

**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**2008 Convocation**  
**President Diana Natalicio**

As our collective pace quickened each day during the past year, a single word seemed to best characterize UTEP: *momentum*. From every vantage point, UTEP seems to be gaining momentum, moving faster, accelerating the pace at which we are setting—and achieving—ever more ambitious goals.

Summer 2008 serves as a good example. The entire UTEP campus was busier and more energized than usual. Summer enrollment increased by nearly 17% over last year, thanks to the leadership of the Provost and deans who revamped their approach to summer course offerings. This new summer school model achieved our goal of expanding the number and range of classes available to students, and students enrolled in record numbers, responding enthusiastically to these new opportunities to make steady progress toward completing their degrees.

Making more efficient use of summer months is especially important to students at urban universities such as UTEP where most have ongoing employment and family obligations, and where summer represents a continuation of their regularly scheduled responsibilities, not a break in their stride. Offering more summer course options will enable students to develop year-round degree plans that establish a steady cadence in their busy lives and accelerate completion of their degrees.

This new approach to summer school took some cues from other innovative course scheduling options that have been introduced at UTEP during the past several years, including increased evening, weekend, off-campus and minimester courses. Growing in popularity among students, these non-traditionally scheduled courses provide the flexibility that many UTEP students find particularly helpful in pursuing their degrees while juggling other responsibilities. Nearly all colleges also now offer courses and entire degree programs in a variety of settings: from office buildings downtown to area schools across town, from on-post at Ft. Bliss to on-line across the world. On behalf of those students whose probability of degree completion has increased significantly as a result of our growing responsiveness to their scheduling constraints, I thank the many faculty and administrators who have worked hard to design and implement these new course offering models.

A focus on student success also served to guide completion of the extensive curriculum review conducted during the past two years. Requirements for nearly all undergraduate degree programs at UTEP now stand at or near 120 total credit hours. Special thanks to faculty committees in departments across the campus for their efforts to streamline degree requirements while ensuring the quality of the educational preparation of all UTEP graduates. Thanks too to the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Curricula Committee, chaired by Carl Lieb, and to John Wiebe,

Greg Elliot and Steve Aley for their active engagement in this critical curriculum review process.

Building on nearly two decades of K-16 relationship-development by the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, UTEP, the El Paso Community College and El Paso County school districts continue to gain prominence statewide and nationally for success in strengthening the pathway toward higher academic aspirations and attainment among all young people in this region. Of particular importance during the past year has been the continued growth in the College Readiness Initiative, which enables pre-college students to complete their required college admissions assessment (ACCUPLACER) and any required remediation while still in high school, so that they can begin UTEP and EPCC fully ready to earn college-level credit, thereby saving both time and money and reinforcing the self-confidence required to become successful university students. Important too is the significant reduction in developmental education enrollments, which at UTEP decreased by 50% between 2005 and 2008.

Another extremely important development in vertically integrating education in the El Paso region, from pre-kindergarten through graduate school, has been the growth in both dual credit and Early College High School programs, led by the El Paso Community College in collaboration with area school districts. These programs enable high school students to earn concurrent credit toward both a high school diploma and an associate's degree from EPCC, and they are rapidly changing the definition of "entering students" and services for them at UTEP.

UTEP and EPCC have worked for many years to devise strategies to achieve efficiencies in integrating information and exchanging data on the many students in this region who enroll at both institutions, either sequentially or concurrently. A major breakthrough occurred during the past year, thanks to Chris Ulibarri, Juan Vicario and Angelica Armendariz at UTEP and Gary Chacon and Yvette Motley at EPCC, and support from a U.S. Department of Education Title V Grant. This team developed "Check Status Tools" which enables dual-enrolled students at UTEP and EPCC to check on their Financial Aid, Admissions and Scholarship applications at both institutions simultaneously. Nearly 9,000 students have already accessed this service since it became available earlier this year.

A commitment to student success has also driven a recent reorganization of academic support services. Enrollment Services, under Craig Westman's capable leadership, now reports directly to the Provost's Office, as does Undergraduate Studies under the direction of newly appointed Associate Provost Donna Ekal. Building on the pioneering work of Maggy Smith and her team in developing UTEP's award-winning Entering Student Program, University College and Bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies, this reorganization reflects both the broader institutionalization of these programs and the expectation of continued innovation and enhanced coordination of student success strategies across the campus. We also welcome newly appointed deans: Dennis Soden in the University College and Pat Witherspoon in the Graduate School and thank them for the commitment they have made to foster the success of UTEP students.

