

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO**  
**FALL CONVOCATION 1998**  
**SEPTEMBER 3, 1998**

**DR. NATALICIO:**

Earlier this year, I celebrated my tenth anniversary as UTEP's president. Like many such milestones, it occasioned both surprise—have ten years really passed so quickly?—and satisfaction—we have really accomplished a great deal! We have been so busy working to fulfill UTEP's mission that it has been easy to lose both a sense of time and of the cumulative impact of our efforts.

A review of the major accomplishments of the past ten years reveals two primary themes. First, these are collective achievements. Although my tenth anniversary served as a convenient context in which to frame an institutional assessment, the fact is that this celebration is ours, not mine.

UTEP students, staff, faculty, and friends—all of you—contributed significantly to the progress that we have achieved. Working together as a team, we have been able to:

- More than double the annual operating budget, from \$65 million to \$145 million.
- To increase the number of doctoral programs, from one to eight
- To increase annual grant and contract funding from \$3 million to more than \$30 million
- To rank fourth among 37 Texas public universities in annual sponsored project expenditures
- To rank second among all U.S. colleges and universities in the number of Hispanic graduates,  
and

- To plan and successfully conduct a \$50 million capital/endowment campaign, the first in this university's history

I'd like to ask that we join together in giving each other a standing ovation for our success in achieving these major milestones.

The second theme that emerges from a review of the past ten years is that each of the major strides we have made was, in fact, a series of countless small steps. UTEP's seven new doctoral programs, for example, did not happen overnight, nor were they the product of one individual or one department's efforts. In fact, these programs were the result of carefully pulling together all of the necessary components of a compelling proposal, including needs and demand analyses, curriculum development, library resources, faculty recruitment, technology acquisition, facilities renovation, and budgetary support. Each of these steps was a building block in the development of the doctoral proposals, and each was critical to gaining their approval. And, now, we recognize that program authorization is not by any means a final step either; it is instead the beginning of another series of small steps which, collectively, will ensure the success of these important programs.

As is the tradition at Fall Convocation, I will try present to you today a brief overview of some of UTEP's achievements during the past year. As we celebrate each of the individual accomplishments, let us also recognize how they join together to continue building toward the major institutional goals to which we are all committed. Before proceeding, let me extend a

warm welcome to all of the new faculty, staff, and students who have joined us this year. We hope that you will share in the joy of our accomplishments, and we look very much to the new perspectives and new energy that you will add to our future progress.

UTEP's fundamental goal is to serve effectively the students who come to us with their dreams and aspirations. They are the reason that we are here and the primary basis upon which we are provided support from the State of Texas. Everything that we do must, in one way or another, support the attainment of this goal.

Who are these students? For the most part, they are residents of this region—84% from El Paso County and another 9% from Mexico. The other 7% include students from other Texas counties, other U.S. states, and more than 70 different countries around the world. More than half of our students are the first in their families to attend college, most are employed while attending UTEP, and nearly all commute to the campus from their homes in the El Paso-Juarez metropolitan area. Nearly 55% of UTEP student population are female. We can be very proud that the ethnic composition of our student body mirrors the demographics of this region.

Each UTEP student represents a unique set of talents, challenges, and expectations, and it is our responsibility to create and adapt opportunities that are responsive to them. In today's higher education context, there are many alternatives available to students, and issues such as cost, convenience, and customer service weigh heavily in students' decisions about how best to pursue their educational aspirations. For example, the rising cost of tuition and fees at public

universities in Texas has caused many students across the state to begin their post-secondary education at community colleges, where costs have remained more modest. Following this trend, a large percentage of local high school graduates are enrolling at the El Paso Community College, which, in addition to offering lower costs, also provides the convenience of five campus locations throughout the County. In the short term, UTEP's enrollment appears to have been negatively impacted by this trend, but we should see long-term enrollment gains, **if** we respond positively and creatively to it.

During the past year, the Recruitment staff, under Irma Rubio's able leadership, has increased UTEP's presence at EPCC, with classroom visits by teams including faculty from the Colleges of Business and Education. The recruitment staff also conducted the first ever EPCC Day at UTEP to acquaint students and their counselors with our campus facilities, programs, and faculty.

