

## Address on the State of the University

The University of Texas at Austin  
October 6, 2004

The dozen months behind us were remarkable for their leverage on the future. They gave us trials, but also advances. And in the midst of it all, we thought and planned with vision. We challenged the goals and standards at our core. The range of important issues was as broad as I have ever seen addressed in a single institution in a single year. It was a powerful performance by a healthy university with confidence in its ability to succeed in work of the most important kind, and with determination to address the future as a leader.

If you are skeptical, just listen to this catalog:

- We managed the consequences of a 10% reduction in support for operations from state appropriations and the Available University Fund.
- We created an effective consultative process for proposing, debating, revising, and advancing an annual recommendation on tuition; and we implemented a priority-driven tuition program for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.
- We completed the *We're Texas* fundraising campaign, apparently with the greatest success ever by a public university for programs apart from a medical component.
- We brought the Knowledge Gateway -- which we now call UTOPIA -- into use as an innovative tool for taking the University's intellectual and cultural assets to the public in a more effective way.
- We established an Honor Code.
- We seized a very high position in combined federal funding for research -- second only to MIT among universities without medical centers.
- We set new highs for success among our students: 93% retention of freshmen, 45% graduation after four years, and 74% graduation after six years.
- We announced that we will re-institute the consideration of race and ethnicity as factors in admission, and we developed the procedures for doing so in harmony with principles enunciated by the U. S. Supreme Court.
- We led in the effort to establish a new Texas-wide consortium to build and operate high-performance data networks for research and education, and we gained places for Texas at the national policymaking tables in this arena.
- We launched a new curricular demonstration school, The University of Texas Elementary School, serving an enthusiastic group of students and families from predominantly African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods in East Austin.
- With completion of the work of the Task Force on Enrollment Strategy, we defined clear principles for managing our size.
- Likewise, with completion of the work of the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness, we challenged ourselves to become more effective in preparing our students and our larger community for the culturally complex world already before us.

- We received a new organizational concept for the Jackson School of Geosciences through the work of its Vision Committee, and we began work internally on synthesis of the new Jackson School.
- And we supported the work of the Commission of 125 through the issuance of its report last Thursday. We now have its blueprint for the long term.

While accomplishing all of this, we taught and advised more students than any other American university; sponsored a vigorous student life; produced thousands of degrees; offered continuing education to many thousands beyond our campus-based students; revised courses and curricula; carried out research and made discoveries; recruited faculty and staff members of the best possible talent; renewed and constructed facilities; hosted exhibitions; acquired new assets for our cultural holdings; sponsored performances and creative activity; transferred technology; provided advice for governments, businesses and civic organizations; supported participation by students in competitive athletic activities; and otherwise did the daily work of a great American public university.

The sweep of all this draws the breath away. That we could do it all simultaneously, and that we could do it well, demonstrates beyond words that The University of Texas has become the "university of the first class" envisioned by the founders of our state and sought so consistently by those who have gone before us here. It is good that we share a moment of earned satisfaction as we gaze back in review.

Then we must push on, because the press forward is a part of the character intended for the University from the beginning. And it is essential to the character of any university that leads.

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Standing imposingly before us is the report of the Commission of 125. Our response to it must be the largest part of the new agenda, so I will dedicate the greatest portion of this address in that direction. But first, let me offer a few additional remarks about accomplishments of the past year.

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If 2002-2003 was "The Year of the Task Force," as I said in my last Address on the State of the University, then the last twelve months might have been "The Year of Deliberating Dangerously" -- that is, if you were a university president considering a multitude of politically sensitive task force recommendations. So far I have managed to keep my job. But there were moments in the early months of this year when it felt as if I were trapped in a recurring dream in which all my final exams were on the same day. The task forces had delivered excellent reports that demanded my attention, but they also delivered simultaneously and the pressure was on. There was a lot to digest, and my gallbladder

refused to cooperate. But I finally managed to issue extensive responses to the Task Force on Enrollment Strategy, the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness, the Report of the Jackson School Vision Committee, and the student committee to recommend an Honor Code. The action items resulting from those reports are in various stages of progress, as might be expected. And that fact defines the theme of 2004-2005: "The Year of Follow-Through."

