Convocation Speech  
September 8, 1994

Eighty years ago this month, in September of 1914, the institution now known as The University of Texas at El Paso opened its doors as The Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy. Despite the considerable instability in this border region occasioned by the revolution underway in Mexico, community leaders committed themselves to long-range goals such as the development of a County hospital, the construction of Elephant Butte Dam, and the establishment of this university. Twenty-seven students formed the first class of future mining engineers who would become industry leaders both in the Southwestern United States and in Mexico.

Eighty years later, this university is obviously larger in size--enrollment this fall is 17,219--and more comprehensive, offering 55 bachelor's, 53 master's, and four doctoral degree programs. It is important to recognize, however, that the mutuality of interests that initially bonded this university to the community that surrounds it continues to be one of the greatest sources of institutional strength and a critical factor in defining our institutional mission. In fact, I think it is fair to say that the increased success that UTEP has enjoyed during the past several years can be directly attributed to its growing awareness of and responsiveness to the human and economic development needs of this region.

At the same time, UTEP has become a national model for success in educating
"non-traditional" students. The profile of UTEP's student body—64% Hispanic, 53% female, a majority of whom are first in their families to attend college, and most of whom are employed either part or full-time—represents the future constituency of higher education in this country, and other universities are increasingly looking to UTEP to provide leadership in helping them meet the challenges of the new student demographics.

UTEP is also a national leader in creating educational opportunities for Mexican students. With approximately 1200 Mexican students, UTEP enrolls nearly 15% of all Mexicans who attend colleges and universities in the United States. What is astonishing about this figure is not that UTEP's Mexican enrollment is so high—after all, our location and our history both work in our favor—but that the aggregate national figure of nearly 8000 is so small when compared with enrollments from countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan, and India.

The visibility of Mexican students at UTEP has also increased recently, thanks to their growing participation in university activities and organizations and to the fine efforts of Debbie Agthe, Rigoberto Delgado, Ben Birchfield, and others in the International Programs Office. Personifying enhanced Mexican student involvement at UTEP is Jose de la Rosa, who was recently elected president of the Student Association, the first Mexican student to serve as leader of UTEP's student body. As ties between the United States and Mexico grow closer, and as
a mutuality of interests draws El Paso and Juarez together, UTEP's role in educating Mexican students will become increasingly important to us and to the region we serve.

The shifting relationship between the U.S. and Mexico is but one of the many major forces of change which are impacting UTEP and other colleges and universities. Just as UTEP was founded eighty years ago during a period of considerable uncertainty, we are today pursuing an extraordinarily ambitious institutional agenda during a tumultuous period in the history of U.S. higher education. Public confidence in higher education has declined, as evidenced by increasingly strident criticism in Congress and in the media, and stagnant or declining appropriations from state legislatures. As states struggle to meet increasing criminal justice and human service needs, reductions in support of higher education are justified on the basis of dissatisfaction with performance--ranging from students' TAAS and SAT scores, to faculty workloads, to curricula that are out of touch with society's needs--and there are demands for greater and greater evidence of accountability.

In Texas, for example, increases in appropriations for higher education have lagged far behind other categories of state funding; adjusted for inflation, such appropriations have increased only 3% during the past 10 years, while funding for public safety and prisons has increased 159% during the same period. In 1985,
state appropriations to UTEP accounted for 58% of the total institutional budget; today, UTEP receives only 38% of its funds from the state. Faculty salaries in Texas rank last when compared with those in the ten largest U.S. states because Coordinating Board formulas which carefully calculate the cost of instruction (by discipline and by level) have been funded for many years at approximately 70% of the recommended level.