Equally important has been the enhanced communication between UTEP and EPCC through the work of the Permanent Articulation Committee, with Maggy Smith taking the UTEP lead. A major accomplishment this year was the joint effort to respond proactively to legislative changes in TASP requirements for entering students, and special thanks are due to Steve Zerwas, Joe Guthrie and Kate Mangelsdorf for their outstanding work under very difficult circumstances.

Convenience and customer service are also clear factors in today's students' decisions about how and where to pursue higher education. As I travel across the country, I see and hear media advertisements for a number of private institutions whose focus is on the busy, working adult student for whom convenience of class scheduling and minimization of bureaucratic procedures

are major attractions. Thanks to the leadership of deans in Health Sciences, Business, and Education, UTEP has made some progress in offering more classes during evening and weekend hours, but it is clear that additional work must be done to assess the need for such non-traditional class scheduling and to respond to the need that is identified.

On the customer service front, a committee co-chaired by Richard Padilla and Frank Hoy has worked during the past year to identify policies, procedures, and behaviors whose modification would reduce campus red tape and the tensions that arise from it. Through surveys and focus groups, committee members have opened two-way communication channels with our primary constituents, UTEP students. Training programs for staff and student employees have been developed, and a variety of procedures, have been implemented e.g., student access to grades via telephone, and applications for admission and course availability listings on the UTEP Web site. I recently had a chance to preview a web-based "Solution Finder" which will offer responses to frequently asked student questions and referrals to specific individuals and offices for additional assistance. Thanks to Dean of Students Bill Schafer and to Lynn Howell in Customer Technology Services for their leadership in this important initiative.

The quality of students' experience at UTEP relies upon the efforts of a broad range of individuals and departments across the campus. No matter what our direct responsibilities may be, our abiding commitment must be to seek new and better ways to foster student success. Examples of individual actions which have helped meet that commitment during the past year include:

- the University Bookstore's decision to help contain student costs by reducing its mark-up on textbooks;
- the Development Office's success in increasing scholarship funds and the Scholarship Office's more efficient allocation of those funds;
- Financial Aid's successful disbursement of more than \$30 million in merit and need-based aid, a new UTEP record;
- Career Services' highly successful Career Expo, which brought 250 representatives of more than 100 companies to the campus to meet with more than 1500 UTEP students; and,
- the Tutoring and Learning Center's addition of Supplemental Instruction Groups in math, biology, chemistry, engineering, and social science.

Especially noteworthy during the past year has been the enthusiastic participation of student leaders in helping us enrich their and their fellow students' educational experience at UTEP. The Student Government Association under Angel Mendoza's leadership, and the Honors Alliance, conceptualized and established by Oscar Gonzalez, have contributed significantly to the quality of student life on this campus. Our thanks to them and to the many students who worked with them for their commitment to build a stronger future for the UTEP students who will follow in their footsteps.

The first footsteps that a student takes on this or any other campus may have a major impact on the quality of that student's experience. To that end, new student orientation has been completely redesigned. Thanks to the outstanding work of Gary Edens and his team of dedicated

student orientation leaders, and the collaboration of Jeannie Webb in Science and Elsa Villa in Engineering, this program now provides the solid foundation upon which UTEP students can begin to build a successful undergraduate experience. A most important aspect of the new orientation program is the cooperation that has been achieved between individuals and departments in Academic and Student Affairs. Although this apparently simple idea took a while to gain acceptance, the benefits to students—and to the overall organization—are now readily appreciated.

In Academic Affairs, considerable attention has been focused on strategies to foster the success of students once they are enrolled. Inspired by a pilot program conducted under the auspices of the Model Institution for Excellence grant, an important initiative has been introduced this year to increase first-year student retention. Beginning this fall, all entering students in the colleges of Science and Engineering, and some students in other colleges, will participate in cohorts enrolled in blocks or clusters of courses. The goal is to provide a more coherent learning environment and foster more cohesive relationships among students and between students and the university. Maggy Smith, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Pablo Arenaz, Associate Dean of Engineering and Science, provide leadership for this important effort.

