

**COMMISSION OF 125 REPORT PRESENTATION CEREMONY  
REMARKS BY KENNETH M. JASTROW, II  
MAIN MALL  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
SEPTEMBER 30, 2004**

---

In 1957 The University of Texas, under the leadership of President Logan Wilson, invited 75 distinguished citizens to assess the institution, establish goals, and make long-term recommendations. That Committee of 75 delivered "a realistic and sober reappraisal" that was the basis for enormous improvement in the quality of the University in the two and a half decades that followed.

A quarter century later, Peter T. Flawn as president convened 100 accomplished men and women to form the Centennial Commission. That commission's 1983 report served as a thorough and insightful blueprint for launching UT into the ranks of the nation's leading universities.

During the 2001-2002 academic year, 125 years after the Texas Constitution of 1876 mandated that the state establish "a university of the first class," President Larry Faulkner called for a long-term strategic planning endeavor. Its goal would be to strengthen the future of the institution. In the spirit of the Constitutional mandate, the group was called the Commission of 125.

The members of the Commission were charged with these tasks:

- to express a vision of how The University of Texas can best serve Texas and the world at large during the next 25 years, and
- to recommend a course of action to achieve that vision.

Today, two years and countless volunteer hours later, we are ready to present to the president,

*A Disciplined Culture of Excellence: The Report of the Commission of 125.*

The vision statement for The University developed by the Commission sets forth the aspiration and challenge that The University of Texas has the opportunity, and indeed the obligation, to be the best public university. The vision statement reads:

*The University of Texas will be the best in the world at creating a disciplined culture of excellence that generates intellectual excitement, transforms lives, and develops leaders. The University of Texas will define for the 21st century what it means to be a university of the first class.*

The Commission believes that creating a disciplined culture of excellence is the single, overarching imperative that will lead to preeminence. And to support this culture, two strategic initiatives are recommended. They are complex, difficult, yet crucial structural changes to The University of Texas.

1. Develop a new undergraduate core curriculum to better prepare students for lives of accomplishment.
2. Establish a more demanding standard for leadership of academic departments and research centers, and give those leaders the authority and resources to succeed.

In order to achieve these goals, the Commission also makes 16 operational recommendations, which deal with issues such as enrollment size, student-faculty ratio, libraries, and campus housing.

The Commission recognizes that The University is at a watershed moment in its history. The capital campaign raised \$1.6 billion to support our mission, applications are near an all-time high, our state and national demographics are changing rapidly, and we remain the largest university in the nation. UT has joined the ranks of the best public universities, but we are not the best. In the spirit of the Committee of 75 and the Centennial Commission, the Commission of 125 aspires to chart a path that will lead The University of Texas to a higher standard of excellence. The Commission believes that our vision to make The University of Texas the nation's best public university is an achievable goal that will benefit all Texans.

Each member considers service on the Commission of 125 an honor and a privilege. On behalf of the members of the Commission, I want to thank President Larry Faulkner for inviting us to serve. Larry has brought great vision and leadership to his work, he has led the institution through a period of important change, and the University is a better place for it.

I also want to thank Geoff Leavenworth, executive director of the Commission, and his colleague Chris Marcin for their work in arranging the meetings and facilitating the drafting and printing of the report. Please join me in a round of applause to thank Geoff and Chris for their outstanding service to the Commission.

The deans and vice presidents who served as administrative liaisons to the Commission were of great assistance to this project, and I thank each of them. They also deserve our gratitude and recognition.

The presentation of the report to President Faulkner concludes the work of the Commission of 125. However, because of the enormous investment of time and resources by all participants, there needs to be a process for follow-up and accountability. The Commission respectfully requests that the president of The University issue an interim progress report six months from now and each year for four years thereafter. In addition, the Commission requests that we reconvene once a year for the next five years to be informed by the president of progress on these recommendations. President Faulkner has agreed to these requests, and we thank him.

To acknowledge the work and the aspirations of the Commission of 125, we intend to undertake a commemorative project on the campus. We believe that the spirit of giving back to The University has been crucial to our past successes, and it remains crucial to our future. A commemorative fountain is being planned that will forever welcome students and visitors to the East Mall. It will serve as a tangible symbol of the spirit of giving--a spirit that is expressed in countless ways each year by alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends. It will honor the dedication and loyalty of the Commission and The University of Texas community, which extends throughout the world.

Commission member Charles Tate of Houston and Richard Lariviere, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, are co-chairs of the committee planning the commemorative project. We will keep you informed of the committee's progress.

Achieving the vision and aspirations described in the Report of the Commission of 125 will require a strong and sustained commitment from The University's senior administrators and the faculty, as well as from staff, students, and alumni. It will also require increased resources. We believe that Texas, and The University of Texas, can and must be equal to the task. Implementing these recommendations and achieving this vision will pay great dividends to Texas, to society, and to the world at large.

I salute the 218 members of the Commission, who contributed a tremendous amount of time and effort to the project. On behalf of the members, Prudence Mackintosh will offer her thoughts and perspective on the work of the Commission. She served on the Executive Committee and chaired an important task force which studied UT's libraries, museums, and information technology. Please welcome author, journalist, and UT graduate--Prudence Mackintosh.

*[Remarks by Prudence Mackintosh]*

**Kenny Jastrow:**

President Faulkner, on behalf of the entire Commission of 125, I commend to you: *A Disciplined Culture of Excellence: The Report of the Commission of 125*. I also offer the Commission's undivided support for the execution of all the recommendations contained therein. This report reflects the devotion and highest aspirations that all Commission members share for The University of Texas.

*[Remarks by Larry Faulkner]*

A traditional symbol of academic authority is the mace. In medieval times, the mace was used as a weapon. Later it was adopted by academia as a means of keeping the faculty in line.

The marshals of The University of Texas carry ornate maces in academic ceremonies such as commencement, where they symbolize the president's authority to bestow degrees. It is my pleasure to present to President Faulkner the mace of the Commission of 125, which will be carried in future academic ceremonies to symbolize the high aspirations of the Commission for the future of The University of Texas.