The outcomes of these important Student Success initiatives are beginning to be revealed in such metrics as total number of degrees awarded, which grew by 10% between 2006

and 2007 (from 2,883 to 3,171); and total undergraduate degrees which increased by 14% during the same time period. These highly promising outcomes reflect UTEP's growing impact on the under-educated El Paso region from which we draw 82% of our students, and the successful fulfillment of countless individual student dreams and aspirations.

Growth in the number of degrees awarded at UTEP also contributes significantly to the Closing the Gaps Success Goals established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). It's widely recognized that increasing the number of Texans who complete at least a bachelor's degree must be a high priority if the state hopes to compete in the global economy. And as Hispanics in Texas outpace growth of all other population segments, it's equally clear that most of the increase in degrees awarded must be to Hispanic Texans. With our steadily growing enrollment—which reached another new record of 20,458 this fall—and our 75% Mexican-American student population, UTEP is very well positioned to take the lead in responding to this statewide imperative.

Increases in enrollment and in the number of degrees awarded are but two in a growing list of measures of UTEP's effectiveness. As a brighter spotlight shines on institutional accountability, it becomes ever more critical that the metrics used to measure performance be valid and informative. An extraordinarily important development relating to outcomes measurement occurred during the past year when UTEP was successful in advancing its challenge to policymakers to consider alternatives to the flawed graduation-rate metric. This metric, which originated with the NCAA to measure the academic progress of student-athletes, was adopted in the 1990s by the U.S. Department of Education in a misguided attempt to measure the success of all U.S. universities.

In case anyone hasn't heard, the federal graduation-rate calculation has as its denominator the number of first-time, full-time freshman students who enroll at a university in a given fall semester, and its numerator is the number of students in that cohort—and only that cohort—who graduate from the same university four, five or six years later. Although this measure may be well aligned to the kind of students who enroll at some small private schools, where cohorts of first-time, full-time freshmen enroll and progress toward their degrees together, it fails entirely to capture a majority of undergraduates at large public universities, particularly those in major urban settings: those who transfer from one institution to another, enroll part-time or interrupt their studies for military service, employment or other pressing life demands. At UTEP, 70% of the students who successfully earn undergraduate degrees are NOT counted in our graduation rate.

A recent example of the progress that has been achieved in improving understanding of the misuse of graduation rates as an all-purpose measure of university effectiveness has been the shift in criteria developed for a new Texas university performance incentive program. When introduced a year ago, this program relied heavily upon graduation rates as its primary criterion for determining performance incentive allocations to Texas public universities. Over the course of the past year, however, policymakers listened thoughtfully to our concerns and came to recognize that traditional graduation rates may capture the socioeconomic characteristics of a university's student population, but have little or nothing to do with the effectiveness of that university's work. New criteria such as increases in the total number of graduates, the number of "at-risk" graduates, and the

number of degrees awarded in such high-priority areas as engineering, nursing and teacher education have now replaced graduation rates as criteria in this incentive program...a very important breakthrough. These new criteria provide a better measure of the effectiveness of institutions in fostering the success of students from a broad range of backgrounds and life challenges. They are also far better aligned with the State's "Closing the Gaps" goals for public higher education's role in ensuring Texas' competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

Graduation rates represent one example of many higher education practices and metrics that may work reasonably well in affluent settings but fail when they are applied to first-generation, low-income students like the majority of those served by UTEP and other large urban universities. One of our major challenges at UTEP is to devise strategies to ensure that all students, whatever their backgrounds or family incomes, have the encouragement and the resources they need to develop their talent to its full potential. Our students' future—and our society's future quality of life—depend on our getting it right. At a time of reduced per-student state appropriations for higher education and the consequent rise in tuition and fees, such strategies take on even greater urgency.

First and foremost, we must be able to assure ourselves and our students that we are constantly searching for new ways to achieve greater cost-effectiveness in all areas of campus operations. We are grateful to the many staff members across the campus who have participated in this never-ending hunt for efficiencies, and we express special thanks to:

- Cindy Villa and her team in Business Affairs for efforts to streamline a broad range of operational policies and practices;
- Juan Guerra and Cliff Walsh and their associates in Facilities Services and Campus Police for their success in covering more ground while controlling costs;
- Robert Moss in Environmental Health and Safety for helping us record the lowest injury and lost-time statistics since we began keeping these records in 1995;
- Craig Westman and his Enrollment Services team for their commitment to enhancing customer service and the Goldmine and Banner applications that enable it;
- Paul Stresow and his team and Larry Johnson and the Parking and Traffic Committee for significant improvements in parking policies and practices; actually, when not a single parking complaint reached the President's Office this fall, I began to wonder whether someone had disconnected the telephone!
- And finally, Ken Pierce, Roy Mathew, David Batten and their teams in IT and CIERP who ensure that our data and technology infrastructures support all these efforts.