A similar initiative to cluster courses is reaching maturity after having been introduced in the College of Education several years ago. Met with initial resistance by some students and faculty, this approach to field-based teacher education has proved its worth with highly favorable response from principals, veteran teachers, and recent graduates of the program. In addition, and

thanks to the strong support of Deans Brady and Daudistel, the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Science have become full partners in teacher preparation, acknowledging the shared responsibility that they bear for ensuring the quality of the teachers who graduate from UTEP. That quality is evident in the aggressive recruitment of UTEP graduates by school districts across the country. Most of our teachers remain in El Paso, however, and the quality of their preparation will have a major impact on this community's future. These and many other accomplishments have brought to the College of Education major national recognition for its success in reforming teacher preparation. Thanks to Dean Arturo Pacheco and the students, faculty, and staff for their willingness to embark on new pathways. We are proud of your success in serving as a national model for innovation in teacher education.

Research on student retention underscores the pivotal role played by faculty members, with whom students have regular and frequent contact. When Regents, legislators, and the general public demand institutional accountability for student achievement—as typically measured by retention and graduation rates—attention inevitably turns toward evaluating the faculty in terms of student outcomes. The argument that student success is entirely the responsibility of students—or of Student Affairs professionals—falls on mostly deaf ears in today's environment. Faculty are expected to foster student achievement and to hold themselves—or be held—responsible for it. Steve Riter, the deans, Sally Andrade, and the Faculty Senate have been grappling with the many dimensions of this challenge.

The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning was established last year, and under Gail Goodyear's leadership, has offered a variety of faculty development activities, designed to bring best practices to UTEP classrooms and laboratories. Through the Center, more than 180 faculty participants have become acquainted with—and implemented in their classes—strategies that have proved successful in other settings. Alternatives to the standard lecture format have been explored and adapted in courses ranging from Music to Geology. Special thanks to Greg Lush, Robert Webb, Sally Blake, Mary Stevens, Bob Webking, Julie Cummins, and Robert Klaphor, college and library representatives to the Center, for their many contributions during the past year.

A major new teaching/learning asset is the Undergraduate Learning Center, which was inaugurated a year ago. Showcasing the state-of-the-art technology of that facility, Fall Convocation was presented in multi-media format. Although all of the work of providing a multi-media dimension to my remarks was very ably carried out by Bob Webking and his students, I gained a great appreciation for the dedication of time and talent required for such presentations. My congratulations to all those faculty members who during the past year stepped up to the challenge of re-vamping their courses to capitalize on the technological capacity of this facility. And, special thanks to the talented students and staff members who work side-by-side with the faculty to develop their multi-media courses.

Since its inauguration, the building has been the site of a large number of classes—more than 200 scheduled there this semester alone—and numerous special events. In addition, the ULC staff has

hosted a steady flow of visitors from universities across the country, who have come to admire and draw inspiration and ideas from this beautiful and beautifully functional facility. Among the most important visitors were State Representatives Irma Rangel, and Pete Gallego, who were instrumental in securing the South Texas/Border Initiative funding for that facility and other UTEP initiatives. And, thanks to Senator Eliot Shapleigh, several key members of the Texas Senate were made aware, during a recent visit, of both UTEP's success in giving the State a significant return on its investment and our continuing needs for capital investment. Most recently, The University of Texas System held its annual technology conference at UTEP, with more than 100 representatives of academic and health science center components in attendance. Everyone was justifiably impressed with both the facility and the staff who operate it. Special thanks to Henry Ingle, Kati Gerdau, and all of the dedicated staff who have helped ensure the success of the inaugural year of the Undergraduate Learning Center, and to Evelyn Posey for her leadership as we go forward.

UTEP's educational mission becomes more and more reliant on technology, not only in the Undergraduate Learning Center, but in classrooms, laboratories, and offices across the campus. The organization and management of technology services has become increasingly complex, and considerable recent attention has been directed at how best to ensure that the organization keeps pace with the changing technology and the constantly increasing demands placed upon it. A Technology Infrastructure Task Force, ably chaired by Dan Cooke, has carefully analyzed UTEP's technology environment, and its recommendations will serve as a basis for mapping future technology directions.

Technology has also become a major part of UTEP's communications strategy, linking us to our students, potential students and interested people and organizations throughout the world.

Considerable work was done during the past year in News and Publications and Information Technology Services to develop an informative and attractive web site that captures the many facets of UTEP and responds effectively to the needs of our diverse constituencies. Special thanks to all of the individuals in departments across the campus who have contributed to this important effort...and who will surely be called upon to continue updating and upgrading in the months and years ahead.

