



**2015 State of the University Address
Sept. 16, 2015**

James Conover

Good afternoon. Please be seated and please silence your cell phones.

Thank you all for coming. I'm James Conover, past chair of the Faculty Senate. On behalf of the Faculty Senate leadership, which includes Guido Verbeck, our new Faculty Senate chair, V. Barbara Bush, our vice chair, and the rest of our executive leadership, we are excited to help celebrate UNT's 125th anniversary and the 2015 State of the University.

It's my pleasure and honor to be here to open the 2015 State of the University on the exact day that we held our first classes above a hardware store on the Denton Square 125 years ago.

We're joined today on this momentous occasion by distinguished guests and members of the UNT System and UNT leadership.

Joining us today are:

- State Representative Myra Crownover
- Kamal Fulani, who is here on behalf of U.S. Senator John Cornyn
- Erik With, who is here on behalf of U.S. Congressman and UNT alumnus Michael Burgess
- Breanne Jackson, who is here on behalf of State Senator Jane Nelson
- Denton County Judge Mary Horn and members of the Denton County Commissioners Court
- Denton Mayor and UNT alumnus Chris Watts and members of the Denton City Council
- We also have one of Denton's former mayors and UNT alumna Euline Brock
- Denton City Manager George Campbell
- Denton ISD Superintendent Jamie Wilson, who also happens to be a UNT alumnus, and Barbara Burns, president, and members of the Denton ISD Board of Trustees
- Members of our Denton chambers and our business community

Our distinguished guests include some of our biggest supporters:

- The co-chairs of our recently concluded capital campaign, Frank and Janet Bracken and Gayle Strange. They are all UNT alumni and Ms. Strange also is a former UNT System Board of Regents Chair
- Bob Kimmel, UNT Foundation Board Chair, and members of the UNT Foundation Board
- Members of the UNT Alumni Association Board

Now, please welcome our UNT System representatives.

- UNT System Board of Regents Vice Chair and alumnus Donald Potts
- Our current and former members of the Board of Regents
- Chancellor Lee Jackson
- UNT Dallas President Bob Mong
- We also have System administrators and the leadership from our other UNT System institutions here with us today.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge members of UNT's leadership who are here today.

- President's Cabinet
- Deans
- My fellow members of the Faculty Senate
- Staff Senate Chair Kristi Ormand and members of Staff Senate leadership
- Graduate Student Council President Jesus Valero as well as other members of the Graduate Student Council leadership
- Student Government Association President Adam Alattray and Vice President Chris Lee, as well as other members of the SGA leadership

Now, on with the show.

I've been at UNT since 1989 and I've seen the university undergo a lot of change and growth in that time.

And in the last 125 years, UNT has evolved from a humble teacher's training school with 70 students on the edge of the North Texas prairie to become the nation's 25th largest university and the creative heartbeat of a vibrant city in a booming metropolis. Today, more than 37,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff members call UNT home.

Our 125th anniversary is the perfect opportunity to celebrate how far we've come and dream about how much farther we can go.

UNT has firmly set its sights on becoming a Tier One research university. As more of us believe in that goal and commit to it, it has become less of a dream and more of a concrete, attainable vision for our next chapter. That's what President Smatresk will discuss today.

Before we look ahead to the future with President Smatresk, we're going to explore our past. We have a special look back at how UNT has transformed itself into a hub of creativity, knowledge and innovation since 1890, and the milestones that shaped us along the way. It is the story of progress and opportunity.

It's a story called *UNT at 125*.

[UNT at 125 video](#)

President Neal Smatresk

Celebrating 125 Years of Creating Bright Futures

President Smatresk gave his address in conjunction with a PowerPoint Presentation.

[Download the PowerPoint Presentation from the State of the University address. \(590KB, PDF\)](#)

Well, all I've got to say is, Happy 125th Birthday, UNT!

It's been an amazing year, but if you take a look at that history and then you imagine President Chilton 125 years ago to the day delivering his opening address to a group of students, who I'm sure had no idea what was in store for the future, you have to admit that he had a bold and audacious dream.

Who could have thought that we'd be a university of 37,000 students with over 300,000 alumni, a university with students from 50 states and 130 countries, a university with so many things to brag about — National Merit Scholars, [NSF] CAREER Award winners, Fulbrights, faculty with National Academy distinctions, Goldwater Scholars, Terry Scholars. What an amazing record of accomplishment in 125 years.

I'm incredibly proud of this university. I'm so pleased to be able to serve all of you, and I know if President Chilton could be on stage, he'd be just as proud and just as amazed at our accomplishments as many of you are.

A year of progress

Well, we have a lot to talk about today, and we want to review a little bit of our progress, where we've been, what we're going to be doing and some of the benchmarks that we discussed last year. I think it's important that every year we concretely assess where we've been, how we've influenced our numbers and where we're going to go. And so, if we've done a lot in 125 years, let's not forget the boldness of the vision of President Chilton and let's embrace a vision to become more in our quest for national prominence and our quest to be the best, not just in Texas, but anywhere.

