven by rising student educational aspirations in this region and workplace expectations in many professional fields, especially health sciences and nursing. As a result, faculty recruitment at UTEP often focuses on specific research and graduate program development to ensure that these graduate programs meet the highest professional standards. However, we never lose sight of the critical role that all faculty members must play in enhancing undergraduate education as well. After all, undergraduate students continue to constitute more than 80% of UTEP's overall enrollment, and nearly 90% of those undergraduate students are residents of this region who are our primary focus. We can all be very proud that so many UTEP faculty members are well known not only for their research, scholarly and artistic accomplishments, but also for their dedication to and success in teaching and mentoring undergraduate students.

Just last month, seven UTEP faculty members were selected, in competition with peers from all nine U.T. System academic institutions, as recipients of the prestigious U.T. System Board of Regents' Teaching Excellence Award. These outstanding faculty members are with us on stage today, and I'm deeply honored and pleased to recognize them now:

- Rachelle Thiewes, Professor of Art
- Steve Stafford, Professor of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering
- Stacey Sowards, Associate Professor of Communication
- Carolyn Mitchell, Senior Lecturer in Communication
- Larry Lesser, Professor of Mathematical Sciences
- Bridget Konter, Associate Professor of Geological Sciences
- Keith Erekson, Assistant Professor of History

Congratulations to all of you on receiving this highly competitive award! We thank you for bringing this very special recognition to UTEP, for serving as models of teaching excellence on this campus and, most of all, we thank you for the commitment you've made to UTEP and the students we serve.

During the past year, many other UTEP faculty and staff members, students and programs have been honored with a variety of national and international awards and recognitions, and through them, the story of the quality of this institution and our remarkable transformation continues to spread. Let me share with you just a couple:

- Two faculty members in Education were honored as Fulbright Scholars this past year: Mourat Tchoshanov to the Russian Federation and Reynaldo Reyes to Chile.
- In Creative Writing, two books by Ben Saenz—one a novel and the other a book of poetry—were named national top ten books of the year by the American Library Association and the Huffington Post, and books by Sasha Pimental Chacon and by Daniel Chacon and Mimi Gladstein, were winners of American Book Awards.

Many other indicators of excellence help paint an even more complete picture of UTEP's growing national prominence, telling the story of the leading role that UTEP is playing in the current transformation of U.S. higher education. Among them:

- UTEP ranks second among all U.S. colleges and universities in the total number of degrees awarded to Hispanics, ranks first nationally in the number of Hispanic graduates in both Nursing and Education, and among the top five in most other degree programs. We are clearly at the forefront of responding to the national imperative of increasing college completion among the fast-growing Latino population.
- UTEP ranked 6th among all U.S. colleges and universities last year in the number of Hispanic baccalaureate recipients who continued on to successfully complete doctoral degrees; other top-ten institutions in this category are major national research universities whose ranks we are quickly joining. This ranking is a reflection of the quality of undergraduate education at UTEP and the enhanced aspirations it fosters for UTEP's mostly first-generation students who in the past would have seen completion of a baccalaureate degree as their final educational destination.
- The quality of a UTEP education is validated in the success of graduates of our Law School Preparation Institute as they compete for law school admissions. Ninety-percent of all participants in this program who apply to law school are admitted, compared with 67% nationally, and of those, 30% are admitted to Top 15 law schools, compared to only 5% nationally.
- The Medical Professions Institute also proudly reported a 76% increase in medical professions admissions over last year, including to such top-tier medical schools as Yale, Columbia and Johns Hopkins. UTEP ranks second only to UCLA in the total number of Mexican-American baccalaureate graduates who are admitted to highly competitive U.S. medical schools.

All of UTEP's progress in moving into national prominence as this country's model Hispanic-Serving Institution rests on the pioneering systemic reform work over the past 20 years to raise academic aspirations and attainment of all young people in this region through the work of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence and many other outreach initiatives and partnerships with area school districts, the El Paso Community College and civic and business organizations. Thanks to Dr. Susana Navarro for her leadership of the Collaborative over the past 20 years, and to Gary Edens and the directors of such highly successful programs as Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, College Assistance Migrant Program, GEAR UP and the High School Equivalency Program, for fostering smooth educational pathways for young people in this region, from pre-K through graduate school.