Another important dimension of our responsibility to serve the residents of this region is the development of academic programs that respond to their needs and which prepare them for career opportunities not otherwise available. For the first time in its history, UTEP granted more than ten doctoral degrees in a single year, representing five different programs. More than half of these degrees were awarded to Mexican and Mexican American students. Also during the past year, program development continued at the doctoral level, with the admission of the first cohort of students in the Ph.D. degree program in Pathobiology, and authorization from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer a Ph.D. degree in U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History. Approval of the History Ph.D. program completes the first cycle of eight doctoral programs included in UTEP's strategic plan, a robust program development agenda by any measure. Attention must now be directed toward stabilizing enrollment in these programs,

generating sustainable support for doctoral students, and ensuring that infrastructure requirements are fully met.

UTEP's ongoing efforts to expand opportunities for careers in the health professions were enhanced during the past year with the formal transfer to UTEP of the Physical and Occupational Therapy programs from the UT Medical Branch in Galveston. These two high-demand programs were established in El Paso on a fast track and under the UTMB accreditation umbrella to avoid the long start-up usually required. Now fully operational, and independently accredited, Physical and Occupational Therapy have been turned over to UTEP by UTMB, as planned and on schedule. We are grateful to our UTMB colleagues for their support of our efforts to launch these important programs and especially appreciative of their recognition of the mutual respect required for a successful inter-institutional partnership.

UTEP's relationship with another potential partner, Texas Tech Health Sciences Center in El Paso, has been complicated by the tensions that have arisen over what is viewed as the Lubbock System's lack of serious commitment to this community. Although the last words have not been uttered in this controversy, it is important to emphasize that through the development of a strong set of academic programs and a solid research base, UTEP has become a major player in any vision of the future of health professions education in this community.

The Pharmacy program, initiated last year in cooperation with UT Austin's School of Pharmacy, has greatly expanded its outreach activities in the El Paso region. Under the leadership of Lloyd

Young, the program opened its first clinic pharmacy in San Elizario in cooperation with Thomason Hospital, the Kellogg Community Partnership, and Texas Tech, enabling previously underserved residents of El Paso's Lower Valley to access medications and drug information. This month, in cooperation with the West Texas Poison Control Center at Thomason Hospital, a UTEP Drug Information Center is being established to serve as a resource to health care providers in this region. And, pharmacy faculty have begun to provide career opportunities information to young people throughout this region, reflecting their long-term investment in this community.

In addition, UTEP embarks this year on a new health professions collaboration with the UT Houston Health Science Center to offer a doctoral degree in Nursing. Supported by a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, this program will be taught via distance learning technology by both UT Houston and UTEP faculty members.

1997-98 was another outstanding year for sponsored project funding at UTEP, with more than \$30 million in new grant awards. Such funding creates opportunities for faculty to pursue their research goals, while at the same time offering students—both graduate and undergraduate—an enriched learning experience. It also serves as a catalyst for a variety of student recruitment and retention initiatives, which once successfully developed, become an integral part of the university's operations. Among major grant awards this past year was a \$5 million Phase II renewal by the National Science Foundation of the University of Texas System Alliance for Minority Participation, for which UTEP serves as lead institution. This program brings together

all nine academic components in the UT System, and the fourteen community colleges with which they collaborate, to foster greater representation of minorities in science and engineering programs and careers. Pablo Arenaz has been the key to the success of this program—and so many others!—and we thank him for his fine work.

In a related effort, the National Institutes of Health has awarded UTEP \$445,000 to provide undergraduate social science majors with research and education experiences which will prepare them to pursue doctoral training in scientific fields related to mental health. Thanks to Larry Cohn in the Psychology Department for spearheading this project. Another major new program, Talent Search, was launched at UTEP by the U.S. Department of Education. Funded at \$1 million, this program focuses on the early identification and recruitment to higher education of economically disadvantaged, first-generation students. Congratulations to Sandra Braham, who adds this responsibility to the portfolio of programs—including two highly successful Upward Bound projects—for which she has provided outstanding leadership.