One strategy to raise higher education revenues has been to shift costs to students through increased tuition and fees. Tuition increases at some private institutions have pushed them far beyond students' ability to pay, and feverish recruitment campaigns and rumors of mergers and the closing of small institutions are on the rise. At most public universities tuitions have increased less dramatically, but the cost to students has nonetheless risen substantially. UTEP is no exception. Tuition set by the Texas Legislature has risen by $2 per credit hour each year for resident students and is adjusted to reflect the actual cost of instruction for non-residents, which for 1994-95 is $171 per credit hour. Fees, which are institutionally determined, have also been increased to help cover the costs of everything from supplies, materials, and technology associated with courses and labs, to a variety of student services including Counseling, Career Services, Student Health Services, The Prospector, and Intercollegiate Athletics. In 1985, tuition and fees accounted for only 8% of UTEP's total Education and General budget; today they represent 19%. However tempting it may be to the
Legislature to increase tuition, and however pressed we may be to increase fees, it is abundantly clear that the growing cost of higher education and recent changes in federal financial aid programs have combined to place a university education out of the reach of many students at a time when more and more young people will need this education to lead productive and satisfying lives. There is also no question that the cost differential between UTEP and the El Paso Community College, which has grown during the past several years, has impacted students' enrollment decisions.

Now, within this context of turmoil in higher education, UTEP has distinguished itself by successfully pursuing an extraordinarily ambitious agenda during the past several years. In fact, it could be argued that it is precisely because we have been aggressive in seeking new opportunities, and, particularly, new sources of support, that we have managed to shield ourselves from many of the serious problems that now plague other universities. Like those who founded this institution 80 years ago, we have dared to dream of a bigger and better future at UTEP while others hunker down to weather the current storm, and in the process we have achieved both significant progress in reaching our goals, and national visibility for the success of our efforts.

Such success is not achieved without the leadership of the vice presidents and deans and the strong and abiding commitment of large numbers of faculty and
staff members who, through their dedication to UTEP and the students we serve, help us to seek continuous improvement in all that we do. To all of them, we express our appreciation for a job well done, and—in the spirit of continuous improvement—for their understanding that the job is, in fact, never truly done. Success depends too on support from our many friends who understand the importance of our mission and enthusiastically share our aspirations for the future: alumni, members of the El Paso and Juarez communities, our many generous donors, foundations, and government agencies. We have articulated our dreams to them, and they have responded unfailingly.

The 73rd Texas Legislature was particularly responsive to UTEP's dreams last year with its special funding of the South Texas/Border Initiatives. This special commitment of $33 million has enabled us to construct and renovate facilities, to accelerate the development of new degree programs, particularly at the doctoral level, and to strengthen existing programs, both graduate and undergraduate, and related student support services. $23 million of the $33 million came in the form of tuition revenue bond funding for facilities. The largest project is a $15 million undergraduate classroom building featuring the latest teaching/learning technology. Preliminary plans for this building were enthusiastically approved by the U.T. System Board of Regents and endorsed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board this summer, and construction is expected to begin in early 1995 on the site of the present
swimming pool and tennis courts. David Alvidrez, the talented El Paso architect responsible for the physical/occupational therapy facilities in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, was selected to design this new building, and with the advice of a faculty/staff committee, he has created a beautiful and highly functional facility in which we will all take great pride. The site selected for this building will be a new focal point on the campus, and a portion of Dormitory Road will be closed to create a large plaza between the Centennial Museum and the new building to accommodate the anticipated increase in pedestrian traffic.

The remaining $8 million in tuition revenue bond funding from the South Texas/Border Initiatives will be used to upgrade several other facilities on the campus. Old Main, which houses Sociology and Anthropology, was originally built in 1917, and is more than ready for the complete renovation it will undergo this year. Plans have been approved, and construction activity has already begun, with completion anticipated by Fall 1995. Other facilities scheduled to be renovated with the help of South Texas/Border Initiatives funding include Physical Science, Liberal Arts, Magoffin Auditorium, and Psychology. Although the results of this activity will surely be pleasing to faculty, staff and students, all of these projects will inevitably cause some disruption of normal activity, and your good will and patience will be greatly appreciated.

The South Texas/Border Initiatives funding for facilities is particularly important
to UTEP at this time because of the severe reductions in Permanent University Fund support for repair and renovation of facilities and for equipment and library materials. The PUF has traditionally been a major source of capital funds for UTEP and other U.T. System institutions--in fact, most facilities on this campus were constructed or renovated with PUF support--but declines in both oil prices and interest rates have reduced the Fund's revenue to an alarmingly low level. Relief will be sought during the next session of the Legislature, especially in the areas of instructional equipment and library materials.