One of the most exciting such new pathways has been the accelerated high school/ associate's degree completion program offered at five Early College High Schools in school districts across El Paso County. This innovative program enables highly motivated young people to earn their high school diplomas and EPCC associate's degrees concurrently and transfer to UTEP as juniors, saving them not only two years' time but also the tuition and fees that their first two years of college would have cost them. And they are performing well in their upper-division courses at UTEP. In fact, one of them has set an even more blistering pace. After earning her bachelor's degree in Psychology from UTEP within a year of graduating from high school, she's now

enrolled in graduate school, supported by her financial aid savings. Special thanks to Donna Ekal for her enthusiastic and creative leadership of UTEP's engagement in the Early College High School program locally, and for her outstanding efforts to spread the word in Texas and nationally about the importance of such accelerated higher education access strategies.

UTEP's commitment to the success of young people in this region is also at the heart of our vision of becoming a national research university. Setting a Tier One goal at UTEP is not a relentless quest for status. Instead, it is directly tied to serving our students well by setting the highest possible expectations for them and for ourselves, and creating an enriched campus climate where we can all succeed in meeting them. And, what's interesting about this approach is that authentic national stature and visibility are coming to us as a result of our success in achieving these goals; we are building a national reputation by successfully serving our region.

"Campus climate" may mean many things in U.S. higher education, but at its core at UTEP, it characterizes an environment in which student, faculty and staff aspirations and accomplishments steadily grow, fueled by an energizing vision of our promise to become the first national research university with a 21st century student demographic, and enriched by our collective commitment to seek continuous improvement and high standards of excellence in all that we do.

For many years, UTEP has engaged in intense self-assessment and data-driven decision-making, particularly in the area of student success, because we learned early on that most standard metrics misrepresent us and our students to external audiences, and divert us from the fundamental campus culture change required to reach our research university goal while remaining true to our commitment to access. Metrics matter, and there is no one who understands that more clearly than Roy Mathew, Director of the Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning. We thank him and his team for their deep and abiding interest in the many issues we face as we lead U.S. higher education in developing a new research university model for the 21st Century.

Campus climate is the sum total of who we are and what we do. Factors contributing to campus climate may be highly visible or behind-the-scenes and unsung. In the highly visible category is the explosion of new and renovated facilities on the UTEP campus -- nearly two million additional square feet of teaching, research and support space have been added over the past decade, and an investment of nearly \$300 million has been made in campus facilities during the past three years alone. Cranes, cement mixers and barricades have become a maze through which we have been challenged to maneuver each day. Congratulations to all of us for our truly admirable forbearance during this extremely intense -- but obviously very exciting! -- construction cycle.

The project that has been most prominently visible to the campus and the surrounding community -- and to passing traffic on Interstate 10 -- is the recently completed Health Sciences and Nursing Building, whose design has taken UTEP's Bhutanese

architecture to new heights. We will celebrate its grand opening on September 29, and we hope you'll join us. Meanwhile, Health Sciences and Nursing students, faculty and staff have happily settled into their beautiful state-of-the-art facility, featuring the largest and most advanced simulation laboratory anywhere in the U.S. Southwest. Many thanks to Deans Kathy Curtis and Elias Provencio-Vasquez, and Simulation Laboratory Director Ronnie Stout for their leadership, and to faculty, staff and students for assuring a smooth transition from their former home on Campbell Street downtown.

Another new facility that has generated tremendous excitement is the spectacular \$32 million expansion of the Student Recreation Center, a world-class facility in which UTEP students can take special pride. For the past six years, it has been UTEP students who have led this initiative, identifying the need, promoting its importance to fellow students, conducting a student referendum to assess themselves a fee to retire the bonds required to construct it, and participating actively in every step of its planning and design. The result of students' sustained commitment to this project is an extraordinary facility which, together with the soon-to-be-completed renovation of the original Swimming and Fitness Center to which it is connected, will have a major impact on UTEP's quality of life for generations of students to come. Congratulations to our students on this truly remarkable accomplishment!

