

All Things Texas Tech

The Journal of Higher Education at Texas Tech

The Texas Tech Journal of Higher Education

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Making it Possible . . . Crafting Texas Tech's Strategic Plan for 2010-2020

Bob Smith

Provost and Senior Vice President

From a start as a small technological college, evolving to university status in 1969, Texas Tech would develop to become one of the state's largest comprehensive research universities. While developments throughout its relatively short history may not have always been strategically conceived, our time for strategic planning could not be more critical than now. Additionally, our sense of destiny could not be any more important than it is in 2010, given the literal once in a lifetime opportunity for Texas Tech to forge its future as a national research university.

It's Our Time

Guy Bailey

President

The Texas Legislature has given Texas Tech and six other universities an unparalleled opportunity to become the state's next national research universities. House Bill (HB) 51 sets out criteria that must be met to achieve national research, or Tier One, status and establishes two funding sources that will help Texas Tech and the other emerging research universities reach and maintain that status.

Integrated Scholars: You Will Find Many at Texas Tech

Bob Smith

Provost and Senior Vice President

Triple threat: in football, the term has been used to describe a player who excels in running, kicking, and passing. In the performing arts, the term is used to describe artists who are great at acting, dancing, and singing. In higher education, faculty members who excel in teaching, research, and service can be thought of as academic triple threats. And, academicians who create synergy among the three functions can become what I refer to as integrated scholars.

On Commencement . . .

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Commencement. In the context of higher education ceremonies, it may mark an end to studies for a degree. But true to its dictionary meaning, commencement is a beginning – the beginning of a graduate's journey of life-long learning.



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The university took a major step forward in early September when it announced \$24.3 million had been raised that will qualify for about \$21.5 million in matching funds from the state under the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP).

HB 51 established TRIP to be an immediate funding source for the emerging research universities. For gifts to qualify for matching funds, they must go toward endowed chairs, professorships, facilities, equipment, program costs, or graduate stipends or fellowships.

This level of support is remarkable and will allow us to make a quantum leap. The legislature created a pathway for us to follow. Now it's up to the university and its supporters and partners to do the things that will sustain and grow our research over the long term.

While our \$24.3 million easily topped the other six universities, the fundraising is not over. TRIP provides \$25 million for 2010, and any gifts not matched in 2010 will roll over to 2011 for matching from another pool of \$25 million. The final awarding of matching funds will come at the end of October by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

A second, long-term funding source, the idea of Texas State Sen. Robert Duncan of Lubbock, would provide an endowment similar to the Permanent University Fund that the University of Texas and Texas A&M enjoy. The new fund is called the National Research University Fund (NRUF). NRUF will repurpose an existing but unused state fund into an endowment for new Tier One universities once they achieve certain benchmarks. It requires a constitutional amendment that voters must approve in a state-wide election in November.

If TRIP is the pathway to get to national research university status, NRUF is the mechanism for us to stay there. It is vital that the constitutional change, or Proposition 4, pass in November. Without NRUF approval, Texas Tech, or any university that meets all the state criteria, will not have a funding source to maintain its national research status.

The benchmarks that the universities must achieve to participate in NRUF are high, but with hard work Texas Tech has an excellent chance of reaching them. Our fate is in our hands.

High research productivity is the most important criterion for a Tier One school – and the area in which we have the most work to do. We also must meet four of six additional criteria. Texas Tech already meets one of these: we shelter a Phi Beta Kappa chapter and belong to the Association of Research Libraries. We are close on two others: size of endowment (more than \$400 million) and number of Ph.D.s awarded (at least 200 per year). Other criteria include a high-quality faculty, high achievement of the freshman class, and high-quality graduate programs. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will define benchmarks in the future, but I believe we will either meet them or be very close.

While we have a way to go to meet the research criteria that the legislature has established, Texas Tech currently has some extraordinary opportunities to bring in new researchers who will help. At the same time we have a chance to conduct research that will point to solutions to some of the nation's most pressing problems. For example, generous donors have created endowed chairs that will allow us to attract nationally prominent researchers in solar power, nuclear power, and other areas of sustainable energy.

In bringing new faculty and graduate students to Texas Tech, these opportunities represent a significant win for Lubbock as well as for the university. New faculty and students mean new dollars coming into the local economy.

An economic impact study done last year shows that our students currently spend about \$297.5 million a year in Lubbock County and help sustain many jobs. In all, Texas Tech contributes about \$1.63 billion to the Lubbock County economy annually. Achieving Tier One status will be a win not only for Texas Tech and Lubbock, but for all of West Texas.

To reach Tier One status, we must grow both our student population and the amount of externally funded research we obtain. We have plans in place to do both.

Most important, we must attract additional graduate students. These students are critical in helping us grow our research and instructional capacity. We have put in place funding for 80 new doctoral students to begin in September. We will double this number for fall 2010.

While we continue to work hard to recruit excellent students right out of high school, we also are expanding our recruitment of students who start their education at community colleges. We have agreements in place with community colleges across the state to make the transition to Texas Tech as easy as possible.

In addition, we are recruiting internationally competitive research teams who bring substantial research funding with them. Finally, we are making plans to expand our facilities to support the growth in research faculty and students.

Texas Tech is a great university with a long heritage of providing an education of the highest quality for students. We now have an opportunity to become one of the great research universities in the United States. It is up to us to seize the opportunity.

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Indeed, a president of a major research university noted well: “Alumni are students with degrees.” Texas Tech commencements are marked by two important traditions. First, all undergraduate and graduate students are offered the opportunity to receive their degree personally from the Texas Tech president. Second, prominent speakers are invited to share their sage advice, in the form of short though memorable speeches, on the “road ahead.”



At All Things Texas Tech, we take the opportunity to publish, with the speakers’ permission of course, papers based on commencement remarks along with photos and video clips of their presentations. Full multimedia coverage of commencements events are also available on [Texas Tech Today](#). Visit these sites often to share in the wisdom of Texas Tech commencement speakers.

Spring 2009

Ambassador Karen P. Hughes – May 2009 Graduate School Commencement
[Passion and Perspective](#) | [Video](#) 📺

Scott Pelley - May 2009 Undergraduate Commencement
[Be Prepared to Test Yourself - Sixty Years From Now](#) | [Video](#) 📺