



Fall Convocation 2018
State of The University Address
President Diana Natalicio
October 11, 2018

As-Given
The University of Texas at El Paso
Fall 2018 Convocation Remarks
October 11, 2018

Thank you very much, Sandor. And, congratulations to you, Elena, on your highly successful tenure as President of the UTEP Faculty Senate.

Let me take a moment to thank our Student Ambassadors, student volunteers and representatives of the University staff for serving as ushers today. I would also like to extend special thanks to Martha Faeldog and Victor Erives, Jr., for providing our interpretation this afternoon, and the members of the UTEP Marching Miners Drumline, for providing our opening fanfare as we arrived at the Recital Hall. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Andrew Smith, the Director of the Drumline and Dr. Andrew Hunter, Associate Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands. Thanks for all that you do!

I am also pleased to acknowledge in the audience, along with members of her board, Felipa Solis, Executive Director of El Paso Pro Musica and 2018 College of Liberal Arts Gold Nugget Award Recipient.

This afternoon, I am pleased to present, in a special performance, the UTEP Center for Arts Entrepreneurship Cello Ensemble, featuring three UTEP graduate students from the studio of Grammy Award-winning Artistic Director of El Paso Pro-Musica and UTEP's Center for Arts Entrepreneurship, Zuill Bailey, who is widely recognized as one of the world's premier cellists.

Amy Miller, a second-year graduate student in UTEP's Department of Music, along with Ivana Biliskov, an international student from Croatia, and Christopher Beroes-Haigis, from New York, are the three talented members of the ensemble. They are looking at exciting careers in music and, when not on campus, they participate in community engagement and educational outreach.

Christopher, Ivana and Amy will perform "Pavane" by French composer, Gabriel Fauré. Fauré originally composed this work for piano and it was later transcribed for cello.

Thank you, members of the UTEP Center for Arts Entrepreneurship Cello Ensemble for your exquisite music and for representing UTEP so well before local and international audiences.

I am honored to recognize a number of individuals here today who play key leadership roles in ensuring UTEP's success. I'll start with UTEP's Vice Presidents and Deans, outstanding colleagues whose leadership has been, and will continue to be, critical to achieving our students' and UTEP's full potential.

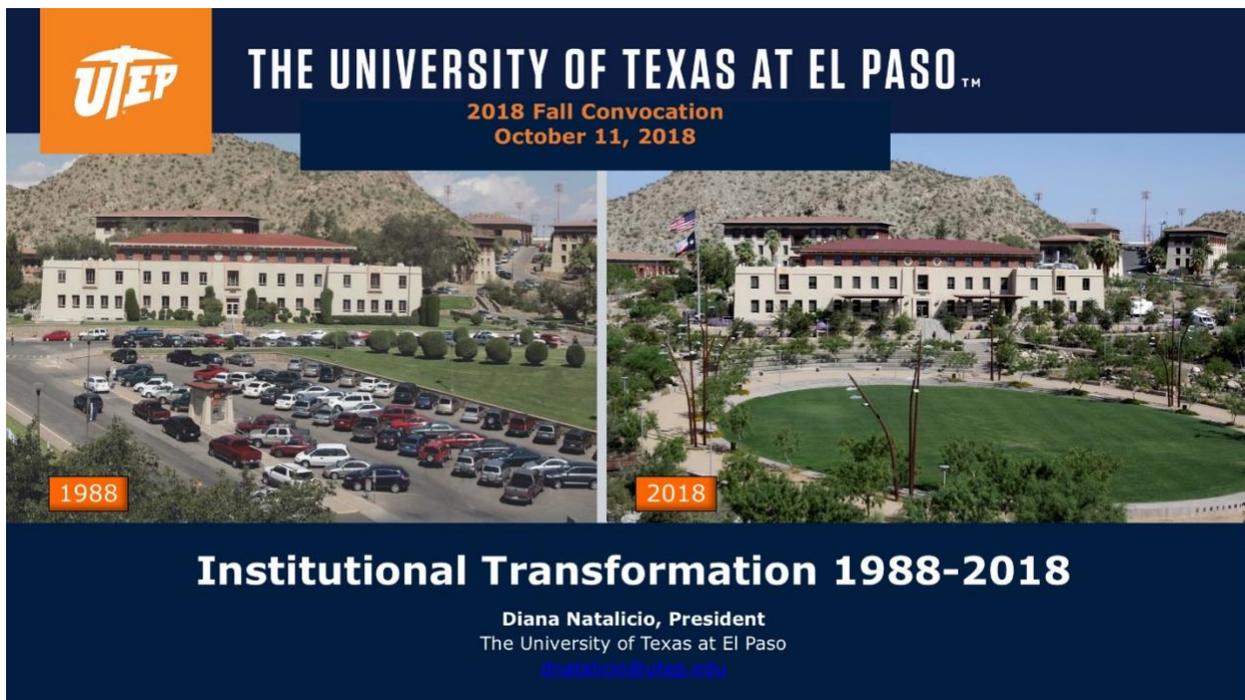
I will ask them to stand and ask you to hold your applause until I have introduced all of them.