I'll start by talking a little bit about what we said we were going to do last year. Last year, we developed a new planning process, one that I said we would turn the wheel on every single year. That planning process was remarkably fine-grained for a university of this size because it had to be. We had an awful lot of very grassroots, in the weeds activities that we needed to perform better in, and we had a series of challenges that we had to face.

When we created this list of tasks that we had to accomplish, I said, "We have two, maybe three years' worth of work here. This is a long list, but I know that if we pull together, work as a team, that we're going to get a lot done."

I had no idea how much we would get done, and in the words of [Vice President for Finance and Administration] Bob Brown, “When I look at this list, I know why I’m tired.”

Planning implementation

So, let’s talk a little bit about what we did. First, we had a little bit of a financial issue, and we needed to achieve financial stabilization. We needed to reconcile our books, we needed to develop better mechanisms for doing what we should have been doing all along. And, in fact, we’ve made remarkable process.

We also said we’d best improve our revenues and replenish our reserves. Again, you’ll see shortly that we’ve made a lot of progress in that, and we’ve done it in partnership with our [UNT] System friends. I’ll talk more about that in a second.

We made a series of critical hires in our cabinet and for deans that I think bring exciting, dynamic leadership to the team and stability to the institution. We worked hard to reorganize virtually every single vice presidential area and we did it while cutting administrative costs and improving our efficiencies and our performance.

We developed a planning implementation process. That’s what we’re doing today is reiterating for the crowd exactly what we’ve accomplished in a year and letting you know what we’re going to be doing next year.

We budgeted — even in a difficult and challenging time — we budgeted modest increases for faculty salaries and staff salaries, and we’ll talk more about that in a second.

I personally went to listening sessions with every single department. They were arguably the most rewarding conversations that I had all year. Our faculty are amazing. I will put them up against any faculty anywhere. They have hopes and dreams that exceed mine and they want to be great and associated with an institution that’s strong and can deliver. I really respect what I heard in these listening exercises, and I think today you’ll see that we’re going to embody that in the plans and vision that we have going forward.

Successful legislative outcomes

We also had a remarkably successful 84th legislative session, and I would be utterly remiss if I didn’t add some praise to our governmental affairs folks. Thank you Rey [Rodriguez, associate vice chancellor for government relations and chief policy operations officer], Jack [Morton, vice chancellor for government relations]. You did an amazing job for us and you helped the rookie get his feet wet in Austin and I really appreciate it. And then, having gone through some of what I would call the most successful session we’ve had in years, we also had a little bit of a challenge to overcome.

And I’m going to say in addition to seeing significant increases in funding and Tuition Revenue Bonds, we resolved our proportional benefits challenge. I don’t want anyone here to think that was a trivial task. And I think we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our chancellor, Lee Jackson, for the very, very hard work that he did with his cool, calm, thoughtful and methodical approach to helping the state realize that there was a challenge, but that we were able to take that challenge

head on and resolve it. And so I'm going to say, Lee, we all deserve to give you a big round of applause and thanks. (*Applause*)

Recruitment and financial aid improvements

Now, another area where we were a bit pressed was in recruitment. Our numbers had been lagging a bit. Our graduate population had been on a four-year decline, and we brought in a new vice president for enrollment, an old friend of mine, Shannon Goodman — give a wave, Shannon. Shannon came and brought a lot of energy and strategy to a team that was a hard-working, high-performing team, and I think with his leadership we really began to gel.

So we had some remarkable accomplishments this past year. We set enrollment records. I'm going to talk about that in a little bit more detail shortly. We grew our summer enrollment programs. We decreased financial aid processing time and increased financial aid awarded. Now, this may sound very dry and down in the weeds. I've got to tell you, for students, the ability for us to package and distribute financial aid in a timely fashion, is their lifeblood. And it's a critical thing that we have to be better at when we're recruiting.

Now, Zelma DeLeon [executive director of student financial aid and scholarships] and the financial aid group — and I don't know where you're all sitting — managed to keep, through a lot of hours and a lot of hard work, a challenge that we'd faced in having long processing times for financial aid, down to very short times — five days or less. We packaged more financial aid in a quicker period of time more rapidly than we've ever done in our past. And I've just got to say, that's the kind of effort where teams pull together and work hard to solve problems, that I think created such success for us last year. Thank you very much, Zelma and the financial aid team.

We also increased our scholarship support, and that had some remarkable results and I think you're going to see those shortly. We launched several new recruiting programs. Last year I told you the [Eagle Express \[Tuition\] program](#) was arguably the most successful in the country, certainly the most successful alternative tuition program in the state. And this year, the takership of this program continues to outperform other institutions. We offer students a great deal if they can graduate in four years on time with a reasonable number of classes. And I'm really happy to see this effort take off.

We built the [Eagle Advantage](#), automatically accepting the top 20 percent of juniors from approximately 17 independent school districts. And that number is going to grow because we own North Texas. And it's time all of our students and all the students in every high school knew that, so that they make us their first choice institution.

One of the numbers that I'm most proud of — oh, we had an [Oklahoma Tuition Plan](#). Time we started turning Oklahoma students into Texans instead of Texans into Okies. So, I'm pretty happy about this, and we'll see how this works over the next year.