The Task Force on Enrollment Strategy recommended that the University increase the size of its faculty, reduce the student population to the range of 48,000 over the next five years, and pursue legislative changes that would limit the percentage of new students admitted under the state's Top 10 Percent Law. I want to thank Professor Isabella Cunningham for chairing the task force. She and her colleagues did an exceptional job. In response to their report, these steps will be taken:

- The University will continue to improve its educational environment, which is the driving principle of the task force recommendations. We must stay on track with the faculty expansion effort to add 30 faculty members per year for 10 years. At the same time we must reduce our student population. The fall enrollment is 50,400, down 2% from last year's 51,426. With freshman entry held constant at 6,800, we will be below 48,000 in four years or so.
- The University will expand the financial incentives and other measures that encourage students to carry at least 14 hours per semester, so that their time to graduation will be reduced. This will make room for other students to attend the University. We have made progress. At present, 48% of our undergraduates are taking 14 semester hours or more. But we can and will do better.
- The University will be working with the Legislature in 2005 to institute modifications to the state's Top 10 Percent Law so that no more than 50% of a freshman class is admitted through automatic admission based on high-school class rank alone. In the past two years, about 70% of our Texas freshmen entered in this way. Students are not one-dimensional. It is unhealthy for Texas and for this university to admit such a large percentage on a single criterion and to ignore everything else in an applicant's record. Besides, if the law remains unmodified, we are headed for a situation where we will lose control of enrollment and must degrade the educational experience for everyone through overpopulation.
- Beginning with the 2004-2005 cycle, the University will consider race and ethnicity in a holistic review of applicants for admission to the University. This year's freshman class contains 4.5% African Americans, 16.9% Hispanic Americans, and 17.9% Asian Americans. For all three groups these are slight increases over last year's freshman class. We can and must further increase African-American and Hispanic participation. The burden of Hopwood has been lifted from us and we look forward to once again competing for the best minority students in Texas and around the nation.

In response to the Jackson School Vision Committee report, I recommended that the Jackson School of Geosciences become a separate school with its own dean reporting to

the Executive Vice President and Provost. An implementation committee is now at work under the leadership of Professor William Carlson to define structure and governance. I am grateful for their effort, and I express further gratitude to President Emeritus Peter Flawn and the Vision Committee for their deliberation and guidance in this important area.

The Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness was chaired by Associate Dean Darlene Grant, who showed outstanding leadership. I am most appreciative of Dean Grant and the other members of her team. They submitted several recommendations, to which we have responded:

- The University has established a top-level leadership position to oversee and improve progress in the development of a more diverse institution. The new Vice Provost for Inclusion and Cross-Cultural Effectiveness will chair the University Council on Inclusion and Cross-Cultural Effectiveness and will have resources to sponsor new programs across the University. A significant budget has been assigned toward incentive programs that this officer will oversee in 2004-2005. At the present time, the Provost is undertaking a search to find the best person for the job.
- The University will explicitly consider a cross-cultural requirement in the undergraduate curriculum. I have indicated my support for this provision and have suggested that it be a subject-area elective chosen by each student from a list of eligible courses. The Commission of 125 has called for a revised general curriculum for undergraduate education at UT, and I will have more to say about that a little later.
- The University is also re-examining the representation of historical figures in statuary on our campus. This is a question of history, art, and architecture, so the ideas need to be examined by a group of technically proficient people who are specially charged for the purpose. We are now in the process of forming that committee. I might add that there are plans under way to erect statues of Barbara Jordan and Cesar Chavez on campus, and I fully support those efforts.

Throughout this review and in the work that lies ahead, we are striving to build a more diverse university with greater skill and comfort in working across cultural boundaries.

A hallmark of the past year was the convergence of student leadership in recommending language for an Honor Code, an idea active here for several years. After consultation with faculty and staff leadership, I announced adoption in the spring. The Honor Code states:

"The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community."

This is an important achievement in the history of the University. I congratulate last year's student leadership and the presidential student advisory committee for taking the

initiative. I have appointed a committee of faculty, staff, and student leaders to find appropriate ways to integrate the Honor Code into the life of the University.

In the spirit of "follow-through," I invite you all to visit the President's web site to read the original reports produced by these task forces and committees, and to also read my more detailed responses to their recommendations. The University has been greatly strengthened by the wise counsel of the numerous colleagues engaged in all of this work.