In the area of infrastructure support, Diane Doser in Geology received a Department of Defense grant for an engineering and environmental geophysics laboratory; and Jeff Drucker in Physics received an NSF equipment grant to support research in environmental and materials sciences. Research funding included a competitive \$4.5 million renewal of the Border Biomedical Research Center directed by Louis Irwin, as well as major individual research grants to Pat Teller in Computer Science, Roy Malpass in Psychology/Criminal Justice, and Ryan Wicker in Mechanical & Industrial Engineering. Special thanks to Claudine Riccillo, Florence Dick and

other dedicated staff members in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs who work behind the scenes to provide UTEP faculty and staff members with both pre- and post-award services. We are especially grateful to them and to the Provost's office for helping us sustain a high level of activity during a leadership transition in that operation: 316 proposals with a value of more than \$100 million were transmitted to funding agencies during the past year.

One of the most significant new grants awarded to UTEP during the past year was a \$1.2 million commitment from the Kellogg Foundation to support a major service learning initiative in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Business. Inspiration for this program was drawn from the highly successful work of the campus ministries' student volunteer program, PRAXIS, so ably directed by Rev. Felicia Hopkins. PRAXIS has successfully recruited more than 500 UTEP student volunteers to work in a broad range of community service projects that have been identified by agencies and organizations throughout El Paso. These UTEP students share their time and expertise with this community, while developing an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

The new program will expand on the PRAXIS model, by incorporating specific community service experiences into the curricula of courses taught by faculty members in the two colleges, who will themselves be actively engaged in the community. UTEP joins three other universities—Northeastern in Boston, East Tennessee State, and the University of West Virginia—in pioneering this integrative approach to service learning. Special thanks to Pat Castiglia, whose successful leadership of the Community Partnerships in Health program has

helped build UTEP's strong relationship with the Kellogg Foundation, and to Howard Daudistel who worked tirelessly to develop this important new program.

Another exciting new initiative, related to the doctoral program in U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History, is an Immigration History Center which would focus on the Paso del Norte as an immigration gateway to the United States, a kind of Ellis Island of the Southwestern border. Telling the story of the history of the immigration stream from the South and the impact of these immigrants on U.S. society, would be the mission of this center. Several major foundations have committed support to launch this initiative, and thanks to the outstanding work of Charles Ambler, planning is well underway.

The focus of most of the new degree programs and many of the grant-funded initiatives at UTEP has been on this U.S.-Mexico border region. UTEP's mission includes a strong commitment to this region, and our responsibility is not only to provide educational opportunities for those who seek degrees here, but also to apply our enormous intellectual capital to the challenges and issues faced by this community. The immigration history center, PRAXIS, the Community Partnerships in Health, and the new service learning initiative are all examples of this regional commitment. Although some would argue that such a regional focus reduces our options, our experience during the past several years strongly suggests that it has, in fact, created enormous new opportunities for us and for the students we serve.

The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence continues to achieve success and considerable national recognition for its efforts to raise the academic achievement level of all children in this community and to prepare them to succeed in higher education or in the more highly skilled work force of the future. Performance of El Paso children on the TAAS has improved significantly, and, although the primary credit must certainly go to the children, their teachers and other staff in the school districts, the impact of the Collaborative's work is unmistakable. This summer the Collaborative launched a new literacy initiative, which will complement its fine work in mathematics and science. El Paso is regularly described as a national model for the cooperation that can be achieved between universities and pre-college education. Much of the credit for that recognition is due the Collaborative's leader, Susana Navarro, and the many dedicated UTEP and school district professionals who work with her.

On the economic development front, the College of Business and the Texas Center for Border Economic Development are playing a major role in a number of regional initiatives. The Family Business Forum and the Franchise Center continue to attract enthusiastic participants and international recognition for the College of Business. A new Small Business Administration funded initiative, directed by Santiago Ibarreche, provides executive education for small business owners, the first such program west of the Mississippi. Tom Fullerton in Economics and Finance has recently completed the first phase of work on the Border Region Econometric Forecasting Model. With 102 equations covering variables ranging from housing prices to northbound bridge traffic from Mexico, the model represents a valuable tool for business planners and policymakers in this region. Manny Pacillas, director of IM3, who is always ready to commit his time and

expertise to important regional efforts, has most recently been providing extensive support for the City's development of an Empowerment Zone application.