One of the signal changes that we've had in addition to enrollment turnaround, is that in my first year we brought five [new] National Merit Scholars to this institution. [This] year, we brought 15 new National Merit Scholars and, in fact, they're here now. And at one of our football games up

here in the near future you're all going to get to meet them. What a remarkable group of young men and women they are. But that proves, when we can draw National Merit Scholars literally from across the country into almost every single one of our colleges that we are indeed becoming a first-choice institution on a national scale.

Academic improvements

If you take a look at academics, and I'm going to start moving quickly through these lists because if you really want to get an idea of what we've done, you can look at the 13 pages of bullet points, which begin to summarize the hard work that we put in last year. And you each have a copy of it and I've got to say again, working together the team has really outperformed.

We really made some changes in orientation and advising to improve retention. We're partway down that road. We've got a ways to go. We appointed a class concierge, Lisa Maxwell, who is helping students when they get a little bit stuck as they approach graduation to clear the skids and to move through and provide real customer support for students in need. She's doing a tremendous job.

We launched a new instructional fee policy. I jokingly have told Bob it's called the "Fee Simplification Act." Finley [Graves, provost and vice president for academic affairs] I know is excited about it because as we move forward, it's going to give more flexibility for how we allocate funds to the colleges while simplifying billing for our students in a more transparent way.

We've increased the number of class sections that we have offered. When you grow, you'd better increase the number of instructional hours that you're putting out. We had some bottlenecks. We've hired up to clear those bottlenecks.

We improved our budgeting and cost-share model — and I'm looking at the deans out here and they're going, "Yeah, maybe." But what we've tried to do is to give them more budgetary authority along with increased accountability for delivering improved academic and research performance in their units. And this is a trend that will continue. We've got a great cadre of dean leaders. They should be the core decision-makers around academic issues for our university, and we want to give them the room to help grow their units and make them thrive.

Faculty standards and support

We also hired a large number of faculty because we had gaps in our line-up. So the number of full-time faculty increased fairly significantly last year.

Now here's a big one. If we're going to be a Tier One university, we need Tier One promotion and tenure standards. Working with Faculty Senate — and I can promise you that revising promotion and tenure standards is not the world's easiest thing to do — but working with Jim Conover [past Faculty Senate chair] and Guido [Verbeck, current Faculty Senate chair] and others in the Faculty Senate, we managed to rewrite our promotion and tenure standards and have discussions with departments about how we're going to use these to elevate the university

to make sure that the faculty that we have support our quest to become nationally prominent and to do better research.

Now if we're going to ask for more from our faculty in promotion and tenure, we're going to have to help them out a little bit more. Mentoring programs have been evolved and will continue to evolve over the next few years so that faculty get the support they need to be as successful as we need them to be.

We developed comprehensive departmental evaluation processes, not to hurt departments but to have a conversation about how they're going to help us contribute to their goals. Whether they're going to help us educationally, with revenue flow, with research and scholarly output — or better yet all of the above — every department now gets to take a rather analytic look at what it's doing. And I think this is a trend that we will be using along with the metrics that I'm talking about today to help guide how we evolve as an institution.

Our student-athletes achieved the highest retention and graduation rates that they ever have in UNT history. Congratulations to Rick [Villarreal, athletic director]. This is a great accolade and I'm very proud of what they've accomplished, particularly in the classroom.

QEP and reaccreditation

We also — and this is very inside baseball — completed our [QEP](#), which is our Quality Enhancement Program, called *UNT Career Connect*. This is a requirement by our accrediting agency, and the “career connect” piece to this is something that we hold near and dear, and I know the System and the chancellor do as well, where we're going to provide expanded professional support and development for our students over the next few years to build up their opportunities to gain employment at the highest levels.

We also completed our [SACS\[COE\]](#) accreditation documentation. I can almost hear the yawns out there, but let me simply say to Allen Clark [vice provost for academic resources] and to the folks who worked on the accreditation team, there is nothing quite so hard as producing a nearly 600-page reaccreditation document with 70,000 ancillary pages connecting to it to demonstrate that in all criteria, we are worthy of reaccreditation. So, Allen and the team, all of you who worked so hard on the SACS document, big round of applause from all of us. (*Applause*)

And that may be the first and last time Allen and Finley hear rounds of applause for reaccreditation. But, it is important to us and we're going to do a bang-up job on this because we're proud of what we've accomplished.

Research improvements

I'm not going to tell you we got everything that we needed to get done in research, but we got some darn good starts. We're in the process right now of searching for and will shortly hire a new [associate] VP [vice president] for economic development to better connect us to industry and to take ideas and intellectual property through the tech transfer process to create more small business startups. We're behind the eight-ball on this. We need to catch up, and part of it is that it hasn't been an embedded value in our institution. This individual will lead that effort by going

out and mining faculty intellectual property and connecting it to the region around us. I think it's going to be incredibly important for us.

We also have re-organized our Office of Sponsored Projects to focus on customer service. There are a few critical searches coming up. We've listened to faculty, and heard, [that] we're not processing your grant applications as fast as we want, we're not necessarily offering you the pre- and post-award as deeply as you need it and we're going to fix it. Under Tom McCoy's [vice president for research and economic development] leadership, I'm very confident that we're going to make major improvements in how we accelerate our ability to work across this university effectively because it's going to be utterly critical to our Tier One efforts.