Student success at UTEP also requires that we provide ready and sustained access to federal, state and institutional need-based financial aid to all students who are eligible and deserve this essential support. Among these efforts:

- We have devised programs like the UTEP Promise which ensures that all students whose family incomes total \$30,000 or less per year receive a financial aid package that fully covers the total cost of their tuition and fees, and we've extended this program to include transfer students.

- We have introduced EZ Pay, a monthly tuition and fees payment plan to ensure that inadequate cash flow at the beginning of a semester doesn't deter students from enrolling.
- We established a no-interest revolving book loan fund that enables students to purchase textbooks at the beginning of the semester when they need them, and repay the loan fund over the course of the entire semester.
- We invest \$625,000 of institutional funds annually to create additional on-campus jobs for students who may not qualify for financial aid, but who must work to support their enrollment at UTEP. During the past year, more than 100 students held such jobs, most of which are well aligned with their academic goals and well above minimum-wage pay.
- We have been aggressive in seeking donor support for additional merit-based scholarships; last year we awarded more than \$8 million in scholarship support to highly talented UTEP students, including a growing number of Top Ten Percent graduates of high schools in this region.
- We are conducting financial literacy and risk assessment training to enable students to manage their finances more effectively and to review all options, including student loans, as part of a personal investment strategy whose lifetime yield will depend upon their successful completion of a UTEP degree.

Enabling residents of this region to achieve the full range of their educational aspirations has also continued to drive the development of new academic programs at UTEP, especially at the graduate level. Two Ph.D. programs—International Business and Rhetoric and Composition—achieved an important milestone this year as they awarded their first degrees. Two new Ph.D. programs—in Computational Science and Teaching, Learning and Culture—and three new Master's degrees—in Public Health, Philosophy and Teaching Science—received final approval for start-up this year. Thanks to Deans Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Josie Tinajero, Kathy Curtis and Howard Daudistel and faculty in their colleges for moving these degree programs forward.

UTEP now offers a total of 16 doctoral programs, and planning authority has been granted by the Coordinating Board for several others, including a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Doctors of Nursing Practice, Physical Therapy, and Public Administration. In addition, new master's degrees are being developed in Rehabilitation Counseling, Systems Engineering, Construction Management, Intelligence and National Security, Biomedical Engineering and Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

There are those who argue that expansion of graduate programs and research will inevitably jeopardize a university's commitment to access in undergraduate education; they claim that there's a necessary trade-off between excellence and access. We strongly disagree and offer UTEP's recent history as compelling evidence. We have made a major and sustained commitment to creating higher education access for the traditionally underserved Hispanic population of this region, while also recognizing that a commitment to access alone is not sufficient. We must also be strongly committed to excellence, for UTEP students have every right to expect the same quality education as that offered to their peers in more affluent settings. After all, once our graduates leave UTEP with their diplomas, they will be competing with those same peers as they continue on to graduate or professional school or to the world of work.

Quality at UTEP and all universities is determined first and foremost by faculty members who set high standards for their own professional accomplishments as scholars, researchers and teachers, and equally high expectations for the UTEP students with whom they work, from freshmen to post-doctoral levels. Graduate programs at UTEP have not only increased access to advanced educational opportunities for residents of this region; they have also enabled us to attract and retain highly competitive faculty members whose active engagement in research and scholarly activity has greatly enriched the quality of undergraduate students' educational experiences at UTEP as well.

A wonderful recent example of the benefits that UTEP students derive from the recruitment and retention of faculty with active research programs is the work of Drs. Craig Tweedie and Vanessa Lougheed in the Department of Biological Sciences. Their successful grant proposal to the International Polar Year program at the National Science Foundation created an opportunity for ten UTEP undergraduates and four graduate students, as well as two teachers from El Paso area schools (both UTEP alumni), to travel to Antarctica where they conducted a variety of research projects...truly an experience of a lifetime!

Other UTEP students, both graduate and undergraduate, journeyed to distant places during the past year supported by faculty members who understand the importance of expanding students' horizons and offering them global perspectives. Among these, Nursing and Health Science students and faculty have worked in such locations as Mexico, Ecuador and Thailand. Liberal Arts faculty members Ron Weber and David Ruitter accompanied UTEP student groups to Rome and London, and Dennis Soden and his team organized special programs in Italy, North Africa and Brazil for student participants in the Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence and other University College programs.