Under Dennis Soden's leadership, the Public Policy Research Center conducted a broad range of outreach activities.

- Supported by a Department of Education grant, it provided 5000 hours of technical assistance to non-profit and community development corporations in El Paso County.
- In cooperation with the El Paso Police Department and the Shelter for Battered Women, it supported the work of the Domestic Violence Commission.
- And, it prepared a feasibility study for a World Trade Center complex in El Paso/Juarez .

The Center for Environmental Resource Management (CERM) and the Pan American Center for Earth and Environmental Studies (PACES) continue to conduct a variety of projects designed to improve the quality of life of all residents of this region. A major two-year air quality study has been initiated to identify the pollutants in the air we breathe, and an animated ozone map of this tri-state, binational region has been developed and made available to the media and to the public on an internet website. A number of projects focus on water, including:

- a survey of the vegetation of riparian areas along the Rio Grande;
- a filtration system using alfalfa for the removal of toxic heavy metal ions from contaminated waters;
- a feasibility study of the use of low pressure reverse osmosis for reclaiming wastewater; and

- a two-year project to develop a long-range vision of a sustainable water use strategy for communities in this arid region.

A \$1.7 million grant from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation has enabled CERM to develop a comprehensive water education strategy and provide direct support to colonias residents. In addition, UTEP had the honor of co-hosting with Congressman Silvestre Reyes a major national conference on climate variability and water resource management in the southwest, which included the participation of Dan Goldin, NASA Administrator, and several members of Congress.

UTEP welcomed a number of other important visitors to our campus during the past year. Vice President Al Gore came to UTEP to join Congressman Reyes in underscoring the importance of building the capacity of our schools to prepare the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although searing heat reduced the size and wilted the spirit of an outdoor rally, a town meeting in the newly renovated Commons provided an excellent opportunity for El Pasoans to interact with the Vice President on this important issue. Governor George W. Bush helped UTEP celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> commencement in a special ceremony in the Sun Bowl Stadium. Although the event lasted longer than usual to accommodate the presentation of more than 1000 diplomas, everyone appreciated the governor's enthusiasm and his willingness to sign autographs, hug, kiss and pose for photographs with the graduates. Special thanks to the deans for their agility and good will in assuming a dual role of college administrator and photographer!

The Sun Bowl also served as the site for two large community events this summer: another Dallas Cowboys scrimmage and a first ever major boxing card featuring Oscar de la Hoya. The latter set a new record for ticket sales, with more than 34,000 tickets sold in a single day! The coordination of such events is a huge undertaking, involving UTEP staff members in Facilities Services, Campus Police, Athletics, News and Publications, and Auxiliary Services, among others. Special thanks to Carol Roberts Spence, Hank Humphreys, Ted Ramirez, Robert Bledsoe, Mike Spence, Beto Lopez, Mike Ross, and Gloria Martinez for their leadership, and to all of the staff members who worked intensively to stage four major events during a three-month period this summer. This was a truly remarkable accomplishment, and a real tribute to the teamwork that characterizes UTEP.

To show our appreciation to all UTEP faculty and staff members for the fine work that they do, we organized our first Splash and Sparks celebration of the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. The site was the beautiful Swimming and Fitness Center, and attendance was large and enthusiastic. More than 500 faculty and staff members and their families enjoyed the pools and the food, and the evening ended with a traditional fireworks display in the sky over Charlie Davis Park. Brian Carter and the staff of the Swimming and Fitness Center served as enthusiastic hosts on this occasion, as they have on so many others, including the MiniBaja Race, the Alumni Association's El Paso Teacher Appreciation Day, and EPCC Day at UTEP. In addition to these special events, recreational use of the Swimming and Fitness Center grew by nearly 50% during the past year, and more than 11,000 students, faculty, staff and alumni now use these facilities each month. Congratulations to Brian and the staff for making this one of UTEP's very special attractions.