Our successful seven-year *We're Texas* capital campaign concluded on August 31st. I am pleased to report that we raised more than \$1.62 billion, greatly exceeding the \$1 billion goal and all expectations. This campaign will long be remembered for the generosity of its many contributors and the lasting benefits it has produced for the University.

Approximately 520,000 gifts were made during the campaign by more than 130,000 donors. The results are already being felt on campus. Gifts to the University have created new professorships, endowed chairs and hundreds of new scholarships. They have funded research initiatives that expand the frontiers of knowledge. The campaign has also made possible the construction of state-of-the-art facilities for the fine arts, law, engineering, computer science, biology, psychology, the geosciences, and other areas. And we have been able to acquire major new collections of art, photography, and important historical resources.

The campaign also brought about unprecedented growth in the University's endowment. Some \$728 million was added through the creation of 934 new individual endowments.

Beyond its financial success, the capital campaign has had the effect of directly linking in the public's mind the long-term destiny of the state of Texas with the quality of its flagship university. Tens of thousands of supporters have invested in our future because they believe in the work we do and the impact we have on students, the state of Texas, and our larger society. Together we have been extraordinarily successful, and I congratulate everyone who participated in this remarkable accomplishment. I offer my special thanks to Ron Steinhart, executive chair of the capital campaign, for his outstanding leadership throughout the campaign.

One of the key players in the success of the campaign was Johnnie Ray, Vice President for Resource Development. He left the University in May, and Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Kevin Hegarty is now overseeing the Office of Resource Development until a new vice president is appointed. I thank Vice President Hegarty for taking on this crucial responsibility.

In 2003-2004, the *We're Texas* campaign and the task forces captured a great deal of attention under the spotlight, as they should have, but there were a number of other matters on which I would like to comment:

- We benefited when the Texas Legislature gave authority to the governing boards of state universities to set tuition. The rise in tuition and fees was sizable, but

essential. This was the only means by which we could move forward to address top priorities, such as faculty expansion and recurring funding for preservation of facilities. It also gave us the ability to preserve services in the face of cuts in appropriations for operations. But UT Austin is still recognized as one of the country's best educational values. Last year's Tuition Policy Advisory Council, co-chaired by Executive Vice President and Provost Sheldon Ekland-Olson and Vice President Kevin Hegarty, worked so hard to establish a healthy process, and they served us extremely well. I thank all the members of the advisory council for their participation.

- As a result of tuition deregulation, the University was able to offer a 3% merit-based salary increase program in January and September. With the help of Kyle Cavanaugh and the leadership of Human Resource Services, the University has created stable benefits for our faculty, staff, and graduate students. The implementation of a new staff grievance policy will be useful in improving employee relations.
- We continue to pursue our goal of recruiting and retaining the highest quality faculty, with greater attention to diversity in our selection process. I have called for a stronger effort to make improvements in this area. This year we celebrate several 40-year anniversaries that signal racial progress at the University. In 1964, when Ervin Perry was hired as an assistant professor in civil engineering, he was the first tenure-track African-American in the history of the University. He is the "Perry" in Perry-Castañeda Library. That same year, the dorms were integrated for the first time; track athlete James Means became the first black athlete at UT; and Edward Guinn became the first black musician to join the Longhorn Band. Yes, 1964 was a landmark year, and it reminds us how far we've come and how diligent we yet must be in making this a more representative institution.
- On October 1, our University became one of the principal components of the national TeraGrid facility, which is a next-generation computational concept in which powerful supercomputing installations across the country are coordinated via a dedicated network, so that they can be brought to bear on computational problems of vast scale. This effort is led by Jay Boisseau, Director of the Texas Advanced Computing Center, and has benefited from important corporate partnerships.
- Vice President Dan Updegrave and his staff led in the formation of LEARN -- Lonestar Education and Research Network -- which brings together 31 universities, university systems, and educational consortia to develop an advanced research and education network for Texas. To put it simply, we will be better wired, better interconnected in Texas, and we will be ready for the huge changes coming on the national networking scene.
- And in March, we successfully introduced UTOPIA to the public, a web site that is our gateway to the treasures of the University. The project was a substantial cross-university effort by a number of individuals who worked tirelessly to create the site. I thank Liz Aebersold, Mark McFarland and his staff, Vice Provost Fred Heath, Dean Andrew Dillon, and Vice President Dan Updegrave for their

leadership in this remarkable venture. UTOPIA just received a major award -- the "Center for Digital Education's 2004 Best of the Web Achievement Award." Congratulations to all!