UTEP's location on the U.S.-Mexico border has provided us extraordinary opportunities to engage in collaborative work with institutions and colleagues throughout Mexico. From partnerships between UTEP's Colleges of Education, Business and Engineering and Monterrey Tech, to joint research and clinical outreach between UTEP's College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing and their colleagues at the Autonomous Universities of Chihuahua and Juarez, these collaborations have provided unique bi-national teaching, learning and research opportunities to UTEP students and faculty. Sadly, recent escalating violence in Mexico has slowed somewhat the momentum of these highly promising bi-national collaborations, as we have had to exercise greater caution in authorizing travel of UTEP students, faculty and staff into Mexico, including Ciudad Juarez. Nonetheless, we remain strongly committed to these long-term partnerships with our colleagues and sister institutions in Mexico, and will continue to seek strategies to grow and develop them in the years ahead.

UTEP faculty members have also worked hard to create a broad range of on-campus opportunities for students at all levels to join in the excitement of their research and scholarly work, and grant funding often converts such experiences into paid employment. Nearly all UTEP students are employed while enrolled at the university, and research-related employment on campus is particularly valuable because it fosters greater coherence in students' daily routines and combines earning with learning. Research-

related grant funding created nearly 1,200 on-campus jobs for UTEP students during the past year.

Building momentum in securing external grant funding requires participation by large number of proposal writers with a broad range of interests and expertise. It's been exciting to see the growth in the total number of proposals submitted each year and the range of departments across the campus from which they come. Faculty and staff members wrote more than 500 proposals last year to compete for \$204 million in funding, a 15% increase over the previous year. Proposals range from a relatively brief application form to hundreds of pages, and from single investigators or project directors to large teams of researchers. Funding probability also varies greatly, from highly encouraging to enormously challenging. The National Science Foundation has reported, for example, that it is able to fund only one in ten computer science proposals submitted each year. As I was reminded by highly successful biomedical researcher Dr. June Kan-Mitchell, in the face of such odds faculty researchers must not only be highly competent but also eternally optimistic and persevering. (And true to her word, Dr. Kan-Mitchell was awarded another highly competitive RO1 grant from NIH this year.)

We thank Roberto Osegueda for his thorough transformation of operations in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the ORSP team for their efforts to provide enhanced support for faculty and staff proposal writers. We are also grateful to the Contracts and Grants Accounting team for their efforts to improve support services to successful grant recipients. We are especially pleased that Ann Gates has agreed to serve as Associate Vice President for Research. Dr. Gates' outstanding record of successfully building interdisciplinary research teams to respond to large institutional grant opportunities should serve as a huge asset in her new administrative assignment. We also acknowledge with thanks the expertise and time that faculty members Christian Meissner and Kristine Garza have committed to their leadership roles in the critical IRB and IACUC processes, and we welcome Doug Watts, who brings a wealth of experience to help us take our biomedical research infrastructure to the next level.

UTEP continues to be one of the most successful research universities in Texas, and we rank among the top 200 research universities in the entire U.S. Sponsored project expenditures from all sources in FY 2007, the last year for which comparative data are available, totaled \$47.5 million, and federally funded research expenditures totaled nearly \$27 million, ranking UTEP fourth among all Texas public universities, after Texas A&M, U.T. Austin, and U. of Houston.

UTEP's funded research portfolio grew in both total size and breadth during the past year. Faculty and staff members from across the campus secured nearly \$77 million in new grant awards from federal and state agencies, foundations and corporations. We congratulate all of them for their success in this increasingly intense competition for grant funding. I wish that there were time to mention all of the fascinating work that will be done at UTEP as a result of this grant-writing success, but a few examples will perhaps provide a flavor:

- The National Science Foundation's Faculty Early Career Development Program awarded Dr. Juan Noveron in Chemistry one of its highly competitive CAREER

grants. And thanks to an ORSP-sponsored workshop conducted by Professor Arturo Bronson in Mechanical Engineering, we anticipate more such prestigious CAREER grants next year.