In addition to the $23 million in tuition revenue bond support for capital improvements, the South Texas/Border Initiatives provided approximately $9 million for program development and enhancement, particularly at the doctoral level. Historic impediments to doctoral program development at UTEP have clearly had a negative impact on overall institutional development, and it is imperative that we seize upon what may be once-in-a-lifetime opportunities presented by the South Texas/Border Initiatives to accelerate the establishment of doctoral programs in selected areas of institutional strength and regional importance. UTEP now offers four doctoral programs, three of which--in Electrical Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering, and Psychology--were initiated within the past three years. STBI funding has been committed to enhancing our capacity to offer these programs, and considerable progress has been made.
The first two students to complete the Electrical Engineering doctorate graduated this year, and enrollments in the Materials Science and Engineering doctoral program have exceeded projections. Of particular importance is the demographic profile of students in the first year of the Materials Science and Engineering doctoral program: of the 22 students enrolled, ten are Hispanic, and six are women, a remarkable achievement when compared with enrollments in engineering and science doctoral programs throughout the country. Special credit for this successful effort in attracting non-traditional doctoral students to this program goes to Larry Murr, who is both totally committed to a goal of diversity in graduate education and tireless in his efforts to achieve it.

The newest of our doctoral programs, Psychology, has made great strides during its first year, attracting a large number of highly qualified applicants, recruiting talented new faculty, and implementing a unique curriculum which responds to the needs and capitalizes on the assets of UTEP's bicultural setting. The Psychology faculty, under the able leadership of Harmon Hosch, are to be congratulated on the solid foundation they have laid for this important new program.

Proposals for four additional doctoral programs will soon be transmitted to the U.T. System: History, with emphasis on the U.S.-Mexico border region; Educational Administration; Biological Science; and Environmental Science and
Engineering. Faculty members in these areas have dedicated considerable time and expertise to the preparation of these proposals, and we hope to be able to implement these programs within the next year, thereby doubling UTEP's doctoral program inventory. The special contributions of Janet Omundson, Julie Sanford and Florence Dick in preparing these proposals for U.T. System and Coordinating Board review are gratefully acknowledged. In addition, we applaud Carlos Villa's appointment to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which assures us of an informed and effective voice when UTEP's programs are considered for authorization by that body.

In other academic program developments, the bilingual Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing, a cooperative effort of the departments of English and Languages and Linguistics, admitted its first students one year ago, and the response from applicants in both the U.S. and Mexico has been strong. The Criminal Justice program has been restructured, as have programs in the Communication Department. The Social Work program has made great strides in its long quest for accreditation, largely due to the extraordinarily fine efforts of its director, Andy Dieppa, who understands well both the profession and its critical role in this bicultural region.

UTEP also continued its efforts to create additional opportunities for students interested in health care professions. Thanks to a large grant from the
Department of Health and Human Services, a new master's degree in Community Health with a Family Nurse Practitioner option will be offered beginning this year. Under the very able leadership of Dean Pat Castiglia, four clinics established at school-based sites in El Paso County with support from the Kellogg Foundation's Community Partnerships Program, have successfully demonstrated how UTEP can extend the reach of its health professions education programs in service to this community. We thank our partners--the Texas Tech Health Science Center in El Paso, and the Socorro, Fabens, Clint, and San Elizario Districts--who have helped us address the health care needs of previously underserved populations in El Paso County, and we welcome Letty Paez to a leadership role in this important initiative.

Partnerships abound in health professions education at UTEP. A collaborative Master's degree in Public Health with the U.T. Houston Health Science Center, graduated its first three students in May, and enrollment has grown to 43 full and part-time students. Occupational therapy will graduate its first class in December of this year, and Physical Therapy next year, both in cooperation with the U.T. Medical Branch in Galveston. These highly popular programs have created career opportunities for residents of this region and a source of well-trained professionals for health care organizations in this community. In our ongoing effort to broaden the scope of health professions education at UTEP, John Bruhn has been working with U.T. Austin to establish a cooperative
pharmacy program in El Paso.