A third structure that has attracted a lot of recent attention is the new pedestrian bridge, which provides safe passage into the campus from the parking lot on the west side of Sun Bowl via the walkway alongside the new Health Sciences and Nursing Building. Constructed by the Texas Department of Transportation as one of a series of traffic access and safety management projects on UTEP's western perimeter, including the roundabout at University and Sun Bowl, this pedestrian bridge has become a beautiful new gateway to the UTEP campus and joins the "Mining Minds" sculpture as yet another striking new campus landmark.

Several other new and renovated facilities are changing our skyline, including the imposing new Chemistry and Computer Science Building, which is expected to open by the beginning of the spring semester, and major additions and renovations to engineering and physical sciences facilities also due for completion within the next year. Meanwhile, to be sure that we are well-prepared to respond to UTEP's growth in enrollment -- predicted to reach 30,000 students by 2020 -- we've recently updated UTEP's Campus Master Plan to ensure that our facilities, and the connections among them, continue to be developed in a cost-effective, functionally responsive and aesthetically pleasing manner. Thanks to Greg McNicol and Ed Soltero for their oversight of the largest construction and renovation program that UTEP has ever undertaken, and for their commitment to sustaining the beauty and integrity of UTEP's unique Bhutanese architecture and Chihuahuan Desert setting.

The operation of facilities, their upkeep and oversight, contribute to campus climate, impacting our efficiency, productivity, and morale. Recent growth in UTEP's research and doctoral programs and the facilities to accommodate them has raised the bar on

our expectations for buildings and grounds maintenance and upgrades, environmental health and safety and security services.

- Under Jorge Villalobos' able leadership, UTEP's Facilities Services team has not only continued its good work in maintaining UTEP buildings and grounds, but also stepped up its performance level in response to the complex challenges of such new facilities as the Biosciences Research Building and the soon-to-open Nano-Fabrication facility in Engineering.
- This same team successfully weathered several unprecedented encounters with Mother Nature this past year. The utility infrastructure collapse during the unprecedented Big Freeze in early February brought out the very best in UTEP teamwork as researchers and laboratory staff, Facilities Services crews, Information Technology, Veterinary Services, Student Affairs, Environmental Health and Safety, Campus Police and many others all worked tirelessly to protect our people, programs and facilities.
- Facilities Services is working systematically to design new buildings to meet LEED specifications, re-design landscaping to conserve water, and retrofit existing facilities to reduce energy and water consumption. Collaborations with campus researchers are leading to efficiencies, including a grant of nearly \$1 million from the State of Texas to install a 175W solar array at UTEP's Facilities Services Complex. Thanks to Ralph Martinez in Engineering for his outstanding leadership in the area of renewable energy research on our campus and for his partnership with Ft. Bliss to study energy consumption and develop strategies to enhance the use of renewable energy and storage systems on post.
- Students have become active partners in UTEP's commitment to the environment with adoption of a new Green Fee, from which an initial allocation was made this past year to a project proposed by an Engineering student who, with Facilities Services, is designing and developing an Energy Dashboard system to monitor efficiencies across the campus.

As remarkable as UTEP's physical transformation over the past several years has been, we all know that creating a truly competitive campus climate goes well beyond facilities. All students, faculty and staff members are both contributors to and beneficiaries of UTEP's successful efforts to create our own "indigenous" version of a Tier One campus climate, and UTEP's progress toward this goal requires each and every one of us to play our part, aiming higher, thinking harder and dreaming bigger, and thereby enabling UTEP to achieve national benchmarks in an authentic UTEP way.

Recognizing the importance of preparing UTEP students to compete in the 21st century global economy, an international dimension has been incorporated into many UTEP programs at all levels, by developing ties with sister institutions across the globe and creating innovative international experiences that are far better attuned to UTEP students' needs than traditional Study Abroad programs might be.

- The College of Engineering has launched two international partnerships, one a dual master's degree program in transportation logistics with the Czech Technical University and the University of Žilina in the Slovak Republic; and the

second, a dual BS program in printed nanomaterials with Seokyeong University in South Korea.