- Dr. Gaspare Genna in Political Science received an award from the U.S. Department of Education's North American Research Linkages Program for a multi-university collaboration that will look beyond borders to study regionalism, migration and security in North America.
- Dr. Maria Blume in Languages and Linguistics received almost \$900,000 from the National Science Foundation to lead a multi-university project to create a cyber-enabled virtual learning environment for the study of language.
- The College of Health Sciences received \$2.7 million from NIH to continue its efforts to reduce cardio-vascular disease in El Paso's Lower Valley through interventions by community health workers (promotoras) and partnerships with a variety of community organizations.
- New UTEP faculty researchers Manuel Llano, German Rosas-Acosta, Marc Cox and Manuel Miranda-Arango in Biology; Malcolm Cooke in Mechanical Engineering; and Chantal Vella in Kinesiology all received grants through the MBRs/SCORE program at NIH; and David Borrok in Geology and Felicia Manciu and Christian Botez in Physics have secured support from NSF, DoD and the Texas Advanced Research Program.
- Dr. Shilendra Varma in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering received nearly \$1 million from the Office of Naval Research for his work on alloys for use in the aerospace industry.
- The largest single grant award this year, \$13 million over six years, came from the U.S. Department of Education's GEAR-UP program which will help more than 3,000 students in 11 middle schools in the Ysleta ISD prepare for college. Thanks to Juliet Caire, Gary Edens and Richard Padilla for their fine work on this highly competitive proposal.
- The Office of Strategic Initiatives, ably directed by Vice President Joe Riojas, successfully secured UTEP's designation by the Department of Homeland Security as the National Center of Excellence in Border Security and Immigration, as well as funding from DoD for work in the Center for Defense Systems Research. Together, these two OSI Centers represent more than \$10 million in new educational and research opportunities at UTEP over the next six years.
- Demonstrating that a grant's size doesn't necessarily equate with its impact, a modest \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to bring Bhutanese dancers to El Paso gave a huge boost to our ongoing efforts to strengthen cultural ties between UTEP and the Kingdom of Bhutan.

The announcement a couple of years ago by the Smithsonian Institution that it planned to feature the Kingdom of Bhutan and the State of Texas at its annual Folklife Festival on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. this summer presented UTEP with a fortuitous opportunity to become involved in the Festival itself and, upon its conclusion, to bring at least some of Bhutan's participation in it to El Paso! An enthusiastic UTEP team accepted the challenge of planning both our participation in Festival activities in Washington and a special visit of Bhutanese performers to El Paso. A few highlights will

illustrate the broad range of activities and many UTEP participants in our Bhutan engagement this summer.

UTEP Communication students Rudy Romo, Javier Corro, Eli Valenzuela, Marcos Zapata and Alfonso Duarte spent six weeks in Washington creating a documentary of Bhutan's participation in the Festival, supported by their mentors Carolyn Mitchell, Patrick Mullins and Bobby Gutierrez. Yvonne Carranza accompanied two other UTEP students, Erika Anchondo and Xochitl Rodriguez, who spread the word among Festival goers about UTEP's architectural ties to Bhutan. "El Paso Night" at the Festival featured both Mariachi Los Arrieros, most of whom are UTEP alumni, and dancers from the Royal Academy of Performing Arts in Bhutan. What a beautiful inter-cultural mix that was! Our Festival-related activities ended with a large gathering of UTEP alumni and friends on July 3 in a glorious rooftop setting overlooking the U.S. Capitol building, where Mother Nature and Liz Thurmond worked together to offer us a perfect evening, and our Bhutanese friends joined us in celebrating the greatly strengthened ties between us.

Following the Folklife Festival, 22 members of the Bhutanese delegation, including HRH Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck, traveled to El Paso for a special performance at the Haskins Center of the masked and traditional dancers of the Royal Academy of Performing Arts. The 7,500 area residents who braved a monsoon rainstorm to attend the dance performance will not soon forget the experience.

Special thanks to: Howard Daudistel for his leadership in preparing the National Endowment for the Arts grant proposal; to Kate Bonansinga for the Bhutanese textile exhibit at the Rubin Gallery; to Lisa Smith and Myron Nadel for organizing an inter-cultural dance workshop; to the Special Events and Don Haskins Center staffs for their staging of the dance performance; to the Centennial Museum for its exhibit of El Pasoans' photos of Bhutan; to Beto Lopez and his University Relations team for serving as hosts for our Bhutanese visitors; to Bhutanese student Dorji Wangmo for her stellar role in the documentary film; and to the many other UTEP staff, faculty and students who contributed to the success of this wonderful series of events...an outstanding example of UTEP teamwork at its best!

And the Bhutan momentum continues to build. Bhutan's Folklife Festival exhibit on the National Mall included the construction of a large lhakhang or temple, whose entire interior was hand-crafted in Bhutan. Especially exciting for UTEP was Bhutan's announcement that this beautiful building was donated by the people of Bhutan to the people of the United States for permanent installation on the campus of the University of Texas at El Paso. How honored we are to add this very special Bhutanese structure to our campus! Although Bhutanese architecture has inspired the development of the UTEP campus since construction of Old Main in 1917, this will be UTEP's first building actually "Made in Bhutan"!