You may remember that last year at this time, I called on every member of the UT community to think about ways to help our students to work more effectively across traditional cultural boundaries. As part of that effort, we presented two successful conferences this year, in January and in March, that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the landmark legal decision *Brown v. Board of Education* and the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. At the January symposium, *Educating for a Diverse America*, we invited delegations from seven major universities to campus to discuss educational innovation aimed at improving cross-cultural ability. More than 650 people participated.

In March, a Civil Rights Symposium was organized by Dean Ed Dorn and his students at the LBJ School of Public Affairs to celebrate the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and to honor several living heroes of the movement. I thank Dean Dorn, his staff, and students for their informative and inspirational program.

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Now let us turn to the agenda for the year ahead. To a considerable degree, it will be dominated by our actions concerning the report of the Commission of 125.

"Public confidence is the only real endowment of a public university," declared H. Y. Benedict, who served UT as president during the Depression years. His words are immortalized in the old Regents' Room -- now the Academic Room -- of the Main Building. They are also highlighted in the report of the Commission of 125. And they are true.

The American public research university is among the greatest of all inventions, and is among our culture's best legacies to the future. But it has a fundamentally distinct social role than its private cousin. At the core of identity and success for a public university is a willingness to engage both public ambition and community needs. An institution may, and should, do all it can to enlarge and elevate public aspirations, but it may not disregard or disconnect from them. Only failure lies in that direction, for there is an essential bond of mutual support between a public university and its public constituencies. The university exists to fulfill their needs. Without broad confidence in its effectiveness, the university will eventually be neglected or impeded fatally.

Listening carefully is essential.

In the late 1950s, this university established a mechanism for listening that seems unique among the practices of our peers. On its 75th anniversary, The University of Texas convened a Committee of 75 -- a group of citizens who were to study the state of the University and to advise on future development. The Committee was ambitious and

frank. The advice was taken seriously and enormous progress was built by action upon the recommendations for two decades thereafter.

In the early 1980s, the Centennial Commission was appointed toward the same ends. The Commission was ambitious and frank. Again, the advice was adopted and two more decades of great progress were guided by it.

I know of no other university that has invited a commission of citizens even once to carry out a diagnosis of its condition and to express their ambitions and advice. Therefore, I also know of none that has acted upon the report of any such group. We have completed two full cycles of this kind, and we are midway through a third.

A key word here is "ambition." No public university can reach effectively for very long toward ambitions that are poorly matched to those of its supporting society. And no university could respect itself if it reached below the best of those ambitions. It is critical to know what the ambitions are. Most universities surmise. Many substitute their own and represent them as those of their constituencies. The surest way to find out is to ask -- to seek a clear statement from a group of leaders, drawn from across the society, willing to take the time to learn about the broad range of the university's operations and realities, and able to think carefully in a process of open deliberation. This is what we did in 1958 and in 1983. It is what we have done again in 2004.

The Commission of 125, ably led by Mr. Kenneth M. Jastrow, II, involved 218 members drawn mostly, but not entirely, from Texas, and mostly, but not entirely, from our alumni. There are poets, novelists, and journalists; business leaders and lawyers; political leaders and public servants; and the former presidents of six other universities. It is a remarkably accomplished group of citizens. Scan the biographical pages of the Commission's report and you will be impressed by the talent that your university was able to enlist for such a long term of intense volunteer service. The members were appointed in 2002 and worked for about two years toward their final report. They supported their own costs of participation, including travel. The overall effort was a great gift to the University -- a gift-in-kind that can be seen, coincidentally, as a fitting symbolic close to the *We're Texas* Campaign.

On behalf of the entire community of The University of Texas at Austin, I express the greatest appreciation to Chairman Jastrow, to the members who led topical committees and ad hoc efforts, and to the full membership of the Commission. They gave richly, with a commitment to the future of their society, and they merit the lasting appreciation of us all.

I also convey appreciation to the many members within the University who supported the Commission by providing information, ideas, and logistical support. Foremost among them is Geoff Leavenworth, Executive Director of the Commission of 125, who brought the pieces together and masterfully enabled progress. Christine Marcin was at his right hand throughout and provided outstanding, intelligent staff support. Both have my deepest thanks.