UTEP also serves as a resource to community members of all ages who come to the campus to participate in a broad range of activities and events. Enrollments in non-credit courses offered by Continuing and Professional Education increased by 20% during the past year. The Center for Lifelong Learning whose founding director—Herbert Schwartz—we honor today, has become a national model for similar efforts at other universities. Special summer programs offered by Continuing Education and by individual colleges and programs brought 10,000 El Paso area youngsters to the UTEP campus this summer to participate in science and engineering institutes, art classes, and physical activities. Special events—ranging from a Pink Floyd concert and a solar eclipse in the Sun Bowl, to lectures by Carlos Fuentes, renowned Mexican author, and Edward Teller, lead scientist on the Manhattan Project—drew large and appreciative audiences, as did a variety of major events in the Special Events Center and the Dinner Theatre's consistently successful productions.

If we ignore our struggles on the football field—a strategy I find soothing!—UTEP's athletic program enjoyed considerable success last year. Worthy of special mention is the improved academic performance of our student athletes. We can also be proud of UTEP's track teams which, under the able direction of Bob Kitchens, finished in third place in the NCAA Indoor and second in NCAA
Outdoor championships this year. Thanks to John Thompson's excellent efforts, there is new turf in the Sun Bowl and increased efficiency in athletic department operations. Talented coaches and players, strong leadership, and new opportunities presented by the expansion of the Western Athletic Conference into Texas all bode well for intercollegiate athletics at UTEP. Still, generating the revenue necessary to participate in NCAA Division I-A athletics is a constant challenge, and the support of this community will ultimately determine whether or not UTEP can continue to compete at this level.

In other efforts to serve as a resource to this region, the College of Business Administration has reached out to the community through the highly successful Family Business Forum and the Franchise Center, thanks to the vision of Dean Frank Hoy and the outstanding efforts of Carmen Ghiselli and Carolyn Gough. The Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management (IM3), led by Manny Pacillas, has been actively involved in a variety of economic development initiatives in the community, and has developed exciting plans for interface with small and medium-sized manufacturers throughout the region.

UTEP also attempts to increase the visibility of the university and the community by hosting conferences and other events which bring large numbers of out-of-town visitors to our campus and community. The College of Engineering again hosted the Mini-Baja, in which cars designed and built by student teams compete
in a variety of events, including the now famous endurance race in Charlie Davis Park. This year 62 universities from throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico participated. Through the good work of Lillian Mayberry, the UTEP Honors Program hosted the 1994 National Honors Semester, bringing 20 honors students from universities throughout the country to the campus for an intensive semester-long education on the U.S.-Mexico border. Such opportunities to acquaint others with our world are critical to our long-term success.

Communicating UTEP's message, internally and externally, is equally critical. This message is communicated in a variety of ways, including the success of our students in national competitions; the success of our alumni in graduate/professional schools and in the workplace; the publications and presentations of our faculty and staff; our participation in national boards, panels, and organizations; the performance of our athletic teams; and the quality of our publications. Texas Western Press is an obvious asset, and its recent releases, including Bill Wright's beautiful book on the Tiguas and John West's biography of Jose Cisneros, should be a source of pride to all of us. Thanks to Jack Bristol and Marcia Daudistel for their good work during a critical transition in the Press's development. News and Publications deserves recognition too for the consistently high quality of their efforts, including the award-winning NOVA magazine.
One of the ways in which we can measure the successful impact of UTEP's message is the increased support that comes to us from alumni and friends of the university. By that measure, we were enormously successful during the past year. Alumni gifts increased by 23%, corporate gifts by 65%, and foundation gifts and grants by 102%. Over $2.8 million were committed to UTEP through wills, trusts, and life insurance, adding to the stability and quality of UTEP's future; and 25 new endowment funds will support in perpetuity scholarships, professorships, and program excellence. The leadership provided by Jan Cavin and the abiding commitment of our many support organizations--the UTEP Development Board, the President's Associates, the Matrix Society, the Alumni Association, and the Miner Foundation--have been the key to our success, and we extend our thanks to them for all that they have done and will do to promote UTEP's future development.

Remarkable progress has also been made in Alumni Affairs, thanks to the superb efforts of Marcia Cohen. The achievements of UTEP alumni are, after all, the best measure of our institutional effectiveness, and by this measure alone we can be very proud of the quality of our academic programs. Automation of records will enable us to develop closer ties with our alumni, as will new Alumni Association chapters--in Dallas, in Juarez, and in Southern California--and more frequent, more visible, and more popular alumni events on campus.
Another measure of our success is the continuing growth of UTEP's grant and contract activity. Data provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board indicate that in FY 1993, UTEP's $12.8 million in research expenditures moved this institution into sixth place in Texas, ahead of both the University of Texas at Arlington and the University of North Texas. This is an especially satisfying achievement when you consider that both of those institutions have long offered a substantial number of doctoral programs which have traditionally been associated with successful grant activity. And, UTEP's climb from twelfth to sixth ranking in annual research expenditures during the past five years has surprised nearly everyone in Texas...except us!