At the end of the Festival, the lhakhang was carefully dismantled, placed on trucks and transported to UTEP, where it is now safely stored until we are ready to re-construct it on a yet-to-be-determined site on our campus. Re-construction will be an interesting challenge for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that traditional Bhutanese construction doesn't employ nails or other such "artificial connectors." UTEP's Greg

McNicol and Ed Soltero each spent time in Washington observing the construction process and capturing it on film, and as further insurance, we also plan to invite at least a couple of Bhutanese craftsmen to provide technical assistance during the re-construction process. We hope too that we will be able to establish a webcam link to Bhutan, so that our many new friends there will be able to observe in real time the re-construction on our campus of their extraordinary gift to us.

We are very pleased that a record number of Bhutanese students have entrusted their dreams and aspirations to UTEP this year. We welcome them to “Bhutan on the Border”...or “BHUTEP,” as some of our Bhutanese visitors this summer decided to call us!

The Bhutanese lhakhang will be one of many new facilities at UTEP. We have embarked on an unprecedented \$260 million program of new construction and renovation projects, the most significant single campus transformation in our history.

- The Foster-Stevens Basketball Complex may be the most visible of our current construction projects because of its location on the corner of Mesa and Glory Road. This beautiful new Bhutanese-style building, funded entirely by generous private donors and scheduled to open next spring, will provide practice courts, locker rooms, training facilities and offices for both women’s and men’s basketball teams and coaches, as well as a Hall of Honor that will celebrate UTEP’s glorious basketball tradition, including a special tribute to our 1966 NCAA Championship team and our beloved Coach Don Haskins.
- A new University Bookstore has begun to take shape on the corner of University and Sun Bowl, just south of the world’s only Bhutanese parking garage. To be completed next spring, this facility will provide additional space for textbooks and course-related supplies, as well as a range of UTEP merchandise and a small cafe.
- Construction of a new teaching and research building for Chemistry and Computer Science, funded by a combination of Tuition Revenue and Permanent University Fund bonds, was recently approved by the Board of Regents. This 140,000 sq. ft., \$80 million structure will be located at the south end of the Engineering Building, and is scheduled to open in late fall 2010. Scheduled to open in late fall 2010, this building will incorporate several interesting new Bhutanese architectural features, and its footprint is expected to re-shape pedestrian traffic patterns at the south end of the campus.
- UTEP’s Child Development Center, which currently resides in a small building on the site where the new Chemistry and Computer Science facility will be constructed, will move to a renovated apartment complex on Schuster, between Hawthorne and El Paso Streets. In addition to being larger and better designed for child care, this new facility offers safer and more convenient access for the 150 children and their parents who participate in its programs.
- Additional Tuition Revenue and PUF Bonds have been committed to expanding and upgrading existing facilities to support growth and new program directions in Science and Engineering. Plans have been developed and endorsed by faculty and administrators to create several new teaching and research spaces including an Engineering Clean Room, a Design Studio, and an

Engineering and Science Entrance Portal with space for biomedical engineering laboratories and future bioinformatics or computational science expansion.

- One of the most anticipated construction projects to be launched this year will be a new facility for the College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing. Re-locating undergraduate Health Sciences and Nursing programs from their current downtown site to the main UTEP campus has long been a high-priority, and thanks to support from the U.T. System Board of Regents, that dream is about to come true. A magnificent new, 130,000 sq. ft., \$60 million facility will soon rise on the hill at the corner of Sun Bowl and Schuster, where the tennis courts and the Student Health Center are now located. Scheduled to open in the spring of 2011, this new facility will take UTEP's Bhutanese architecture in several interesting new directions, and its location will make it highly visible, both on the campus and to passing traffic on Interstate-10.
- In case you're wondering, the Student Health Center will be re-located to the Union Building, in space to be vacated by the Bookstore when it moves to its new site at University and Sun Bowl. The Health Center's new location in the Union will provide greater visibility and access to students, as well as much-needed additional space to accommodate enrollment growth and plans for expanded health and wellness programs.
- Design is underway for a major \$32 million, 87,000 sq. ft. expansion of the Student Recreation Complex. Funded entirely by student fees authorized through a referendum, this new facility will be located between UTEP's Swimming and Fitness Center and the soccer field. It will provide greatly expanded cardio and weight training areas and a variety of new features that our students have identified as high priorities, including climbing and bouldering walls, indoor jogging track, multi-use sport courts, and fitness class studios.
- Last but certainly not least, UTEP has entered into a long-term partnership with the City of El Paso to construct a transit terminal and 500-space parking garage on Oregon between Glory Road and Cincinnati. This new garage will provide convenient parking for UTEP students, as well as participants at events at the Don Haskins Center, Sun Bowl and the Cincinnati entertainment district, and the transit terminal is expected to foster greater use of public transportation.