We also began upgrading our research facility space and infrastructure. We are further trying to increase the number of collaborative work groups we have. And again, Tom's also launched some programs to build research centers of excellence and we have some remarkable faculty and some remarkable achievements in a number of key areas that we're going to use as a nucleus to build around, whether it's logistics, or materials science, biodiscovery, autism spectrum disorders, applied research. We have a number of very, very promising areas — and in some cases — areas that we need to invest in.

We also did something I think that was pretty telling and pretty important in terms of how we're going to be able to recruit and retain graduate students. We weren't necessarily nationally competitive with our stipends or with the tuition waivers that we offered. We agreed to accept a fairly large investment challenge to offer more complete tuition waivers to our [graduate] students. This should allow us to recruit, not just more students, but higher quality students because high-quality doctoral students are the lifeblood of a research institution. And if we're going to compete, we need to compete with the best. And I think our new programs are going to help us to do that.

Better engagement

Well, [we have] improved media coverage, much more media coverage than we've had in the past. Not all of it as good as I'd like, but not bad. Expanded marketing efforts — you've probably seen some of our billboards as you sit in traffic up and down I-35. And, of course, a much greater social media presence. If you haven't done it yet, you need to follow [@UNTPrez](#) and help boost me over the 8,000 follower mark as well as continue to make me the highest-impact [university] presidential tweeter in the United States. Oh, it's happened. So, that was from the school of shameless self-promotion.

We have planned our [125th anniversary celebrations](#). Welcome to the first one. It will go on. This whole week's been amazing. If you were here yesterday handing out popsicles for Chillin' with Chilton, handing out cupcakes today — 3,000 and, according to Mike, they went in about 10 minutes out on the Library Mall. Students are still hungry. Who'd have thunk it?

One of the big things that we accomplished last year was that we closed and celebrated our capital campaign. And I want to thank Frank and Janet [Bracken, co-chairs of the capital campaign] again, and Gayle Strange [co-chair of the capital campaign and former UNT System

Board of Regents Chair] and Brint Ryan [UNT System Board of Regents Chair], for their incredible work. It's a difficult and daunting task and you served us well. Thank you so much. (*Applause*)

Under a new leader in the vice president for advancement office, David Wolf, we have begun to make moves restructuring our relationships with our [UNT] [Alumni Association](#) and our [UNT] [Foundation](#) board, so that we can become more facile, better able to raise money, and most importantly, so we can reconnect with alumni that we've lost over the years. With 300,000 alums, we need to do a much better job in making them feel proud of what they've accomplished when they were here, making them understand the benefit that this university gave them and the edge we gave them in their lives and making sure they feel welcome on campus any time and that they're part of the Mean Green family.

We also increased the number of alumni events that we've run. We had some really great events, and I think they were typified by the event that hosted over 3,000 of our students and alums at SMU last weekend. The event was great, the game — well, not so much.

Campus and infrastructure improvements

We, as I said before, received a Tuition Revenue Bond for a new building. This CVAD [College of Visual Arts and Design] building isn't going to be yesterday's art building. It's going to be the building that launches us into a creative future, a future that combines technology and creativity and comes up with something pretty amazing to meet the modern workforce demands of a high-tech economy in our region. And Texas is now the second biggest high-tech economy in the country.

We purchased gateway properties, a.k.a. Sack & Save, and are looking at others because we need to control our gateway and we want it to be beautiful and welcoming, and we want it to be a wonderful presence from the road. I think you're going to see major progress in that as we get into our plans for this year.

We developed a number of space plans that have been a little bit jammed up. We're starting to clear the skids to reorganize ourselves internally on campus. We've improved the campus appearance and parking lots — and I need Dave Reynolds [associate vice president for facilities] and the grounds crew, you have done an incredible job this year. Our grounds have really gotten much better. I remember early on in the year the chancellor and Dave and Bob [Brown] and I took a ride around in a golf cart and we kept pointing, “That area. That area. That area.” They all needed improvements, and by golly you got it done. And now I think we're really looking good.

The students who walk on the campus for the first time often remark to me, “This is a beautiful campus.” In fact, there was one student who was out of TCJC [Tarrant County College], and they said, “Well, I was originally going to consider — one of our competitors to the south, happened to be located in Tarrant County, and us.” They said, “I got to campus and this is like a real campus. You have trees and everything.”

So, I will just say, the beauty of our campus is important. And I think we're a giant, modern university with everything it offers, but with the look and feel of a beautiful liberal arts college. And that's something that we're proud of and it's something we want to keep.

We have completed a study on deferred maintenance. Sounds boring, very important, because it's how we keep our buildings functioning. And as a result, we've now doubled the number of dollars and projects that we're committing to, to make sure that the campus stays functioning at the highest levels.

Shared services

We're working — this is kind of deep stuff but really important. We have shared services between us and the System in areas like HR, business services, accounting areas. We've worked, I think, fairly effectively to identify the resources we need to be good partners. I know that the System is committed under Janet Waldron [vice chancellor for finance] to do the same kinds of things and this is a work in progress, but it's one that we will continuously strive to improve in and build better customer service around.