In a moment, I will speak about three aspects of the Commission's report, but first let me give a clear overall response. On behalf of the University, I receive the Commission's judgments with both respect and enthusiasm, and I pledge that the University will work intensively and consistently toward the Commission's vision.

A while ago, I spoke about the importance, in a public university, of attending to public ambition, so this is the time for us to examine the work of the Commission closely for expressions of that kind. They are not hard to find, for the Commission of 125 was both determined and clear.

The report bears the title *A Disciplined Culture of Excellence*, which is the phrase that most embodies the Commission's ambition for The University of Texas. The members elaborate with their vision statement, which reads as follows:

"The University of Texas will be the best in the world at creating a 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."

This is far from a *pro forma* nod of the head to a vague concept of better achievement. They mean for the commitment to excellence to be taken quite seriously, and there are at least four ideas in their vision.

First, the Commission judges that this university can best serve its society as a learning center, an engine of research, a source of knowledge and advice, operating on a top-level standard. They believe that Texas must have such resources and that this university is closest to realizing it. They are telling us that reaching for a national standard is more important than maintaining breadth, because breadth can be handled across the large number of institutions of higher education in Texas.

Second, they emphasize the concept of a *culture* committed to excellence. They are urging us to build that commitment into the daily life of the place, so that it becomes permanently a part of all who study and work here.

Third, they ask for discipline. They desire a culture that tests itself honestly against the top-level standard and has the courage to act toward improvement.

Fourth, in their charge for leadership, they are asking the University to think for itself about how the best universities in America will need to evolve in the next two and a half decades.

The Commission's vision is important. In my view, it is also right on target. Moreover, it is an achievable vision for the next 25 years. I ask each member of our community to think carefully about it, and about how steps can be taken in daily life to build the culture of which the Commission speaks.

The Commission goes on to emphasize two strategic initiatives, one about curriculum and one about leadership at the unit level. I would like to speak about each in turn.

Here are the Commission's words on curriculum: We must "develop a new undergraduate core curriculum to better prepare students for lives of accomplishment."

This is not the only call of this kind that we have heard recently. Both the Task Force on Enrollment Strategy and the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness also recommended that the University reexamine its core curriculum.

It is time to do so. Accordingly, Provost Ekland-Olson and I are moving forward in concert with the Faculty Council Executive Committee to establish a Task Force on Curriculum Reform. Our goal is to identify the membership before the end of November and to convene the group even before the close of this semester.

The Provost and I recognize that responsibility over the curriculum belongs to the faculty, so we will work consistently with faculty leadership to develop the process. The job of the task force will be to recommend a new core curriculum. Its product will surely be discussed and debated within departments, colleges, and schools, and ultimately within the Faculty Council. The ultimate adoption of any particular plan will proceed through normal processes of review and approval.

In my experience, an effort of this kind is large, quite complex, and extended in duration. I expect that it will require three or four semesters.

At the Faculty Council meeting of October 20, the chair of the Faculty Council, Professor Linda Reichl, and the Provost and I will discuss the organization of this effort and will seek advice on how to constitute the task force. All of us welcome participation there, and we are all glad to receive advice or expressions of interest by written means.

As this matter has come to the fore, I have occasionally been asked why the Commission has placed so much stress on the core curriculum. This is a question of central relevance as we proceed through the effort before us, so let me take a moment to address it. My comments here are derived not just from what the Commission has written, but also from the discussions that they had as they were debating their ideas and their language.

In my perception, the Commission places the very highest value, among all the services that this powerful university can provide, on the development of leadership for Texas and beyond. They judge that The University of Texas has historically been a very important source of leadership in just about every aspect of life in our state: in business, law, journalism, politics and government, the arts, science, medicine, engineering, social services, and many other areas. I doubt anyone here would dispute that judgment. The Commission places the greatest weight on sustaining this contribution to society.

They have come to believe that the part of the curriculum with the greatest potential for developing an individual's general capacity for leadership is the core, which historically

has been intended to develop citizens suited to participation in a democracy and to foster broad intellectual growth. Moreover, the Commission has come to believe that we in the University think less carefully about the core, that we leave it untended for long stretches, and that quality control within the core is poorer than in the specialized parts of the curriculum. I feel sure that they are right on all counts.