UTEP has made a strong commitment to incorporate environmental sustainability into the design and construction of all new and renovated facilities and the retrofit of existing campus systems. In new construction and renovation projects, for example, we comply with LEED Certification standards, from construction pollution prevention to energy efficiency in mechanical and electrical systems. We have also committed significant resources to energy-conservation initiatives to retrofit existing systems across the campus, ranging from expanding the Thermal Plant to installing occupancy sensor light switches in common areas. We have also greatly expanded our recycling program; last year we recycled 327,000 pounds of paper and cardboard, 35 tons of steel and 8 tons of copper. And we are exploring new "green initiatives" such as a roof replacement on the Biology Building which will be the first "green roof" installation on our campus and in El Paso.

Special thanks to Greg McNicol, Ed Soltero and the team in Construction and Planning Services, who have worked especially hard to provide leadership in overseeing this large portfolio of construction and renovation projects. We also thank the many faculty, staff and students who have generously contributed their time and ideas to the conceptualization and design of facilities that will serve not only them, but future generations to come. Although there will surely be inconveniences to us all as we accommodate an unusually high level of construction activity on the campus, they will be more than offset by the excitement of participating in this major transformation of the UTEP skyline over the next several years.

Exciting too is UTEP's growing national and international visibility. Through academic program recognitions, individual student and faculty successes, research breakthroughs, and athletic accomplishments, UTEP has increasingly stepped into the spotlight during the past year.

- UTEP's MBA program was recently ranked by Hispanic Business magazine among the Top Ten MBA programs for Hispanics in the U.S., joining Stanford, Duke and U.T. Austin. This is the first time that UTEP has been recognized in this national ranking, and we thank Dean Bob Nachtmann, MBA programs director Laura Uribarri, and the College of Business faculty and staff for their commitment to quality, innovation and responsiveness to the needs of a diverse student population.
- Communication major and Theatre minor Christian Contreras received the 2008 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Barbizon Award for Lighting Design. Even more impressive, this was Christian's first-ever lighting design project, and his competitors for this national award were graduate students from some of the most prestigious theatre programs in the nation. Christian will soon take his considerable talent and his UTEP bachelor's degree to graduate film school at the University of Southern California. Hello Hollywood!
- The Chronicle of Higher Education recognized UTEP's Rhetoric and Writing faculty as the third most productive such Ph.D. program faculty in the U.S. in terms of publications, grants and honors received.
- UTEP recently hosted the largest football game ever held in the Sun Bowl, when, for the first time ever, the University of Texas at Austin Longhorns came to El Paso to play our Miners. It was a great event—another wonderful example of UTEP teamwork, both on and off the field—that gave us extremely high visibility across Texas and beyond. Thanks to everyone involved in this major and highly successful production.
- On its tenth anniversary, the Law School Preparation Institute celebrated the extraordinary success of two of its graduates, Danielle Escontrias and Toni Camacho, who are now enrolled at New York University and the University of California-Berkeley law schools, with \$150,000 and \$100,000 in scholarship support, respectively. Over the past ten years, 60% of the LSPI's 350 graduates have attended top tier law schools.
- The Alumni Relations Office, under Richard Daniel's capable direction, successfully partnered with the UTEP Alumni Association to achieve our long-sought goal of establishing a UTEP Parents' Association and a UTEP Student

Ambassadors organization. The Ambassadors have already been a welcoming presence at several UTEP events this fall.

- UTEP's College of Engineering ranked first among all U.S. universities in the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanics, fourth in master's degrees, and second in Ph.D. degrees, and was once again recognized among the Top Ten Graduate Engineering Programs nationally by Hispanic Business magazine. Congratulations to Dean Richard Schoephoerster and the Engineering faculty, staff and students for these validations of their continued excellence and commitment to increasing diversity in engineering.
- For the first time in its history, the UTEP Women's Basketball program earned a bid to the NCAA Tournament. Kudos to Coach Keitha Adams, her staff and her outstanding Lady Miners team for a great season and the well-deserved honor of placing the first women's basketball banner in the Don Haskins Center.
- Dean Bob Anders was named Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing; Dean Richard Schoephoerster was elected Fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering; Physics Chair Jorge Lopez, Fellow of the American Physical Society; and Chemistry Chair Jorge Gardea-Torresdey editor of the Journal of Hazardous Materials.
- Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Center for Civic Engagement has provided more than 300,000 hours of service to over 125,000 community members, involving more than 12,000 UTEP students and 150 local schools, agencies and organizations. Thanks to Kathy Staudt and Azuri Ruiz for the important work that they continue to do.
- The UTEP Dinner Theatre, under the able leadership of Greg Taylor, presented a special 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert in the Don Haskins Center, featuring the music of Sir Tim Rice, who was our honored guest.
- After only two years of publication, UTEP's El Minero was named one of the Top 15 College Magazine Pacesetters in the nation.
- Dr. Judith Munter in the College of Education was awarded a U.S.-Mexico Border Fulbright grant.
- Dr. Larry Murr, Chair of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, was the recipient of the International Metallographic Society award for lifetime achievement and the 2007 Educator Award from the Minerals, Metals & Materials Society.
- The School of Nursing was recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for achieving the largest increase in the number of nursing graduates among all academic institutions in Texas, while also maintaining a 95% pass rate on the professional licensure examination.
- Dr. Pat Teller is serving as the General Chair of the International Conference for High Performance Computing, Networking, Storage and Analysis which is expected to attract more than 10,000 researchers from around the world.
- Four current UTEP student-athletes represented their countries in the recent Beijing Olympics:
  - Halimat Ismaila represented Nigeria and won the Bronze Medal in the women's 400m relay
  - Blessing Okagbare, also representing Nigeria, won the Bronze Medal in the women's long jump