We've worked with the UNT System to develop our accounting, financial and HR systems. Thank you very much, Luis [Lewin, associate vice chancellor for human resources], I saw you out there somewhere. We've dedicated resources to planning and improving our data management. It's hard to run a university if you don't have data to make decisions. We didn't have adequate data management systems. We're about halfway there. This is a major process and we will be completing it over the next year as one of the highest priorities we have for our IT and systems computing group.

We've also adopted a customer relations module. I'll give you a little more on that in the future here. But a university of our size and scope needs to be able to not just get interest from students but be able to respond in a very real-time way to them. The same way Amazon bugs you if you buy one thing. "Do you want another vacuum cleaner bag?" I mean, you know, it comes to your email. We need to be in touch in modern electronic ways, and I think that this project will make a giant change in our ability to recruit top-quality students from all over the country.

New dorms and parking study

We have created a master plan for Greek housing. I'll talk more about that later. We opened Rawlins Hall and here's a great bit of news and, again, congratulations to Tom [Rufer associate vice president for auxiliary services] and Elizabeth [With, vice president for student affairs] in student affairs. We opened up a brand new dorm. We got students moved in by the skin of our teeth for the start of class, and we opened up this semester with our dorms actually over capacity, they were filled so full.

That is the sign of robust good health. Now, the problem is we've got some old dorms we need to fix, so we're going to have to start talking more about major dorm facilities and I don't think we can chip away at it with 300- and 500-bed dorms. We need to be talking about 1,000-bed facilities or else we're never going to get ahead of the curve and be able to take some offline. So you'll see more about that in a little while.

We have been working on a number of other upgrades. And I know you're all fascinated with our street repairs but I won't bore you with the details. They're going to get better. And we are really working hard to make sure that our facilities' pricing and service is at a level that it ought to be. That has been a bone of contention between the academic side of the house and the business side of the house, and one that is going to get better rapidly.

And along with that parking comment, I know parking's perfect, and no one has any complaints. I haven't heard one word from students. I'm lying. But, parking is always a big issue on a campus like ours, and we're doing a lot to make sure that we're going to have an adequate plan through [parking and transportation studies](#) that are rolling forward right now. In fact, if you were out in the student mall yesterday, [students were able to register their opinions about parking and transportation](#) and what we needed in a very open way that I thought was quite engaging.

Peer analysis

So, how did we move the needle as a result of all this hard work? Because if you don't move the needle, well then maybe you just didn't get it right. Last year I said that we would be talking about comparing ourselves on an annual basis to a series of peers — Texas peers, national Tier One universities and national peer institutions.

So, the one in yellow is the target. That's our aspirants. However, there are some remarkably good schools in the Texas selected peers. One of them is a Tier One institution already, University of Houston. Let's talk very quickly about this. This data will be available online and everyone's going to be able to look it up. We're going to fearlessly put it out.

The problem is we put out data that's two years old. Why? Because that's as updated as you can get with nationally normed data. I told you we'd measure 23 metrics that were relatively important and data that we could get, and we'd look at them every year, not just compared to our peers, but we'd compare ourselves to ourselves to see how we were doing.

If you take a look at revenues, one of the major factors — again, two-year-old data, and you'll see we've done significantly better in recent years — our revenue production is behind our Texas comps and our Tier Ones, although we have closed that gap a tiny bit. A lot of those differences are due to the state funding that we received. They're due to gift funding and they're due to research funding. So you can see, if we look at our total average annual gifts, and this is 2015 numbers that are updated, we produce less than our Tier One aspirants, much less than our Texas comps and about the same as our national comps. Clearly in our pursuit of Tier One we're going to have to up our game in terms of fundraising.

We also can look at educational outcomes. And I'm going to say, this is one of the graphs where, if I could fast forward two years, because this is two-year-old data, you'd see some real serious progress. But we don't have the kinds of retention rates we need. We're low, although in the past year I think we've moved it fairly close to 80 percent retention, which puts us at our Texas comps. So I'm really happy with the kind of progress that we made. And our six-year-graduation rate, while about as good as our Texas competitors, still lags behind our national aspirant institutions. We have to do better.

You know, actually, I don't know any president I've ever met who willingly puts up in public their worst numbers. But we're going to do it. And we're going to do it every year. Because if we don't look at them and ask ourselves how well we're doing and whether we're trying to attack the problem, then we're not going to make progress. You do better in what you measure, and you have to be honest about it. So we're putting the numbers out in a kind of fearless way to challenge ourselves to perform at a higher level.

If you take a look at graduate enrollment, you know you find out we're not bad. In fact, we're a little bit better than some of our Tier One aspirants in terms of total graduate enrollment. Where we lag is in our doctoral degree awards. We need to pick that number up, as I've talked to you before, and we've already put a program in place that I think you'll see has shown some remarkably salutary effects on our numbers, even in one year.

Faculty. We've got about the same number of faculty as Tier One institutions. Not bad. Got about the same number of tenured and tenure track faculty.

But then we come to the most critical numbers — our research output. This isn't where we want them to be. At about \$27 million in federal research expenditures per year, we lag behind our Texas peers, we lag behind our Tier One colleagues and we lag behind a lot.