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Carol Parker
- Vice President for Research, Roberto Osegueda
- Vice President for Information Resources and Planning, Steve Riter
- Vice President for Asset Management and Development, Ben Gonzalez
- Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, James Senter
- Interim Dean of Business Administration, Steve Crites
- Dean of the College of Education, Clif Tanabe
- Dean of the College of Engineering, Theresa Maldonado
- Dean of the Extended University, Beth Brunk-Chavez
- Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Denis O'Hearn
- Dean of the College of Science, Rob Kirken

I'm also very pleased to acknowledge other members of UTEP's campus leadership team:

- President of the Faculty Senate, Sandor Dorgo
- Chair of the Graduate Council, Amy Wagler
- Chair of the Staff Council, Ana Diaz
- President of the UTEP Alumni Association, Bonny Schulenburg
- President of the Student Government Association, Cristian Botello

Thanks to all of you for all that you do for UTEP.



One of the ways I prepare to write my annual Convocation remarks is to read through the presentations I've made at previous Convocations, which, when combined, create an interesting history of UTEP over the past 30 years.

Taken together, these Convocation remarks document a rich range of what was considered at the time, the previous year’s highlights, based on reports submitted annually by all vice presidents and deans. To give you just a flavor: In 1989, we launched a major strategic planning effort, which has continued to guide UTEP’s progress since then. In 1993, we celebrated reaching a major milestone of \$10 million in annual research expenditures. In 1997, the Undergraduate Learning Center welcomed its first classes. In 2001, UTEP enrollment climbed to 16,200 students, 1,700 of whom were from Mexico. In 2003, the Texas Legislature delivered the shocking news of a major reduction in state funding for all Texas public universities—which amounted to a 12% cut at UTEP—while at the same time easing legislative caps on tuition increases. The message was clear: state universities should plan to rely less on state support and more on tuition and fee revenues from students. Since then, this new funding model has presented especially daunting challenges to institutions, like UTEP, that serve large numbers of economically disadvantaged students. In 2008, the UT System Board of Regents approved PUF funding to construct the Health Sciences and Nursing Building; and two years ago, we broke ground on the Interdisciplinary Research Building, which will soon become another splendid addition to the beautiful UTEP campus. Oh, and along the way, in 2014, we celebrated UTEP’s 100th birthday with a re-configuration of the campus center, and creation of Centennial Plaza, which has transformed UTEP’s campus and our campus climate.

I could continue citing many more fascinating UTEP historical nuggets, but I’ll resist that temptation. Instead, let’s focus on some of this year’s contributions to our growing UTEP highlights list and their validation of both our success in achieving UTEP’s access and excellence mission..... and our raised aspirations for what can be achieved going forward.



Student Success Indicators -- 30-Year Change

	1987-88	Current
UTEP Enrollment	14,056	25,151
Total Percent of UTEP Hispanic Students	52.7%	80.2%
Percent of Hispanics in El Paso County	69.5%	82.8%
Regional HS Graduates Enrolled in Higher Education*	44% <small>(2002)</small>	54% <small>(2017)</small>
Students Employed on Campus	1,894 <small>(1995-96)</small>	3,314
UTEP Graduates	1,485	4,842

1st in Texas

* THECB High School Graduates Enrolled in Higher Education the Following Fall by High School County, School District

During the past year, UTEP's enrollment continued its steady growth. This fall's enrollment of 25,151 students set yet another record, adding to our more than 50% growth since 2001. This is especially good news in our historically underserved region because it means that more young people have chosen—and prepared themselves well—to pursue a college degree. In fact, the El Paso area now ranks first among all Texas regions in the percentage of all high school graduates who continue on to post-secondary education. Noteworthy, too, is that UTEP is attracting this region's "best and brightest" high school graduates: UTEP now enrolls more than half of all the Top Ten Percent high school graduates in this region who attend public universities in Texas.

The total number of UTEP graduates also rose again this year to 4,842, setting another record. Especially satisfying is the growth in the total number of graduates per year, which has more than doubled (127%) over the past 20 years. This is one of the best indicators of the success of our more focused efforts to work closely with our students to prevent stop-outs, achieve efficiency in the pursuit of their degrees, and reduce their time to degree completion.

A majority (55%) of UTEP's students continue to be the first in their families to attend college, and, by any measure, they have very modest financial means. During the past year, the more than 24,500 students who applied for financial aid at UTEP reported an average family income of \$36,700, and 37% of them reported annual family incomes of \$20,000 or less.

Respecting our students' financial challenges, UTEP has sought to ensure affordability in a context of declining state support, by keeping a tight rein on tuition and fee increases. Today, our average tuition is just over \$8,000 for the two-semester academic year, which is \$2,000 less per year than UT San Antonio, the next lowest among all our peer institutions, and \$5,000 less than UT Dallas's, which is the highest among our peers.

The past year has been significant in many other ways, with great progress on many fronts, all contributing to UTEP's growing reputation for successfully fulfilling our public research university mission. On the leadership front, we learned just how competitive UTEP has become in recruiting new faculty, staff and administrators. Two new deans—Clif Tanabe in Education, who came to UTEP from the University of Hawaii, and Denis O'Hearn in Liberal Arts who was most recently at Texas A&M. Both bring extensive experience, a strong commitment to UTEP's mission, and high aspirations for the future of their colleges and, especially, for the students they serve. In addition, Vice President for Business Affairs Mark McGurk and Athletic Director Jim Senter joined us to provide leadership in their respective areas. We've already learned that Jim Senter moves fast! Within one month after arriving, he recruited new head coaches in football and men's basketball, Dana Dimel and Rodney Terry, who are themselves now off to running starts. A warm UTEP welcome to all of you!