Churandy Martina represented the Netherlands Antilles in the 100 and 200 meters, and

Mickael Hanany represented France in the men's high jump.

Congratulations to all of them and to Coach Bob Kitchens and his capable staff!

Although all the many accomplishments that were mentioned in these remarks—and the many, many more that we don't have time to include—might give the impression that UTEP is justified in resting on its laurels, we all know that's not our style. We have many new goals to achieve, and much work remains to be done. During the coming year we will be intensely engaged in two extremely important efforts.

First, we must do all that we can to leverage our success in attracting external research funding, developing new and enhancing current doctoral programs, and increasing undergraduate student success, to enable us to fulfill our promise of becoming one of Texas' new "Tier One" universities. Our extraordinary progress during the past two decades has earned us designation as one of the state's seven "Emerging Tier One" universities; 20 years ago we surely wouldn't have been a part of that conversation. In football terms, we've fought our way into the Red Zone, and we've now got to get the ball across the goal line. It's going to take tremendous effort, teamwork and support from many external sources, but we clearly have developed self-confidence, a strong sense of purpose, and a committed group of loyal alumni and stakeholders, all valuable assets that will enable us to accelerate the momentum we've already built.

Second, we are embarking on our Centennial Campaign, a major fundraising initiative that will culminate in 2014, UTEP's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Earlier this month, we conducted the first meeting of the Leadership Council. Chaired by Distinguished UTEP Alumnus Russ Vandenburg, this group of highly committed UTEP alumni and friends will help us achieve our ambitious Campaign goal. This external funding Campaign has now taken on greater urgency as community and alumni support will be essential to our pursuit of Tier One status. UTEP and El Paso simply must compete. UTEP's future capacity to continue to create opportunities for talented young people to achieve their full potential, to prepare a highly skilled workforce, and to play a major role in regional economic development and quality of life will depend on our success in this Centennial Campaign.

As many of you know, in February of this year, I celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my appointment by the University of Texas System Board of Regents as UTEP's president. What a privilege and pleasure these past 20 years have been and how quickly they have flown by! As often occurs on such special anniversaries, I decided to have a look at the first Convocation remarks I presented in September 1987, shortly after becoming UTEP's interim president. What I discovered is enormously satisfying. The vision of UTEP that I shared in 1987 is in fact the UTEP that we have not only successfully achieved....but gone well beyond! We have greatly exceeded our initial lofty goals, steadily building on our growing success and the increased confidence associated with it. We set ever higher aspirations for ourselves, and we are now well prepared and confident in our capacity to become a nationally recognized Tier One university with a 21<sup>st</sup> century demographic.

Let me close by reading a few sentences from those 1987 remarks:

“UTEP in many ways represents the American Dream....the conviction that everyone deserves an opportunity—and a quality opportunity—to become educated to the full extent of his or her talents and motivations. For 75 years, this university has been successful in creating educational opportunities and access, while at the same time constantly striving for greater excellence. Striking this balance between institutional quality and accessibility is both UTEP’s most significant challenge and its single greatest achievement.....

UTEP benefits from enormous institutional assets...[and] ultimately, our greatest institutional asset is you: UTEP’s faculty, staff and students. We are UTEP. We have invested far more than dollars in this institution; we have invested our lives. We care more than anyone else possibly can about what happens here. So, it’s up to us to chart our future course and to work toward attaining our goals. Together we can achieve our dreams, both individual and collective, and together we can help make each others’ dreams come true.

Believe in yourself and in your dreams. Believe in UTEP and its aspirations. Share the dream!”