- Our partnership with Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia continues to grow. We're very honored to have with us today VU Chancellor George Pappas, his colleague Dr. Roger Slee, and several VU students who are spending this fall semester with us at UTEP. Please join me in welcoming all of them.
- Despite the many recent challenges associated with working in Mexico, the College of Education has grown its partnerships with Mexican universities and replicated its highly successful Mother-Daughter Program in Ciudad Juárez, all with support of USAID. Thanks to Dean Josie Tinajero for her steadfast and creative efforts to continue supporting our Mexican colleagues and the young people they seek to serve. We're honored that U.S. Consul General in Juárez, Thomas Rogan, is with us today, and we thank him and his team for their support.
- In Liberal Arts, Communication students traveled to Indonesia with Professors Stacey Sowards and Richard Pineda in conjunction with UTEP's partnership with international conservation organization Rare; and Art student Andres Payan is currently studying in China.
- In Health Sciences, groups of students in the Minority Health Interdisciplinary Training Program spent six weeks in summer research programs with the Universidad de Aconcagua in northern Chile, with the Universidad de Costa Rica in San José, and with the Universidad Central del Ecuador in Quito. Several other students participated in a faculty-led Global Rehabilitation program in Antigua, Guatemala.
- In the College of Business, graduate and undergraduate students are strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of intensive international study-travel experiences which during the past year included trips to Hong Kong, Paris and Madrid.

Faculty and staff are creating opportunities for UTEP students to participate in academic and professional competitions with peers from across the country, thereby building their confidence and poise, while also increasing others' awareness of the caliber of UTEP's students and programs. Our students are always extremely well-prepared for such competitions, and with the many honors and awards they've proudly brought back to the campus, I'll borrow a phrase from Coach Mike Price, and say that they've definitely gone from underdogs to "wonderdogs!"

- In the Department of Communication, for example, the UTEP Advertising team won the Western District title in the American Advertising Federation's national competition, and the Forensics team was ranked among the top 20 in the nation. Thanks to Carolyn Mitchell and Mary Trejo for their sustained success in preparing our talented UTEP students to perform with polish at the national level.
- Preparing students for highly competitive internships creates yet another opportunity for UTEP to test itself against peer institutions, and in that context, UTEP is measuring up very well. In the College of Business, four BBA students participated in internships at top Wall Street investment banking firms last year and all were among the small sub-set of interns actually offered full-time

positions upon graduating. Four additional BBA students did internships this past summer, and two of them already have job offers for next year.

- Not to be outdone, our cheerleaders and mascot also gained national recognition. The Cheerleading Squad, under the able leadership of David Vasquez, took first place in the National Cheerleading Co-ed Championship, and Paydirt Pete, our beloved mascot, lost by a whisker in the final round of the Nation's Best University Mascot competition.

Closer to home, UTEP has developed a campus culture of service learning and civic engagement, which is especially important on a campus where 90% of the students are part of the surrounding community. UTEP students, faculty and staff enthusiastically engage in reaching out to share their time and talents with a broad range of community organizations and activities.

- This past year, UTEP earned the coveted Carnegie Foundation designation as an Engaged Institution, one where "teaching, learning and scholarship engage faculty, students and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration." UTEP is one of only 146 public universities nationally to receive this designation over the past five years. Congratulations to the Center for Civic Engagement for its leadership in competing for this national recognition, and thanks to Azuri Gonzalez, Donna Ekal, their partners in Student Affairs, and the many UTEP students, faculty and staff who enabled us to earn it.
- Ft. Bliss is playing an increasingly prominent role in defining this region, and building partnerships with Ft. Bliss has become a high priority for UTEP. In recognition of this commitment, UTEP has been designated by the Department of Defense as a "Military Friendly School." Special thanks to Junius Gonzales, Pat Witherspoon and Craig Westman for their leadership of efforts to identify the academic program needs and interests of the fast-growing Ft. Bliss population, and respond effectively to those needs with accessible programming, including online courses and degrees.

At a quickening pace, technology is transforming higher education institutions across the world, and it is certainly re-shaping UTEP's approaches to all aspects of our operations, from teaching and learning, to research, to outreach, to our business transactions.