Implementation of UTEP's QEP, now branded as the UTEP Edge, has focused attention over the past year on two key areas that directly impact student success —academic

advising and financial support—and the convergence between the two. Closer cooperation between Academic and Student Affairs has led to a re-design of Academic Advising, ably directed by Heather Smith; tighter articulation between UTEP and EPCC, steered by Gary Edens; and, with Ivette Savina’s capable guidance, a re-energized El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. Deeper dives into data on students’ financial challenges have enabled the development of such strategies as enhanced investment in student employment on campus. The 3,314 UTEP students who are employed on campus today reflect nearly 70% growth since 1996. Through these and other strategies, we are making real progress in weaving together a far stronger safety net to ensure that students who enroll at UTEP will be able to progress more efficiently toward graduation.

University fundraising across the U.S. has changed dramatically over the past couple of decades. A new team in Asset Management & Development, under Ben Gonzalez’s leadership, has brought refreshed energy and innovative ideas to lay a foundation for increasing and diversifying UTEP’s revenue base, through such research –driven entrepreneurial ventures as the Keck and cSTER laboratories’ off-campus operations; participation in regional economic development initiatives; and stage-setting for a strategic fundraising campaign within the next couple of years. In addition, we view these initiatives as offering potential to stem the tide of UTEP graduates, especially those in STEM, who now leave this region for more attractive offers of employment across the U.S. and the world.

As I reviewed deans’ and vice presidents’ reports of the past year’s accomplishments, I was once again impressed by the sheer volume of major strides that have been made across the entire campus far too many to capture in today’s remarks. With so much growth in UTEP’s size, scope and list of major accomplishments, it’s not only difficult, but perhaps even misleading, to feature just a few. Perhaps the bigger story is best captured in a quote from Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who said, “Real change enduring change happens one step at a time.” Indeed, in our pursuit of UTEP’s vision and mission, each year’s major milestones are the single steps that have contributed to bringing about real and enduring change at UTEP, and in the lives of the students and the community we serve. They have interwoven to become cross-cutting themes, and they have delivered cumulative impacts, reflecting, shaping and growing our appetite to set ever-higher aspirations for UTEP’s future. That’s enduring change. The vision and mission adopted 30 years ago have been strongly validated by UTEP’s progress in becoming one of the very few large public research universities in the United States today that is authentically and successfully delivering on both access and excellence commitments.

It’s those cross-cutting themes that I’d like to focus on briefly now. Let’s start with access.

As all of you know, UTEP has over the past 30 years placed high priority on delivering on its responsibility to welcome and serve well talented and motivated young people in the Texas-Mexico border region in which we are located. From the first Convocation,

my remarks underscored the importance of fostering student access in an educationally underserved region like ours. At that time, UTEP's students didn't accurately reflect the demographics of the surrounding region which was home to more than 80% of them. Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students were disproportionately underrepresented. If you believe, as I did then and do now, that talent is equally distributed across gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, and socioeconomic level, then you also recognize that public universities like UTEP have a responsibility to provide high-quality educational opportunities to all young people in their surrounding regions, whatever their backgrounds.

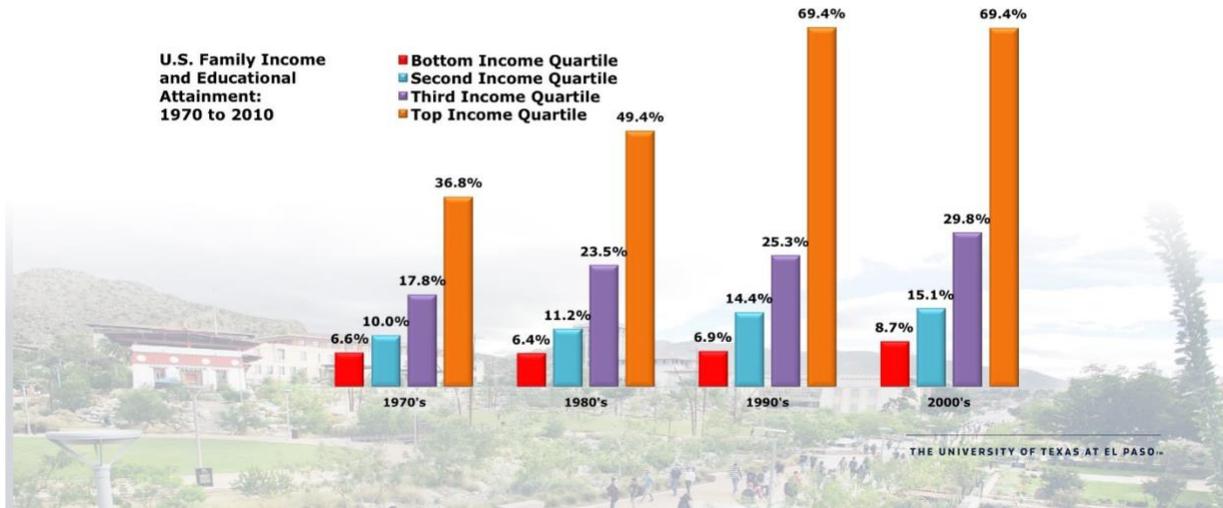
It was clear in 1988 that too many talented young people in this region, who had earned an opportunity to pursue their higher education dreams and aspirations, were, in effect, being discouraged from pursuing a pathway—for most of them, probably the only pathway—to a better life for them and their families. A shared mindset across the region—in families, neighborhoods, teachers, schools, and even at UTEP—reminded young people constantly of the many reasons why they did not have whatever it took to be university students. College-going was considered to be exclusively for those who had more talent and, especially, more money.