So, lest we get too excited about our pursuit of national excellence, in the [Carnegie \[Classification\]](#) rankings, to become an RU/VH [research university, very high research activity] institution, you need to generate about \$100 million a year in research— ballpark figure, not far off. We have to pick it up. And in order to pick it up, we have to really assess why we're where we are. The biggest single factor is the total number of people who are generating this type of research dollar. We need more research-active faculty. But, more importantly, if we don't have the space for them, which is in the second graph, we're not going to be able to house them. We lack research space, period.

We have about a fifth of what it takes, maybe less, more like an eighth, of what some of our Tier One peers have in terms of total research space. We have about a half of what our competitive institutions in Texas have. Over the next six years we're going to have to make a concerted effort to grow the amount of research square footage on our campus in order to house the faculty who can generate the awards and improve our research outcomes.

UNT analysis

Now I said that we'd also compare ourselves to ourselves and I want you to quick memorize this graph. There will be a test in five minutes (*laughter*). This graph is what I call a hot graph. It just looks at how we did last year versus this year, and I told you we'd look to see where we improved and where we did more poorly. I'm not going to take year by year things too seriously, but we also have five-year trend lines that we're looking at so that we can chart our course when we have noisy data. Don't try to read the legend because I sure can't.

We improved our metrics in about 16 of the 23 areas that we measure. And I also said we'd take a look at where we didn't do as well. We didn't do as well in about eight of our metrics. Now in about half of those, the changes are so small it really doesn't matter, so we can argue they pretty

much remained unchanged. Where we lag is in doctoral enrollment and graduation, transfer student retention and fundraising. Now fundraising overall you saw we have to close a big gap for our Tier One aspirations. Last year the number — they bounce, it depends when you score things and typically after a capital campaign there is a little dip, so I'm not overly concerned about that. I'm more concerned with the big challenge of how we double the amount of annual gifts we receive every year to get to where we need to go.

Enrollment gains

Let's look however where we showed strong growth, and this is time for celebration. We exceeded for the first time in our history 37,000 students in enrollment, about 37,221. I'm looking for Shannon [Goodman], I think that's our 12th day numbers — 37,231, I'm sorry I missed the 10. But Shannon and team, great, great job. Congratulations, UNT. *(Applause)*

One of the signs of a healthy university is that your freshman class is growing and their qualifications are improving. Our freshman class was the biggest in our history, and while there was some up and down in terms of their overall qualifications — a little drop in SATs but an increase in ACTs — most importantly the strongest measure of college success is class ranking out of high school. We improved significantly in terms of the number of students in the top 25 percent of their class, and I think this is an incredibly positive sign for the future.

But in addition to growing our freshman incoming class by about 7 percent year over year, we improved our transfer population by about 7 percent year over year and we improved our graduate population by 16 percent, reversing a four-year slide in the numbers. And I think that says nothing but really positive things about how bright our future is going to be.

Our student diversity is approaching 50 percent. We're on a quest to becoming a minority serving institution because we won't meet the needs of Texas if we can't handle the first generation populations and the very diverse populations of our state and transform them into the high-tech workforce of tomorrow.

We have strong revenue growth as a result of these numbers and when you have incremental revenues you have opportunities for investment, and that is really what we're going to be talking about here in a second.

Most affordable college

Oh, along the way something kind of curious happened. I'm going to look at the chancellor. Less than a week ago, when the college report card that's produced by the White House and the Department of Education first came out, we looked at it and said, "Looks like we're pretty good."

We didn't know how good until a research group that's quite respected started running numbers. And, again, I'm going to say I'm not going to take these too seriously right now, but what they tell us is that the University of North Texas is the most affordable college among all research universities in the country in several income categories and ranks in the Top 10 overall of over all incoming student income categories. So this just confirms what you all knew, we're an

incredible educational value and it explains our population growth, and it's something I think we can all be proud of — although I will say the statistic in itself is an interesting one. I'm not going to bet on these numbers year in and year out.

If you hear all these stories about universities not controlling cost, not having great educational outcomes, we're above average in the salaries our students [get], we're above average in graduation rates and we're far below average in our cost. I think that we're an incredible deal and I think our students should celebrate that.

Budget for 2015-16

Let's take a look at some of the priorities that we have coming up. Hold on, I feel like I missed a slide. Yes. Let's take a look at our budget. This year, our number's significantly different than last year although I will say, at a System level, we're kind of figuring out how to get comparable numbers year in and year out.

But for the sake of comparisons, we have revenues of about \$626 million — there are actually larger numbers built into this and I'm just not going to try to go deep into it because it's pretty tricky stuff — \$626 million of revenues, \$620 million of expenses. We're going to be able to save about \$5 million, but that was prefaced on an enrollment increase of 1.75 percent. Since we had a semester hour increase of nearly 4 percent, I believe that we have a little bit of extra room for investment in some exciting new opportunities and an opportunity to continue to save money and build our reserves back up.

We funded new academic affairs funding of \$7.37 million, primarily for faculty and advisors, because they are key to being able to deal with the new students that we've brought in the door. We increased enrollment funding by \$1.5 million, primarily to build more modern enrollment management apparatus and for software investments. We increased scholarship support significantly and we got a lot of help from our friends, which I'll talk about toward the end of this presentation.