- Online learning has been growing rapidly at UTEP. Last year, more than 350 class sections were offered with more than 10,000 enrollments. The Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies degree program is now offered completely online, providing a new pathway to degree completion for those whose lives may not align well with regularly scheduled on-campus offerings.
- A Technology Support Center was established in the Library to assist students, faculty and staff with a broad range of technology services, from software workshops and computer repair to videoconferencing suites. Thanks to Frank Poblano and Robert Stakes for their continued commitment to expand the Library's active engagement in 21st century learning and teaching at UTEP, and to Steve Riter for his enthusiastic support of student-centered initiatives like this.

- As part of its commitment to apply technology to make its processes and services more efficient, functional and user-friendly, Enrollment Services has replaced the printed class schedule with an online class search format, and provided students and advisers with capacity for electronic degree auditing. Special thanks to Craig Westman and Chris Ulibarri for this and so many other examples of their fine work.
- Enterprise Computing and Purchasing worked together to bring online Miner Mall, a fully automated purchasing system. Special thanks to Diane de Hoyos, new Director of Purchasing, and Edgar Padilla in Information Technology, for their fine work. It should come as no surprise that both of them are proud UTEP alumni.
- The most ambitious single software project ever undertaken at UTEP was launched during the past year. This coordinated effort to improve Human Resources and Finance systems, which will run on PeopleSoft software at the U.T. System's remote Data Center in Ft. Worth, is led by Vice President for Business Affairs Cindy Villa and managed by Iris Niestas. A large UTEP team has been hard at work during the past year on this major systems conversion project, which is expected to provide us with the capacity required to support UTEP's growth and our national research university aspirations. Although the designated team has primary responsibility for this project, all of us will have a role to play as work progresses toward anticipated implementation in September 2012, and I know that team members will greatly appreciate your support and patience as this process unfolds.

A broad range of amenities also contribute to campus climate, creating an attractive environment for students, faculty and staff members, as well as for members of the surrounding community.

- The new Student Recreation Center, enhanced computer access and extended hours in the Library, and growth in student organizations and events have expanded opportunities for UTEP students to spend more productive and enjoyable time on campus, which adds to our collective quality of life on the campus. There is a notable increase in activity on the campus, from early morning, throughout the entire day, and into the evening hours. On most weekends too, the campus is abuzz with activity, both regularly scheduled classes and outreach programs, as well as a broad range of special events.
- Parking, the constant challenge on urban campuses, is being addressed with the addition of parking garages, with another, on Schuster between the College of Business Administration and the Academic Services Building, scheduled to open early in the spring semester to serve the growing UTEP population at the southern end of the campus.
- In conjunction with our updated Master Plan, we have begun focusing greater attention on-campus grounds -- the connecting spaces between campus buildings, walkways, gathering areas and other open spaces that invite us all to enjoy each other's company, our beautiful campus and El Paso's wonderful weather. We continue to have a goal of closing the center of our campus to vehicular traffic by the time of our centennial in 2014, and have begun designing

various spaces across the campus that we hope participants in our Centennial Campaign – including members of our own UTEP family – will help sponsor.

- Food and beverage services play a daily role in our quality of life at UTEP, as well as a special role in nearly all of UTEP’s activities and events. We successfully negotiated new seven-year contracts with two key vendors— Sodexho and Coca-Cola—for food and beverage services on the campus, with anticipated revenues to UTEP of nearly \$14 million, in addition to \$2.4 million in upgrades to food venues across the campus. We’re pleased to continue our relationship with the Sodexho team that has served us well over the past seven years, and we welcome Luis Rivera and his Coca-Cola team back to UTEP. Special thanks to Cindy Villa, Victor Pacheco, and Diane de Hoyos for their great work in expediting these two major contract processes.

Campus events and activities are among the most highly visible signs of an institution’s level of internal engagement and its quality-of-life impact on the surrounding region. They provide both on- and off-campus constituencies with opportunities to learn, offer support and assistance to others, form new associations, and be entertained.