There are many other ways in which UTEP contributes to this community. Our Dinner Theatre, which celebrated its fifteenth anniversary this year, continues to stage outstanding productions which meet Greg Taylor's high standards and this community's high expectations. Our Music faculty and students continue to participate in a variety of community musical organizations, and they enrich all of us with their performances both on and off-campus. A new performing group, Pandemonium, which includes students from both Music and Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, delighted 8000 El Pasoans at a Music Under the Stars concert at the Chamizal National Memorial this summer. Special thanks to Larry White and Larry Murr for their unique and highly successful steel drum partnership. The Don Haskins Center offered El Pasoans a variety of entertainment options throughout the year, including a special tribute to Coach Don Haskins, after whom the facility is now named, upon his induction in the Basketball Hall of Fame.

Intercollegiate Athletics brought UTEP a number of significant honors during the past year, the most prominent of which was the NCAA's recognition of Obadele Thompson as one of the Top VIII student athletes in the United States, for his outstanding performance in both athletic and academic arenas. High priority has been assigned throughout the department to student-athletes' academic performance, and strong support has been provided by the Enrollment Services and Tutoring and Learning Center staffs. Perhaps most important for the long term was a major reorganization of the Intercollegiate Athletics Department and the return to UTEP of former

football coach Bob Stull as Director. Newly recruited staff members have brought energy and enthusiasm to the department, and community interest and support appear to be on the rise.

Although there are many ways in which to measure UTEP's impact on this community, one very tangible approach is to assess our economic impact. Because the bulk of the university's budget is drawn from state, federal, and private sources outside of El Paso County, the money spent by the university, and its faculty and staff represents a new infusion into the metropolitan economy—what economists call “export revenues.” During the past ten years, UTEP's budget has more than doubled, from \$65 million to \$145 million. Today, with nearly 2400 full-time employees, UTEP pays salaries in excess of \$65 million per year, a figure equal to the university's total budget in 1988. UTEP also awards contracts to and purchases goods and services from several thousand El Paso businesses each year. In 1997, more than 11,500 contracts and purchases were executed, totaling nearly \$25 million. In addition, our athletic and other special events, the major conferences that we host—more than 20 during the past year alone—and the many visitors to our campus add to the revenues of local travel and hospitality businesses. The total multiplier effect of UTEP's salaries and contracts is estimated to result in the creation of more than 6300 jobs in this community, and a total income resulting either directly or indirectly from the university's presence greater than \$164 million per year.

UTEP's budget growth during the past ten years has been remarkable because it has been achieved in an environment of declining State investment in public higher education. I have already mentioned the outstanding record of contract and grant awards that UTEP once again

achieved during the past year, thanks to the combined efforts of faculty, staff, and the Office of Sponsored Programs. The Development Office and our many dedicated community volunteers—led by Peter de Wetter’s unflagging energy and commitment—also enjoyed an enormously successful year. In addition to increasing annual giving by 8.5% and local business support by nearly \$400,000, we have made considerable progress in achieving our ambitious \$50 million Legacy Campaign goal. I am pleased to announce that our Legacy Campaign total to date now stands at \$45 million—90% of our goal—and has already enabled us to create more than 200 new endowments, including 80 newly endowed scholarships, 26 new professorships and chairs, and 48 new departmental excellence funds. I want to take this opportunity to offer special thanks to UTEP faculty and staff members who have made substantial commitments to this campaign.

Alumni giving has also increased during the past year by 11%, and a new year-round phonathon effort has contacted more than 2800 alumni and 600 graduating seniors and secured nearly \$30,000 from first-time alumni donors. The pace of Alumni Association activities has also quickened, with highly successful events such as Minerpalooza, Homecoming, Season of Lights, and Senior Days. The new UTEP Student Alumni Association is off to a strong start with a high level of activity and recognition as Student Organization of the Year at this year’s Student Awards Banquet.

The university’s financial, facilities, and human resource services, are the primary responsibility of Juan Sandoval and his colleagues in Finance and Administration. Despite flat state appropriations, the Budget and Financial Services staff have managed to contain costs, which, in

turn, has enabled us to control tuition and fee increases and to minimize dependence on institutional reserves. Administrative costs at UTEP account for only 8% of total expenditures, among the lowest in public universities in Texas and comparing quite favorably to U.T. San Antonio at 11.5% and U.T. Dallas at 14.5%. This record is all the more impressive when viewed within a context of exponential increases in external audits and compliance reporting, changing technologies, and increased service demands.