From my vantage point as UTEP's new president, this message resonated very strongly. Like many of you, I graduated from a blue-collar high school that did little or nothing to inspire or prepare me or my fellow graduates to pursue higher education. We understood the collective expectation that we would get jobs, and to prepare us for those jobs, we were provided special high school courses—machine shop for the boys, and secretarial studies and home economics for the girls, the latter to come in handy when we married those boys, which many of my high school friends did shortly after graduation. To be fair, I should add that my high school experience wasn't all bad: I continue to be fast-fingered on the keyboard, and can still sew on a button!

Of course, those were different times, when a university degree was far less common than it has become today. What's striking, however, is that today—more than 50 years later—far too many economically disadvantaged young people in this country continue to have a very low probability of completing baccalaureate degrees.



Bachelor's Degree Attainment Disparities in the U.S.--1970's-2000's



When viewed through the lens of socioeconomic levels, less than 10% of young people in the lowest quartile of the U.S. population today now earn baccalaureate degrees, a figure that has grown only 2% over the past 40 years. This dismal statistic becomes even more alarming when compared with the 70% of their peers in the highest socioeconomic quartile who complete bachelor's degrees today, a figure that has doubled during the same 40-year period. This widening baccalaureate degree gap is alarming: 9% vs. 70% college completion rates as a function of family income! Last time I checked, there's no evidence that talent has been, nor is now, disproportionately concentrated in the highest socioeconomic quartile.

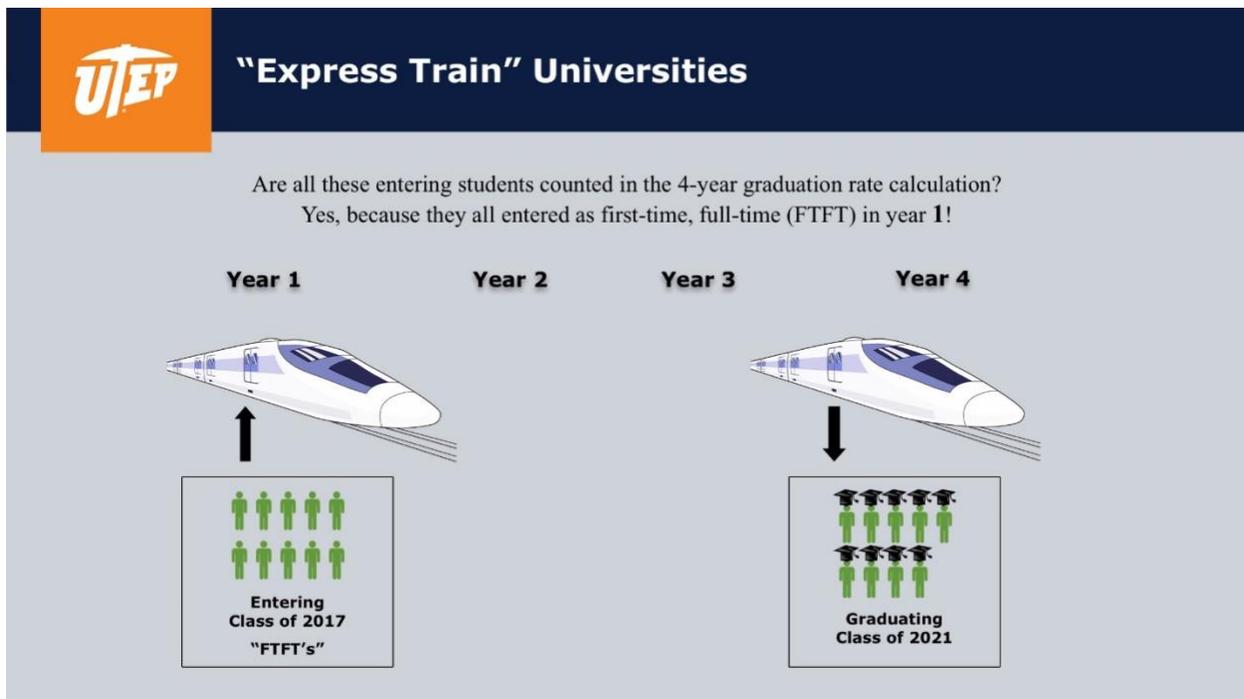
For most of its history, UTEP—in all of its name incarnations—was, like most other universities across the country, a destination for those who were able to find their own way to them. Graduates of a small number of high schools—Coronado, Eastwood, El Paso and Burges—comprised the majority of UTEP-bound students. Many of them were the sons and daughters of college educated parents, and they were from better resourced backgrounds....not necessarily wealthy, but comfortable. Conversely, we learned from studying feeder patterns that other El Paso area high schools, especially those enrolling predominantly Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students, sent only one or even none of their graduates on to UTEP.

To address this unacceptable disparity, UTEP reached out to build partnerships with area school districts, the El Paso Community College, and business and civic leaders across El Paso County. (I should mention here that we had a head start on this outreach because an estimated 80% of school professionals in this region were UTEP alumni, and 80% of UTEP students were graduates of area high schools. In effect, UTEP was—and still is!—part of a closed PreK – 16 educational loop.) We called this partnership the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, whose mission was to

pave—or in many places build from scratch—smooth pathways from Pre-K through baccalaureate degree completion. Our goal was to engage all educators in the region in a shared commitment to prepare all young people to aspire to and achieve a higher education credential.

More than 25 years later, the Collaborative continues to serve as a convener, innovation generator, data manager and evaluator for what has become widely recognized as the national model for success in fostering access and PreK-16 educational attainment across ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries.