In short, the Commission is urging us not just to review the core, but to develop a mechanism for sustaining attention to it. And they are forceful because they regard the quality of experience within the core as central to the most important responsibility of all that we have. These are very important ideas, indeed, and they need to be kept in mind as we proceed.

The Commission's second imperative addresses leadership at the unit level. Let me quote: We must "establish a more demanding standard for leadership of academic departments and research centers, and give those leaders the authority and resources to succeed."

In the judgment of the Commission, the adaptability of the University -- really even our ability to reach toward the top-level standards -- is influenced strongly by leadership at the departmental and program level. The members conclude that it is critical for us to maintain wise, experienced, and empowered chairs and directors. Their diagnosis is that we are far from the optimal. The Commission recognized that there are variations in habits and practices within units here, but they concluded that, in general, our unit leaders are not experienced enough, do not have enough discretion over actions or resources, and are not adequately rewarded for their service.

I agree. My judgment on this score comes not from listening to the Commission's deliberations, but from a career of 36 years in three great universities, during which I have also been able to visit and observe practices across a tremendous range of peers. By comparison with most against whom we compete, we do have relatively weak unit-level leadership. Of course, I speak here, just as the Commission does, about our structures and practices, not about individuals who serve now or have served as chairs or directors.

We will take the Commission's point quite seriously and will work to strengthen our local leadership. Much can be done by reviewing our practices and by rethinking the division of responsibility over decisions and resources. We also need to examine our methods of compensation. For the most part, I believe that adequate progress can be made by gradual means. I do not believe that radical redesign of the structures and practices is required, but we may wish to develop alternate organizational models that units could consider.

The Provost and I will begin this process during the winter by convening three work groups -- one involving leading faculty members, one involving current chairs and directors, and one involving deans -- to discuss the issues and realistic possibilities for action over the near and intermediate term. From those discussions, we will build an agenda and will establish a suitable follow-up mechanism.

We will also work to strengthen the training that is offered to new and continuing unit leaders.

Enlarging the discretionary resources available to unit leaders must become a priority in our fundraising efforts. Discretionary endowments are generally available to deans. Surely we can develop them for unit leaders over time.

The Commission went beyond its two strategic initiatives to convey sixteen specific recommendations. I cannot cover them in detail here today, but I will say that I believe them all to be well chosen and important. During the remainder of the fall semester, I will review them all and develop an agenda relevant to each of them. Progress will be reported consistently on the Commission's website.

As I close remarks here about the Commission's report, let me remind us all that their recommendations are meant as a guide to the evolution of the University over the next 25 years. Their issues and goals are big ones. We will keep returning to them. A university like this one moves over generations, and the report in our hands, *A Disciplined Culture of Excellence*, is mainly about the next generation, not about next year.

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I began this address by noting the remarkable performance of this university over the past dozen months. I even suggested that we have realized the vision of the founders. You may still be skeptical, but I think it is true.

This University, of which we are privileged to be a part, is a very fine manifestation of its breed. Certainly it can improve, and we all know how. In practically any dimension, it is possible to identify one or more places that perform better. But let me pose some questions: How many other institutions have a comparable record of developing leadership for their societies? How many can match our combined educational impact? How many really have a faculty equal to ours? How many produce research of equal scale or distinction? How many have a comparable record of beneficial impact on economic development? How many are custodians of cultural treasures and the written record on such a scale? How many do all of this with the impact that we have? No matter how you answer these questions in detail, it is not possible to escape the overall conclusion that there are very, very few true peers in this world.

This observation is not meant as "Texas bragging," but as a way of sobering us to the responsibility ahead. Achieving the first class does not imply that we will remain in the first class. In fact, it may be harder to remain on this stage than it was just to make an appearance. In the years ahead, we will not have the advantage of chasing after the leaders well ahead of us. We know that we will have to improve, and we certainly know that there is room to do that. But we will also have to adapt on the basis of our own judgment about where a leading public institution will need to be decades from now.

The Commission, with its vision statement, has expressed both the ambition and the hope that we will adapt better than any other -- that "in the 21st century we will define what it means to be a university of the first class." They have not told us how, but they have declared that at least two things will matter greatly: the quality and habits of our local leadership and the power of the educational experience to strengthen leadership in Texas and beyond. I, for one, feel sure that they are right.

Thank you all for being here today and for listening.