During FY1994, 276 proposals were submitted, seeking $79.5 million in grant funds, and 249 grants were awarded for a total of $32.4 million, a 45% increase over last year. We can all take enormous pride in these achievements, and we especially acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Julie Sanford and her staff in the Office of Sponsored Projects and the many faculty and staff members who have committed their time and talents to writing proposals and administering grant awards. Special congratulations to deans Arturo Pacheco and Carl Jackson and the faculties in Education and Liberal Arts for the significant growth in grant/contract activity in those colleges.

Grant funds contribute in a variety of ways to UTEP's success in achieving its
goals. First, they support our collaborative efforts to prepare pre-collegiate youth for increased success in higher education and in the workplace. A recent $15 million grant from the National Science Foundation will, for example, greatly reinforce the outstanding efforts of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, under the able direction of Susana Navarro, to transform how mathematics and science are taught to all young people in this region. Second, grant funds support the improvement of undergraduate education at UTEP. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute awarded UTEP's Biological Sciences Department $850,000 to provide a comprehensive mentoring program for entering biology students, as well as research opportunities for sophomore, junior, and senior-level students. At the graduate level, grant funding has provided support to increase the number of graduate programs and student enrollment in them. For example, 28 graduate students are receiving support from the Patricia Roberts Harris fellowship program funded by the Department of Education. In the competition last year, UTEP received the second-largest number of fellowships awarded to universities in the entire U.S. Fourth and finally, grants support basic and applied research, and UTEP has become increasingly competitive in securing investigator-initiated grant funding. In the College of Science, for example, Chemistry faculty have received awards from such agencies as the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, the Texas Advanced Research Program, and the Welch Foundation; members of the UTEP surface physics group have received a major grant from NASA; and Geology faculty researchers are supported by the
National Science Foundation, Sandia National Laboratories, and Exxon Exploration Company.

Of enormous importance to UTEP's development during the past several years has been the establishment and enhancement of research centers, stimulated by grant funding. The Materials Research Institute, which serves as the home of the new interdisciplinary doctoral program in Materials Science and Engineering, has benefited greatly from the NSF-funded Materials Research Center of Excellence grant. The Border Biomedical Research Center, which creates a research base for the proposed new doctoral program in Biological Sciences, was established with support from the National Institutes of Health. The Center for Environmental Resource Management has been the recipient of funding from a variety of sources, including the Ford Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

When summarizing events of the previous year, it is easy to focus on headline-grabbing events and other major milestones, the events that caught our attention at the time and which are already well documented in Horizons, NOVA, and other publications. Less salient but ultimately of potentially greater importance are the many achievements which, in the aggregate, make this university better, more efficient, more accountable, and more responsive to the needs of those we serve. Such achievements are particularly noteworthy when limited state appropriations
restrict our ability to invest resources in improvement strategies and when external accountability requirements—many of which appear to be unrelated or even contrary to actual institutional improvement—strain our human resources to their limits.

UTEP faculty and staff have made a commitment to the continuous improvement of all that we do. We recognize the importance of setting goals for improvement, monitoring progress in meeting those goals, and assessing the outcomes of our efforts. A year ago, I announced the establishment of the Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research, and Planning. During the past year, Dr. Sally Andrade, the Center's director, has involved a large number of UTEP faculty and staff in a broad-based effort to create mechanisms for effective institutional assessment and planning, and the groundwork that has been laid will be critical, not only to satisfying the requirements of reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, but also to our commitment to individual and collective accountability and continuous improvement. SACS reaccreditation will require the special dedication of time and talent of a large number of UTEP faculty and staff, and we are grateful to all who have agreed to participate, and especially to Jon Amastae who will serve as chair of this ambitious two-year effort.