- With an estimated 35,000 participants this year, Minerpalooza has become the back-to-school festival and pep rally on everyone’s calendar, attracting UTEP students, faculty and staff and their families as well as increasing numbers of community participants. Thanks to interim Vice President Gary Edens, and all those who work with him in Student Affairs, for their creativity and enthusiastic support of the full calendar of activities they plan, organize and sponsor each year.
- The Millennium Lecture Series, the Border Security Conference and many other departmental and college-sponsored events brought to the UTEP campus a broad range of high-profile speakers, including U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Education Trust President Kati Haycock, Lumina Foundation President Jamie Merisotis, and Director of Customs and Border Protection Alan Bersin, who shared with us their unique perspectives on a variety of provocative topics.
- We enjoyed a robust schedule of recitals, concerts and productions presented by the many talented students and faculty in the Music Department, in Theatre Arts and Dance and the UTEP Dinner Theatre, as well as engaging exhibitions in the Rubin Center, Centennial Museum, and other campus venues. Special thanks to T. Andre Feagin for the excitement that he’s created with the UTEP Marching Miners in the Sun Bowl....and for his special interest in researching the history of UTEP bands and band music, just in time for our centennial commemoration!
- The Special Events Department offered a full entertainment schedule during the past year, selling a total of 550,000 tickets to 450 events with revenues exceeding \$7 million, featuring such performers as Shakira, Monster Jam, and Michael Bublé. Thanks to Jorge Vazquez for the success he’s achieved in bringing such a broad range of exciting programming to the UTEP campus. Thanks too to Mike Spence and the Special Facilities Department for adapting the Don Haskins Center, Sun Bowl and Magoffin Auditorium to accommodate

nearly 1000 events during the past year, ranging from Cirque du Soleil to 32 university, college, high school and trade school graduation ceremonies.

- During the past year, UTEP Miner Athletics hosted in some of the finest intercollegiate sports venues in the U.S., a large number of men's and women's competitions, including the Conference USA Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments which attracted student athletes and fans to El Paso from across the U.S. The UTEP Women's Golf Team won the C-USA championship, both football and men's basketball teams played in post-season competitions, and two UTEP women athletes, Stacie Townsend and Blessing Okagbare were finalists for highly prestigious national awards.
- Also attracting both on- and off-campus participants are events organized by Alumni and Constituent Relations, under Richard Daniel's leadership. From tailgate parties before home football games to Homecoming and Parents' Association activities, UTEP is extending its reach into the Paso del Norte community and our alumni network, both in this region and across the world.
- The 2014 Commission launched its work under the able leadership of Laura Tate Goldman and Ed Escudero with support from Richard Daniel, and as we move toward our 100th birthday in 2014, the visibility of the Commission's work will continue to grow. Next spring, for example, we are planning to invite the surrounding community to UTEP for a campus-wide open house, which will be part of our participation in a national initiative called OpportunityNation, as well as our first "rehearsal" for our centennial celebration in 2014. Stay tuned for that!

I arrived in El Paso 40 years ago to fulfill a one-year contract as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Languages and Linguistics without a clue that I'd actually just embarked on a longer and far more eventful journey. The UTEP that I joined in 1971, and the one that surrounded me as I accepted the Board of Regents' offer to serve as president in 1988, were remarkably different from the UTEP we all know today. Although our many splendid new campus facilities proclaim proudly that UTEP has undergone a significant campus transformation, we all know that universities are fundamentally about people, and I'm sure that those of you who have been at UTEP for a while will agree that even more deeply transformational than our physical changes have been the changes in attitudes, aspirations, and expectations among UTEP students, faculty and staff, alumni and friends. We expect more of ourselves and each other, and with growing pride and confidence, we have become both a more authentic and ambitious institution. We have embraced our mission to provide both access and excellence to all residents of this region, we're proud that our student population now mirrors that of the region, and we're prouder still that our students' extraordinary accomplishments have so strongly validated the path we've chosen.

As we approach our centennial commemoration in 2014, we will reflect often on our distinguished 100-year journey from the Texas State School of Mines, through the College of Mines and Texas Western College to today's proudly transformed UTEP. But our centennial will also be an opportunity to look ahead toward the next leg of this journey, as we launch the second century of UTEP's service to this region, and continue the confident pursuit of our vision to become the first national research university with a

21st century student demographic. Thanks to each and every one of you for all you've done to contribute to another highly successful year at UTEP, and special thanks to you for your commitment to continue with us on UTEP's remarkable journey. I can't imagine better travel companions than all of you!

Go Miners!