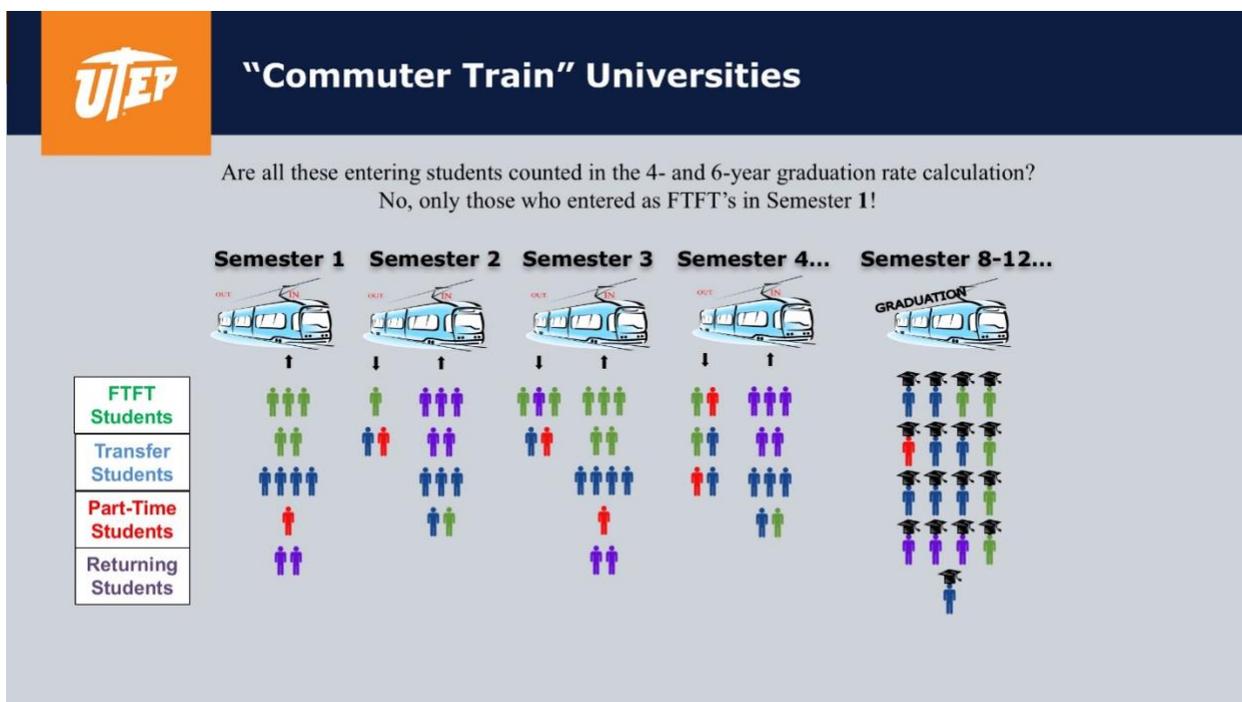
U.S. higher education is often segmented into two sets of institutions: elite colleges and universities, which include both high-profile private and public state flagships that serve students from across the US and which have historically tended to serve a majority student population from the higher end of the socioeconomic scale. By contrast, comprehensive universities—usually public—primarily serve students from the regions in which they are located, and sometimes reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of those regions. There are many ways to characterize these different university models, but my favorite is one that a group of UTEP faculty members and I worked up some years ago.



The express train depicts the elite university model. Once students embark as freshmen, they speed along together for four years and, with few outliers, the entire cohort graduates in the same year. Fellow graduates were fellow freshmen four years earlier.

At most of these universities, a commitment to diversity and access has generally been focused on, defined, and measured in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of their entering freshman cohorts. Under enormous enrollment pressures, and using such traditional admission tickets as SAT and ACT scores, these institutions tightly control who gets a seat on the express train ride and, once they are aboard, they are very likely to complete their journeys together and on time. With few exceptions, the graduating classes look very much like the entering classes four years earlier. More recently, as socioeconomic disparities in higher education participation have been added to the diversity menu, some of the more selective institutions are struggling over how best to respond to pressures for increased diversity while maintaining their elite status. One solution adopted at some of them (e.g., U. of Chicago and Trinity University in Texas) is to suspend the use of such “inconvenient” admissions metrics as SAT and ACT scores, which are well-known to be highly correlated with family income, and, I should add, metrics in which UTEP has had no confidence.

Diversity in the student body is, then, achieved through highly restricted admissions, and far less on a sustained strategy to ensure continued accessibility for students as they progress toward graduation.



Comprehensive universities, on the other hand, are more likely to operate as commuter trains, stopping at each semester's station, while passengers get on and get off. There are generally fewer restrictions on who is allowed on the train and at which station they may board, and many of the passengers may transfer from and to other trains. Still others discontinue their journey along the way because they don't have enough money for a full ticket or they are discouraged by the slow ride they are taking. By the time the commuter train arrives at its destination four years later, the cohort of those on the train

who have arrived at their graduation destination does not resemble the one that boarded the commuter train together four years earlier. In fact, at UTEP, only 30% of the graduating students actually make the full trip together, and, consequently, 70% of the students with whom we work over a four-year period, are not counted in UTEP's 4-year graduation rates.

In general, it has been these comprehensive universities, and more recently, community colleges, that have enrolled the majority of economically disadvantaged students. In the past, and thanks to strong state support, many of these institutions were able to offer a high-quality education at an affordable cost. However, demographic changes and declines in public education funding over the past several decades have disrupted that model, and the educational opportunity gap between haves and have-nots in our society has grown wider.