One significant measure of institutional effectiveness is the success of graduates
in securing professional positions or admission to highly competitive graduate and professional schools. Although factors such as faculty credentials and students' pre-collegiate preparation are obviously important, this and every other institution's success must ultimately be determined by the quality of its graduates. Data from Career Services and from the colleges, which we are beginning to track more closely, reveal that UTEP graduates perform extraordinarily well on licensure and other professional examinations, in graduate and professional schools, and in the workplace.

Another measure of institutional effectiveness is the capacity to respond to growth and change within the context of severe financial constraints. Efforts to automate financial services and document processing, to extend electronic mail and other telecommunications services to all campus departments, to continue the automation of purchasing functions, and to create distance learning and teleconference options for both academic program and administrative applications, all reflect UTEP's commitment to do more with less and to become increasingly efficient in all campus operations.

Staff training and development is a major component of any successful organization, and UTEP is committed to developing more comprehensive training opportunities for faculty and staff. Faculty members have responded enthusiastically to Mike Kolitsky's guidance in applying technology to their
teaching; such training will enable them to capitalize on the technology featured in the new classroom building, a facility in which students and faculty will learn together. The Intensive Spanish courses that are offered each year continue to attract healthy enrollments, and orientation programs and the highly successful UTEP Aware program enable faculty and staff to become better acquainted with the many facets of this university and its context.

A highly competitive staff scholarship program helps support enrollment in credit courses, thanks to the generosity of faculty and staff members who contributed to the UTEP Partners Scholarship Endowment, which we hope will grow in the years ahead. A commitment has also been made to expand the staff training offered through Human Resources and other UTEP departments. Communication with and among staff members will be enhanced through the establishment of a Staff Council whose soon-to-be-elected membership will likely take a special interest in training and staff development issues.

Greater institutional effectiveness is sometimes achieved through reorganization. A new administrative unit, Enrollment Services, was established last year to serve students' needs more effectively by increasing the coordination of operations in Admission and Evaluation, Financial Aid, Recruitment & Scholarships, and the Registrar's Office. The automated interface between Financial Aid and ISIS, precipitated by changes in federal legislation, has
enabled us to respond to 2000 more applications for financial assistance, and increased financial aid awards to UTEP students to $20 million per year. Expansion of Touchtone Registration telephone lines has not only enabled more students to register by telephone, but also facilitated add-drop transactions, thereby eliminating the long lines and short tempers in the Academic Services Building at the beginning of each semester. A recently completed space inventory update will improve utilization of classrooms and laboratories and provide greater class scheduling flexibility. Although there is still considerable work to be done, Enrollment Services has proven its value as an administrative unit, and Robert Stakes and all staff members involved in this transitional year are to be commended for their fine efforts.

Another major reorganizational effort is underway in the College of Education where Dean Pacheco and faculty and staff members are working to restructure teacher preparation to meet the challenges of the simultaneous renewal of schools and teacher education programs advocated by John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal, with which UTEP is proud to be affiliated. This ambitious restructuring effort has brought resources and recognition to the College, and strong support for the goals of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. Teacher education must clearly be an issue of importance to the entire UTEP community, especially when we stop to consider that the products of our efforts represent the majority of teachers in the districts from
which UTEP draws 86% of its student body. Criticism of the preparation of entering students and demands for strengthening UTEP's admission requirements may be emotionally satisfying, but real progress will be made only when we recognize that all players in this continuous loop must be part of the solution. If our goal is indeed to create educational opportunities for residents of this region, we must work with the College of Education to prepare the best possible teachers who, in turn, will send us far better prepared students; and we must collaborate closely with area school districts to develop admission requirements which seek not to serve as mere barriers but instead, to maximize student success at UTEP.

Still another test of institutional effectiveness is our success in maintaining and improving all campus facilities within ever-more-constrained budgets. Although major new building construction and renovation projects may capture our attention, day-to-day efforts at continuous improvement should not be forgotten. Juan Ontiveros' extraordinarily fine leadership in Facilities Services has resulted in many improvements in campus buildings and grounds, enhanced staff training opportunities and incentives, and a full organizational commitment to Total Quality Management. In addition to completing major remodeling projects such as the Computer Center's new quarters in the Union Building, the Library Technology Center--which serves 9000 students per month--and the Border Biomedical Research Center facility in Bell Hall, Facilities Services has worked steadily to implement our plan to provide increased disabled access to campus
buildings. Most recently, Facilities Services has organized a Structural Maintenance and Repair Team to respond on a rotating schedule to the many small improvements sought by the occupants of various campus facilities. Compared to most university campuses I know, UTEP is not only more beautiful architecturally, it is also far better maintained, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to Juan Ontiveros and his staff for helping to make our surroundings more attractive and productive.