We fully accounted for previously unbudgeted items. That single line hides a myriad of sins, but when you reconcile your books you finally get it right. And I'm going to say now going forward we have a very clear idea of how much we spend in what categories and that was an important thing for us to handle.

We also included funding for a number of capital projects including the Science Research Building, Coliseum renovations and our Greek Row infrastructure and some planning money for other projects that I'll discuss in a second. And then we provided an additional \$2.5 million in support to bring in highly qualified graduate students and doctoral candidates.

Infrastructure priorities 2015-16

Now I've got — apparently there's a slide out of order here. OK, so let's take a look at some of our plans for this year. First, in terms of general academic support infrastructure and physical infrastructure, we're going to continue to work on IT systems and try to bring that to conclusion,

we're going to continue working with our System colleagues, we're going to plan new residence halls, which I've just discussed, [and] renovate the Coliseum.

And I'll say I put this in quotes because it's not official, but given that our alma mater talks about the "Corridor of Years," it would be nice to have a celebration of that in the walkway that we plan to build through campus, which we've occasionally called the Green Brick Road, but we'll have other names for I'm sure in the future. We're going to create a Visitors Center and we're going to work hard to develop our unique brand and identity.

Education priorities for 2015-16

In education, we're going to finish planning and implementing a one-stop student success center to help students who have pre-professional aspirations in areas like engineering and business to gain the core skills they need to be successful. Rather than throwing them into classes that they're not quite capable of handling, we're going to build their strengths, fill their gaps and allow them to enter high-tech professions. We're going to grow our enrollment and continue recruiting high-ability students. We're working toward minority-serving institution status.

And then we decided it was time that we actually spread our wings just a bit. And so one of the things I think that I'm most excited about this year is that we're going to really grow into our UNT-UCD [Universities Center at Dallas] downtown campus and we're going to establish a new footprint in Frisco, one of the fastest growing high-tech regions in the country. Our UNT Frisco campus will have about 30,000 square feet, we'll be able to seat about 500 students at a time and we will be delivering site-directed workforce development to the Fortune 1,000 companies in the region.

Our rules for this will be that it will be an educational laboratory to produce highly collaborative degree programs that really meet the needs of regional employers and allow students who are trying to complete their degrees to successfully complete them. I am incredibly excited about this and I think there's just a heck of lot of business out in Frisco.

Similarly, downtown we have an art district and a design district. What better time as we plan for a new CVAD [College of Visual Arts and Design] building to begin growing our design programs. We have programs in industrial design, interior design, communication design and fashion design. What a great match for the vibrant urban core that is becoming downtown Dallas, and I think that bringing the creative class to that region and growing these programs is going to be strong.

But speaking of fashion design, allow me to briefly mention that our fashion design students recently designed (*holding up his tie*) a UNT tartan. Now just to make sure — my wife has deep Scottish roots — you don't call it a tartan plaid. That's redundant. It's simply our tartan. It is registered in Scotland as the "UNT Tartan," and this lovely tie and scarves are on sale in our bookstore now (*laughter*). I'd take \$100 donations for the tie but, you know, we'll do that later. I really think it's lovely and it's a great way to celebrate our quasiquicentennial with a new tartan. So, hopefully, you'll all be decked out in tartan as we celebrate [Homecoming](#) this year.

Along with these other educational priorities, we're going to be working on some new dean hires. We've had some great deans in the colleges of information, education and music — very long-term folks who will be retiring in the next year. They've agreed to stay on as we search and I would be remiss if I didn't say to Herman Totten [dean of the College of Information], Jim Scott [College of Music] and Jerry Thomas [College of Education], thank you so much for years of service and building your programs (*Applause*).

We're going to work on growing our summer into a third semester, of course. I mentioned SACS. We're going to have a great SACS visit here this spring. It will be an all-hands drill. I'll give everyone a cheat sheet and a cue card so you know what to say when they come, but I think it's going to be a really exciting opportunity for us to affirm nationally how good we are and how much progress we've made.

We're going to expand our professional development and internship opportunities. This is a major activity supported by our accreditation plans and we're going to work very hard — this came out of our planning session — on really building up the sense of community pride that our students, faculty, staff and the region around us have. We feel like we've been a great institution for years. We want everyone to feel the same way. We want our students to walk away from the campus feeling like they'll always be part of our campus. And so new traditions are coming in our 125th year, and they're going to be fun and I hope you'll all join the festivities.

Faculty and staff

We also have to think about how we treat our faculty and staff. We'll be holding a whole series of town halls on these major topics, led by our vice presidents so that we can really find out what faculty and staff are feeling, what the consensus view is and get people aligned to helping us pursue our Tier One goals. We need to make sure that we increase the number of tenure and tenure track hires, especially some high-demand areas where there are great research opportunities.

We'll be working on mentoring. Perhaps for the faculty and staff in the audience there will be a 2 percent merit pool this year — we're doing better financially — and a 0.6 percent equity pool, and that will give us a chance to reward the amazing faculty that we have here. We'll complete a [Job Grading and Evaluation Project for staff](#) that will help them to understand career advancement and their disciplines better. One of the things that's come out steadily is that chairs, deans and even our Faculty Senate have said, "We would love for chairs to be a locus of leadership at the department level and if we can help develop our leadership we can move faster," so we're going to commit to improving chair leadership throughout this campus.