At UTEP and many other public universities, especially those using relatively open admissions to counteract the socioeconomic bias of traditional metrics, the commitment to ensure access cannot end with a student's initial enrollment. UTEP students are clearly talented, they tend to be disciplined, hardworking, and resilient, and they fully understand that completing their degrees offers a trajectory to a better life for them and their families. However, even these highly positive student attributes are too often not sufficient to take them across the graduation goal line. Students' often complex life issues and responsibilities disrupt even the best planned and tenaciously pursued pathways.

Deeply embedded in the UTEP culture is a constant commitment to foster access, a shared and sustained responsibility for students' success in achieving their goals,

whether completing baccalaureate or advanced degrees, or discovering a deep passion for philosophy, graphic design or physics....or all three! For UTEP faculty and staff, that usually means playing a more active role in nurturing a climate that is intensely focused on supporting the achievement of students' goals during the full span of their engagement with us. It means stepping out of our roles as faculty and staff members to see our students as human beings with complex lives, and to allow them to see us as human beings who truly care about their well-being and success. This mutual respect pays huge dividends, building students' trust in us and in their own self-confidence, and giving us the privilege of sharing in the joy of their successes.

I hasten to add that this sustained responsibility for ensuring access does not, in any way, mean lowering standards or expectations of students, which would do them no favor. Instead, it entails vigilance and responsiveness by all faculty and staff to support students when they are faced with such major life circumstances as homelessness and food insecurity, or the sudden disruption of their progress toward degree completion by the loss of a job or a family member's health crisis. We can demonstrate this sustained commitment to accessibility by optimizing scholarship and financial aid awards, accommodating test or class schedules, setting aside funds for emergency loans, providing a full range of context-sensitive student support services, even advocating for improved local public transportation options or state policy changes...but never lowering standards, which would deny our students the very opportunities that we pledged to offer them. Our highly intentional efforts to address the myriad access issues that our students face during their enrollment at UTEP will strongly increase their likelihood of success and degree completion, and our satisfaction in having had a positive impact on their and their families' lives, and on the future quality of life of all residents of this region.

Changing a campus climate to assure sustained access not only involves responding to challenges. It is the result of highly intentional efforts made over many years to understand more fully both the daunting challenges and the remarkable strengths that students develop through their life experiences, which they bring with them to the campus every day: such assets as resilience, bilingual/biculturalism, responsibility, perseverance, and time management. UTEP's goal has been to identify, leverage and build on those assets.

Extending well beyond classrooms, laboratories and other formal education settings, the collective commitment to student success involves the engagement of the entire campus community, creating an "all-in" culture in which everyone at UTEP has a role to play. Whatever our official duties, and wherever we are located on the campus, we must all share responsibility for, be committed to, and strive to promote, student success. All of us have the capacity to help new students navigate the campus, mentor student assistants in our workplaces, submit grant proposals that incorporate undergraduate student assistantships, console students who have suffered a setback of some kind, and express interest in their experiences, or in their big dreams and aspirations. More recently, this "all-in" culture with its UTEP Edge branding, is expected to develop further a comprehensive and asset-based campus climate that ensures that

all students are respected, and encouraged to participate in a rich array of experiences, both in their classes and labs and everywhere else across the campus....and beyond.

The graphic features the UTEP logo in an orange box on the left. To its right, a dark blue banner contains the text "Access and Excellence Mission". Below this, a central illustration shows a large orange and blue scale of justice. The left pan is labeled "ACCESS" and is higher, while the right pan is labeled "EXCELLENCE" and is lower. The scale is supported by a central pillar with a large blue cross on top. Two lists of bullet points are positioned on either side of the scale. On the far left, a small photo shows a person walking on a campus path. On the far right, a small photo shows graduates in blue and orange regalia.

UTEP

Access and Excellence Mission

- Pre-College Preparation
- Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Comprehensive Academic Advising
- Career Planning Services
- Class Scheduling Options

ACCESS

- Competitive Faculty & Graduates
- Expanded Doctoral Programs
- Robust Research Infrastructure
- Enriched Undergraduate Programs & Research Experiences
- Alumni Success Stories

EXCELLENCE

UTEP's commitment to embed in our culture a commitment to sustained access is critical but not sufficient to ensure students' success upon graduation; an equally strong commitment must be made to quality and excellence. So, another critical dimension of our shared responsibility to serve UTEP students well is the quality of the academic programs they complete, and the assured opportunities offered by the degrees they earn. Degrees earned mean little if they do not offer graduates a pathway to post-enrollment success; they must authentically be—and be recognized by future employers and graduate and professional schools—as highly competitive. The UTEP brand must be well-known for its success in offering students both access and excellence.



Access + Excellence = UTEP Graduates' Competitiveness



Challenging the widely held notion that universities fall into two distinct categories—those committed to access and those that are excellence-driven—and that an institution's success requires making a choice between the two, UTEP set about proving that no such trade-off was necessary. In fact, we believe that making that choice is seriously problematic for public institutions, especially those like UTEP, that are the sole universities in large, highly populated, relatively isolated and historically underserved settings. 30 years ago, we understood that to be worthy of the students to whom we offered access—who were, in effect, entrusting entirely to us their dreams and aspirations for the future—we had to do all we could to ensure that their UTEP diplomas would enable them to compete with their more affluent peers for graduate and professional school admissions and employment opportunities. We also knew that this commitment to the quality of UTEP's degree programs would require successfully recruiting highly productive research faculty who are equally committed to teaching and mentoring undergraduate students. We also knew that recruiting such faculty would require us to be successful in developing doctoral degree programs and building a more robust research infrastructure, including both physical facilities and a more proactive and supportive Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Despite many doubters and naysayers, UTEP embarked on its access and excellence quest, determined not to emulate traditional models, but rather to create our own context-sensitive UTEP model.....to do it our way!