Many administrative processes have been re-engineered, as we move toward an increased reliance on electronic processing systems. In addition to their new hardware and software requirements, these new applications of technology require an investment in training, and Human Resources and Customer Technology Services have worked together to offer an expanded range of training opportunities for staff and faculty members. We are especially pleased with the significant improvement that has been achieved in increasing productivity and reducing the cost of workers' compensation by more than \$500,000 through a highly successful program overseen by Human Resource Services.

UTEP facilities were greatly enhanced during the past year with the inauguration of the new Undergraduate Learning Center and conversion of the Commons cafeteria into an attractive conference center. In addition, a major and highly innovative utility infrastructure project is underway, designed to meet UTEP's increasing energy needs without additional cost. The old energy plant will be replaced, the existing energy distribution system will be reconfigured, and a central chilled water storage facility will be constructed east of Memorial Gym. Projected energy

savings will pay for the project within seven to ten years. The mechanical systems in the College of Health Sciences and the Stanton Professional Building are being replaced at a cost of \$2.7 million, with expected completion a year from now. And, construction of the outdoor educational complex at the Centennial Museum, funded entirely by generous donors, is well on its way toward completion. Although speculation about this project has been a source of entertainment to members of the campus community for the past several months, the finished product will be a source of pride to all of us, and the desert garden spaces so carefully conceptualized by Wynn Anderson and Florence Schwein will add a major new dimension to the Museum's educational mission.

The pace of renovation activity, which has already seemed hectic to many of us, will quicken during the next three years, as Facilities Services undertakes the planning, coordination and supervision of some \$14 million in facilities improvements supported by tuition revenue bond proceeds authorized by the Texas Legislature. More than 45 elevators across the campus will be improved; 150 classrooms will be refurbished; electrical systems in eight older buildings will be modernized; mechanical systems in several buildings will be upgraded; auditoriums across the campus—including this one—will be renovated; the fiber optic network on the campus will be upgraded; and fire safety improvements will be made. Although it is easy to take such physical plant improvements for granted, or to lose a sense of connection between them and UTEP's educational mission, it is clear that without them, this would be a far less efficient and far less pleasant place to study and work. We thank all of the members of the Facilities Services team

for the fine work that they consistently do, and we congratulate Gloria Martinez on her recent appointment as Director, one of the few women Facilities Services Directors in the country.

One of our major ongoing challenges has been to secure for UTEP the capital funding support for technology, library materials and building repair, renovation, and construction, that is available to other state institutions through the legislatively appropriated Higher Education Assistance Fund (HEAF). Richard Aauto and I will once again head to Austin during the coming legislative session to underscore the gross inequity of capital support of institutions like UTEP and to work toward securing our fair share of those public funds.

Despite the shrinking commitment to higher education by the State Legislature, however, the case for external support of UTEP becomes more compelling each day, because all investors seek to place their trust—and their funds—in organizations that offer the promise of success. UTEP's record of delivering on its promises during the past ten years has been exemplary—extraordinary by almost any measure—and supporters see clearly UTEP's capacity to yield rich dividends on their investments.

1997-98 has been another highly successful year at UTEP, and I congratulate all of the faculty, staff and students who contributed to that success. In preparing for this Convocation, I re-read the state-of-the-university remarks that I have made for the past ten years. What is most striking is not only the enormous collective effort that has led to our many accomplishments, but also the steady rise in our expectations as we built upon the stronger and stronger foundation of those

accomplishments. We are indeed a different university today than we were ten years ago. I thank all of you for your commitment of time and talent to this university and its important regional mission. Together, we are making a real difference.

(APPLAUSE)

(DR. NATALICIO TO HER SEAT DR. LIGUORI TO THE PODIUM)

**DR. LIGUORI:** THANK YOU PRESIDENT NATALICIO. IF THERE IS NO FURTHER BUSINESS ..(PAUSE).. THIS CONVOCATION, A MEETING OF THE GENERAL FACULTY, IS NOW ADJOURNED. YOU ARE INVITED TO A RECEPTION HONORING THE SERVICE OF OUR FACULTY AND STAFF IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS CONVOCATION. THE RECEPTION WILL BE HELD ADJACENT TO THE GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES BUILDING. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE.

(APPLAUSE)

AT THE CONCLUSION OF DR. LIGUORI'S REMARKS, STAGE PARTY EXITS AND JOINS THE RECEPTION.