Equally important is the good work of the environmental health and safety group led by Jim Marsh, which has made major improvements in research and teaching laboratories in science and engineering by installing special equipment and identifying, stabilizing and removing hazardous chemicals, and created a safer environment for all who come to the UTEP campus. Safety is also the responsibility of the campus police, whose staff development efforts have enabled it to respond effectively to the many challenges presented by an ever more ambitious and active UTEP. The number of special events held on campus has grown significantly during the past several years, and with them comes traffic and parking congestion, which, in turn, leads to public relations and interpersonal skill challenges. Although we have not yet been able to avoid all unhappiness, we have made significant progress, and the new, more agile bicycle patrol promises even better service in the future. I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge here the unsung members of UTEP's Parking and Traffic Committee,
chaired ably by Howard Daudistel. I cannot think of a more thankless task than
dealing with what some have called "THE major issue on all college campuses," and
I thank Dr. Daudistel and his colleagues for their willingness to tackle it.

In the end, institutional effectiveness depends most on the quality and
commitment of people within the organization, and during its 80-year history,
UTEP has been fortunate to be able to count on the talents and dedication of
outstanding individuals who understand our mission and work passionately to
carry it out. I have already mentioned a number of individuals who have made a
real difference at UTEP during the past year, and each such attempt always omits
many whose names should be mentioned too...though time will prevent that from
happening. My special thanks to all of those UTEP faculty and staff members to
whom we presented service awards today. Your commitment to UTEP and your
sustained efforts are what has made this institution the great one that it has
become.

Like any dynamic organization, UTEP continues to see veteran faculty and staff
members retire--as many fine employees did this past year--only to be replaced
by eager new faces who bring new talents and new perspectives to the mix. We
are especially pleased to welcome Richard Padilla, Vice President for Student
Affairs, who brings a wealth of experience with him; Henry Ingle and Mike
Kolitsky who have already provided strong leadership in UTEP's technology
development; Arturo Candelaria who will strengthen our Human Resources efforts; and Rena Selits in Financial Services. We also reiterate our warm welcome to all of the new faculty and professional staff who have become members of the UTEP community this fall. Ours is an exciting challenge with almost unlimited opportunities. We are pleased that you have chosen to join with us in pursuing them.

Eighty years ago, a few people shared a vision of higher education in El Paso. Although there were doubtless those who considered them mere dreamers, they proceeded to establish the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy. They would certainly be proud—and perhaps even a little surprised!—at the fine, comprehensive university that stands as their legacy today. More recently, we have shared a dream of increased doctoral program offerings and enhanced research activity at UTEP and of growing national recognition for our special institutional commitment to both excellence and access. We can take pride in knowing that we are well on our way to achieving that dream too.

I have often said that universities are places where dreams come true...each of our 17,219 students brings dreams and aspirations to this campus and we, the faculty and staff, play major roles in making those dreams a reality. It is clear that universities themselves must have dreams too, and UTEP's future is bright indeed because we have dared to dream. We have risked articulating our vision—
even when the odds did not appear to be in our favor—and we have believed passionately in our dreams and worked tirelessly to achieve them. These are collective, not solitary, efforts, and as we celebrate our 80th birthday this year, let us all recognize our shared values, our interdependencies, and the mutuality of our interests. None of us does anything alone, and UTEP's greatness rests on the commitment we have all made to our shared dream.

So, to all of you in today's audience—staff, faculty, students, and friends—we extend our most sincere appreciation for all that you have done and will continue to do to make this university the best that it can be. Together we have made great progress during the past several years and together we will continue to foster UTEP's future development. Our 80-year history is a proud one, and with your talent, your energy, and your commitment to UTEP, the next 80 years will be even better.

Diana Natalicio
President
The University of Texas at El Paso