Excellence Indicators -- 30-Year Change

	1987-88	Current
Doctoral programs	1	22
Doctoral students	16 <small>(1990)</small>	921
Full-time Equivalent (FTE) faculty	456	948
Research expenditures	\$2.6 M <small>(FY88)</small>	\$94.6 M <small>(FY17)</small>
Total degrees awarded	1,485	4,842 <small>(+226%)</small>

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO™

The results of our highly intentional strategies to build excellence by developing doctoral programs and a robust research agenda at UTEP have, by any measure, been remarkable. The number of doctoral degree programs offered on our campus has increased from 1 to 22, and annual research expenditures from \$2.6 million dollars in 1988 to nearly \$95 million last year.

Equally important, and perhaps one of the very best examples of the interplay of access and excellence at UTEP, is our commitment to ensure that all students benefit from our quest for excellence. Research faculty are not sequestered in ivory towers; they do cutting-edge work while also dedicating their time and talents to undergraduate mentoring and teaching. Many of our most successful—and successfully funded—researchers actively engage UTEP undergraduates in their work, and often incorporate funding for undergraduate assistantships into their grant proposals, thereby creating opportunities for financially strapped students to simultaneously learn and earn. Over the past two decades, the number of student employees on the campus has grown by 75%, from just under 2,000 to more than 3,300 today, most of whom are supported by external funding competitively generated by UTEP faculty and staff. The following examples provide just a small window into the remarkable success stories resulting from UTEP faculty's strong and sustained commitment to achieving excellence through highly competitive grant funding, while never losing sight of our shared access responsibilities:

Dr. Thenral Mangadu in the College of Health Sciences was successful this past year in securing four major grants from the Department of Health and Human Services, totaling more than \$5 million, to conduct evidence-based education and training in such areas as substance abuse, serious mental illness and mental disturbance, sexual assault, and

dating and domestic violence. More than 100 undergraduate students will participate in these grant activities.

Dr. Igor Almeida, Professor of Biological Sciences, received a 5-year, \$6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health for a clinical trial study, “New Chemotherapy Regimens and Biomarkers for Chagas Disease,” a disease caused by a parasite that affects millions of people in Latin America and is emerging in the U.S. and elsewhere across the world. With this grant and additional NIH funding, Dr. Almeida will develop new chemotherapy regimens and biomarkers for the disease, and in addition to engaging research partners across the globe, he will involve 10-15 UTEP students in this work.

Dr. Ann Gates, faculty member and chair of the Computer Science Department, is recipient of a \$10.7 million grant from the National Science Foundation to advance the work of INCLUDES Alliance: a Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, which she launched in 2004, and which now comprises more than 40 public and private institutions and organizations across the U.S. This project seeks specifically to build a process for change through collective impact strategies. Dr. Gates is well known for her leadership and research in computer science and for her success in building partnerships, at UTEP and across the world, and she will engage both post-graduate and graduate students as well as 66 undergraduate students in this grant-funded project.

Evidence of the long-term impact of UTEP’s excellence climate on student success is clear and powerful, from accelerating their progress to degree completion and raising their aspirations to pursue post-graduate education, to successfully securing elite fellowships, admission to highly prestigious post-graduate and professional programs, and offers of highly competitive employment.



UTEP Graduates' Growing Competitiveness

	2005	Current
Employer Interviews on Campus	1500	3000+

UTEP undergraduate and graduate students recently interviewed by, among others:

- Google
- Apple
- University of North Carolina
- Amazon
- Microsoft
- George Mason University
- Novartis
- University of Kentucky
- Prudential
- Rolls Royce
- St. John's University
- University of Maine
- Lockheed Martin
- NASA
- Boeing
- Texas Tech University
- New York Life
- Deloitte
- James Madison University
- ESPN
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Blue Origin

One indicator of UTEP's success is the number of employers who interview UTEP students annually. These employers range from major technology, accounting and engineering firms to energy and healthcare companies, government agencies, as well as higher education institutions seeking to recruit our accomplished doctoral degree recipients for faculty positions.



UTEP Graduates' Growing Competitiveness

	1999-00	Current
UTEP Graduates in Post-Graduate School Within One Year of Graduation	342	551