Committing to Tier One

Along with faculty and staff, we're going to ask everyone on campus to commit to Tier One because this is something where everybody has got to be in the boat and we've got to be rowing hard if we're going to get to our goals.

In research, we've talked a little about this. We're going to be renovating our Science Research Building and creating a new research space allocation plan. Space is precious. We have to use every inch of space to generate revenue and we need to make sure that we're using our labs productively to train the new graduate students that we're bringing in. We need to grow our federal research funding and we're going to be hiring high-impact folks into several research areas and making some fairly significant investments in our research program. We're going to grow the number of Ph.D. students we have.

One of the big areas of interest to me and many of us on this campus is that we need to talk about how we can weave high tech and IT related careers into many different disciplines and into opportunities to find a locus for areas like big data, decision analytics and informatics. We haven't had those conversations yet, so we're going to put a blue ribbon panel together to really look at what the future of computer science and engineering, computer science and business, computer science through the rest of the campus and through our College of Information — and what it might become over the years as we try to grow IT related disciplines.

We'll work on library funding. Currently library journal acquisitions are, frankly, usurious. It's national and international crime. But to keep up with the 17 percent a year annual inflation rate of journal holdings, we'll continue to make investments into our libraries and that will support, in turn, the students and research faculty here.

And finally, we're going to really work hard to expand the philanthropic support of our tier one initiatives, which focus on students, their education, research activities and endowed position for leadership.

Alumni gifts

Now I'm going to take a moment's indulgence as I move to the next slide. And I want to recognize a group of folks who are sitting up here in the front row because we have a newly formed Presidential Leadership Board. Here today with us, and I just ask that you'll stand up so everyone can get a good luck at you. We have C. Dan Smith, Ms. Kristin Farmer, Jim McNatt, Ernie Kuehne, Bruzzy Westheimer and Don Lovelace. And not in attendance today, Steve Holmes and Duffy Oyster. Now, I'm going to brag on you guys for a little bit.

Now one of the things I said we had to do is show and prove to the world that we were going to be deeply committed to building a first-choice institutions that students from all over the nation want to come to. I'm just so pleased to say that, this week, because of the generosity of these donors in this area and in other areas, [we now have 15 \\$10,000-a-year-times-four-years scholarships that were donated from this group to support our students](#) and to make sure that we can continue to recruit National Merit Scholars going forward into the future. So if you hear National Merit Scholars, I want you to think of these folks. How about a really big round of applause for them. (*Applause*)

Now you would be wrong to think that's all they've done because each one of these people has given not just their gifts in dollars to the school. But they've given their passion to this institution. And it's that abiding passion that creates the difference for us.

When we look at research programs, if we're going to get to where we need to be, we need your generosity. But more importantly, we need your commitment, your passion and your belief in these programs. Every person here has given, whether it's Bruzzy in areas that influence student affairs and some of our artistic activities. Whether it's C. Dan and some of the athletics things that we've done. Whether it's Ernie who has been one of the most generous givers here and Kristin who is Kristin Farmer Autism Research center and the new group that is growing up around it and working so amazingly.

I want to pick on Jim McNatt for a second, however. I want to say Jim saw the need and appreciated how gifts that provided leadership support to the institution could really make a difference. And so he has — by the way, all of these folks are what I call crossover donors — they give to athletics. They give to academics. And it's a beautiful thing.

Jim has not only given significantly in athletics but has given in the past couple of months \$2.6 million to really transform our athletics programs. And [he has just recently named the Jim McNatt Logistics Research Institute, which has Terry Pohlen smiling, with a \\$1 million TRIP eligible endowment that can grow into \\$1.75 million](#) to launch our number 3 — or 2 — rated logistics program into top spot in the nation. That's the kind of gift and that's the kind of passion that I think makes a deep difference so congratulations to you. Thank you so much. (*Applause*).

And hopefully by next year, Don and I will be talking about that new baseball stadium. We're moving, we're moving.

Moving forward

Well as we reflect on an incredible year's progress and where we're going to go in the future, one of the things we have to consider is how each of us helps this institution moves forward. So I'd like to show you a quick video with many folks from our planning session and that's definitely from the heart.

[Moving UNT Forward video](#)

Last year, we proved what working together as a team can do to help transform our university, put us on the right track and let us start that long march toward the goals that we have. This year, I ask each of you to commit. We all need to own these goals as a team and we all need to own them personally.

So there is a card at your seat. Fill it out or go online. Tell us and share your story about what you'll do to help us reach our Tier One goals by improving the educational outcomes for our students and the research and service that we perform for the community and world around us.

You know, last year, we did what we had to do so that this year, we can do what we want to do. And what we want to do is, quite simply, have the whole world know what an amazing institution we are and how far we can go. So, I thank all of you. I thank you so much for what you've accomplished and the commitment that you're making to help us to achieve our goals. And I want to everyone to celebrate with us out in the hallway. We're having a big 125th party.

If you will all please join me now in a quick round of applause for all of those who've made a giant difference in our university. Thank you very much.

End