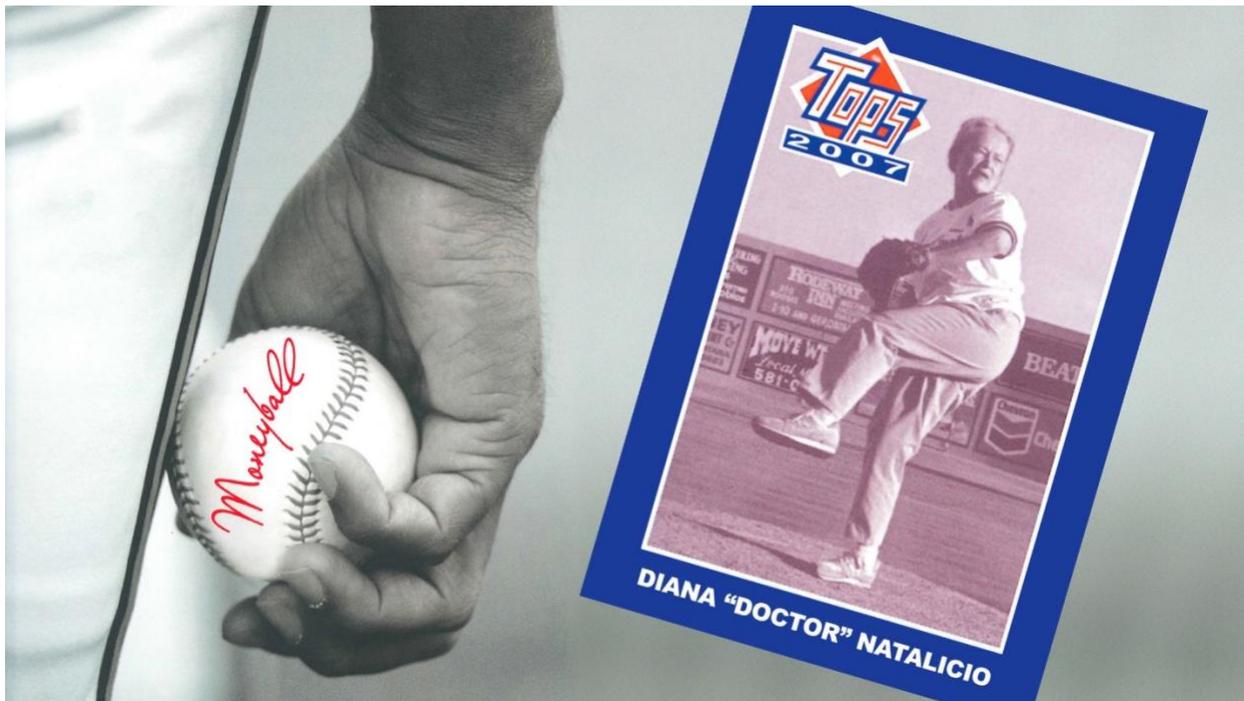
UTEP graduates enrolled at:

- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- U. Texas Medical Branch Galveston
- UT Southwestern Medical School
- Harvard Law
- Harvard School of Public Health
- New York University
- Rice University
- Stanford University
- TTHSC-EI Paso
- UCLA Law
- UC-Santa Barbara
- UC-Berkeley
- Yale University

Another good indicator of UTEP's quality is the steady growth in the number of UTEP graduates who enroll in graduate or professional school within one year of their UTEP degree completion. In 2016-17, for example, more than 550 UTEP students enrolled in graduate or professional school within one year of earning their bachelor's degrees, by successfully securing for slots in extremely competitive graduate programs.

So, that's UTEP's story over the past 30 years as we've developed more intentional and nuanced approaches to serving the population of the surrounding region. Initially, we pledged to all young people across this region that, whatever their backgrounds, UTEP would make every effort to represent for them an authentic opportunity to achieve their dreams of pursuing a university degree. Once they enrolled, we worked very hard to sustain our commitment to access by providing a safety net of support services, which both enhance the quality of their academic programs and minimize the disruption to their progress that may be caused by the life challenges they sometimes face. As we've seen, the results of these efforts have not only had a strong impact on UTEP students' successful degree completion, but has also ensured that the degrees they earned will be well-known for their high quality, positioning them well for continued success wherever their lives may take them after graduation.

And, in the process, our students' success has determined UTEP's success. All of us—students, faculty and staff—have been the beneficiaries of UTEP's remarkable transformation from comprehensive regional university to national and international recognition as a highly competitive public research university that never lost sight of its fundamental responsibility to provide social mobility pathways for the population of its surrounding region.



Arriving on this campus as a rookie faculty member, I knew immediately that this UTEP franchise had enormous unrealized potential. As a new member of the team, I learned from students, from alumni and friends in the community and beyond, and from my fellow faculty and staff team members and my colleagues across the world, a process that has continued every day for the past 45 years.

When I received a contract extension, sometimes known as tenure, and was later named coach, then manager and finally general manager, the learning curve accelerated, with exciting new insights every single day. As general manager over the past 30 seasons, I've enthusiastically participated in this UTEP team's long and highly successful run on a range of playing fields, thanks to the talent, competencies, discipline and tenacity of both veteran and rookie players alike. We learned from our playbook, *Moneyball*, whose subtitle is "The Art of Winning a Rigged Game," and we applied its focus on the use of data to play our game, not a game invented and played out in far wealthier franchises. We've learned to understand very clearly who we are, whom we serve, and why we serve them. In addition to the many veteran members of our team, we've been intentional in recruiting outstanding new players—staff and faculty—whose decision to join our team was based on a shared commitment to our access and excellence mission; they too understand why they are here and whom we all serve. Their loyalty to our team and to the surrounding community that supports us is deep and steadfast, and their skill in playing their positions is well aligned with our ballpark, and the aficionados we play for every day. With smart and dedicated coaches and talented, hard-working and skilled players on the field, a highly strategic and effective playbook, and a determination to follow it through, we've learned to compete successfully and win, rising ever higher in the national standings. I am so pleased and grateful to all of you for making that field of dreams come true.

But, we're not finished. There's still so much more that can be done to achieve our own and UTEP's full potential to serve our students, this bi-national metropolitan area, and our state and nation, as a model institution successfully committed to both access and excellence. So, let's get on with making my final season as general manager the best ever.

Go Miners!