



UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION AND FOUNDERS' CELEBRATION September 8, 2015

“What an exciting start to the school year! I am thrilled to welcome Dr. Michael Williams, president, and Dr. Thomas Yorio, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, from the University of North Texas Health Science Center, to our Convocation. We first met in March, and since that time our friendship has grown by leaps and bounds. At that first meeting we both realized that our combined strengths as institutions could bring about desired outcomes — outcomes that will benefit not only TCU and UNTHSC but also the city of Fort Worth. You will hear more about our new collaboration later in my address.

We come together today to launch our 143rd academic year and acknowledge progress on many fronts since we last gathered for Convocation. Benjamin Franklin once said: "Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning."

Indeed, our campus has seen many changes and we celebrate that progress and growth. TCU gives meaning to the words improvement, achievement and success.

However, as we welcome the Class of 2019 into the Horned Frog family, I want to celebrate one thing that has not changed: our enduring relationships with one another and with this great university.

Convocation provides the opportunity to consider both our collective achievements and our aspirations for Texas Christian University. Common motifs run through all of our accomplishments and goals, in fact all we do at TCU:

- Community
- Collaboration
- And connection

These "three Cs" embody TCU's identity. They define our relationships with our students, with one another and with the larger world. Consequently, they provide a most appropriate theme for the coming year and a lens through which to observe and evaluate what we do here. And they correspond with components found in our strategic plan as set forth by the Board of Trustees, *Vision in Action: the Academy of Tomorrow*.

Let's start by speaking first about COMMUNITY: the sense of unity, identity, cooperation and spirit that so many feel here.

We welcome many new members to the TCU family for the fall semester, including our freshman class. We are very proud of this accomplished group, chosen from more than 18,500 applicants.

The Class of 2019 is in fact larger than anticipated— 2,072 — even with 300 fewer offers of admission this year than last year, and 800 fewer than the year before. However, TCU's yield — the percentage of students who accepted offers of admission — was greater this year than at any time in the last three decades.

Applications are predicted to increase again for next year, but we are focused on our longtime goal of admitting a freshman class of around 1,850.

The Class of 2019 continues a trend of excellence and achievement with the highest academic credentials in TCU history. These new Frogs bring record high SAT and ACT scores, and TCU's admission rate remains in the "highly selective category."

Without a doubt, the sense of community that defines TCU is very attractive to prospective students and their families. There is great value in what we offer.

Introducing incoming students to TCU's mission, values and culture is essential in building and sustaining our community. First-year students made friends and began to learn about their alma mater this summer at Frog Camps that stretched from here to Colorado to Costa Rica. You can learn more about this by following "TCU global" on tumblr. Students, faculty and staff engaged with one another in analyzing this year's common reading, *The Other Wes Moore*, while the Chancellor's Assembly further welcomed the Class of 2019 to TCU's academic culture.

Permit me for a moment to expand on the importance of COMMUNITY.

In his book, *Eight Habits of the Heart*, Clifton Taulbert outlines the timeless values that build strong communities. These habits include a nurturing attitude, dependability, responsibility, friendship, brotherhood, high expectations, courage and hope. Of the eight habits of the heart, the one habit that Mr. Taulbert cites as critical to a good community is brotherhood, which he defines as reaching "beyond comfortable relationships to extend a welcome to those who may be different from yourself."

This is a habit we all must practice, demonstrating respect and civility. We must continue to reach beyond ourselves and reinforce the connectivity that makes the TCU community so unique.

I would be remiss if I moved from the topic of community without mentioning a special recognition. Again — for the fifth consecutive year — TCU is listed among *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* "Great Colleges to Work For." It is gratifying that this year our university was the only one in the nation to be recognized in all 12 categories on the survey of faculty and staff that determines the award.

Our second theme is COLLABORATION — the teamwork, partnerships, alliances and relationships that will be vital as we further realize our vision: to be a world-class, values-centered university.

Collaboration does not just happen; it takes more time to exchange ideas and reach consensus. But we see time and time again that this investment yields successful outcomes for the greater welfare of all.

One bold initiative is sure to positively impact the University and our community. As noted in the video, TCU and the University of North Texas Health Science Center are joining forces to create a new MD-granting medical school in Fort Worth. The school, planning to accept its first class in

2018, will prepare future doctors to utilize a team-oriented approach that centers on patients and will shape the future practice and business of medicine.

The UNT Health Science Center already is home to an osteopathic medical school and several graduate health care programs. Blending a medical education and TCU's liberal arts focus will help shape tomorrow's physicians as ethical leaders. A memorandum of understanding between the two institutions calls for an initial class of 60. One third of the places in each class will be dedicated to TCU students. The MD school is expected to increase educational and research opportunities at both institutions, while using existing facilities and faculty.

TCU is also involved in a collaboration to transform geriatric care in North Texas. The University will partner with the UNT Health Science Center, JPS Health Network and the United Way's Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County to establish the Workforce Enhancement Healthy Aging and Independent Living, or WE HAIL for short. The collaboration was selected for funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to improve health care for older adults nationally.

In a third collaboration, TCU and Tarrant County College have signed an agreement that will facilitate the transfer of TCC graduates to the University. TCC graduates account for about 25 percent of the university's transfer students each semester. This formal partnership will provide a clearer pathway for TCC student access to TCU and increase an already steady pipeline of capable, successful students to the University.

To complete the three "Cs" themes is CONNECTION. Our mission encourages students to forge connections that will have a positive influence far and wide. TCU educates students to think broadly and be global leaders--and to be responsible citizens in every sense of the word.

Our student, faculty and staff live this theme every day.

The University won the prestigious 2015 Institute of International Education's Heiskell Award for the most innovative and successful models in the field of internationalization. Two Horned Frogs were named Albert Schweitzer Fellows in 2015. Five became Fulbright Scholars (for a total of 16 Fulbrights over the past three years).

Closer to home, TCU made progress through key connections in the state and local community. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the Institute of Child Development in the College of Science & Engineering has garnered recognition for innovative methods of care and treatment of harmed children across the world. The therapeutic model that the institute developed is being adopted to revamp the Texas child foster care system.

The results of our unswerving commitment to community, collaboration and connection are many, and others have taken notice of our progress.

TCU's academic expertise is being recognized on a global level. For example, *The Economist* ranks Neeley's Executive MBA faculty 2nd in the world and the EMBA 12th in the world. Six new endowed faculty positions for distinguished professors have been added in the last three years, and Dr. Molly Weinburgh has been named a Piper Professor — one of 10 top professors in Texas.

Support from alumni and friends gives proof that they believe in our vision. Since *The Campaign for TCU* ended in 2012, with more than \$435 million raised, donors have continued the momentum with new commitments of some \$244 million.

After today's recessional, we will gather for our Founders' Celebration outside Landreth Hall in full view of the amazing new and improved Mary Coutts Burnett Library, which will re-open in early October in the Intellectual Commons.

Across the Intellectual Commons is the expanded and renovated Annie Richardson Bass Building for Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences, which opened last academic year. An ambitious new complex for the Neeley School of Business is on the architects' drawing boards.

On the west campus, the Ed and Rae Schollmaier Arena in the Daniel-Meyer Complex is on schedule for completion in time for basketball season, and two new parking garages will provide parking for faculty, staff, students and visitors.

Friends and colleagues, we are committed to creating an optimal campus for the TCU community. Our focus remains on the Academy of Tomorrow, which is all about people and programs and the facilities in which they "live."

In closing, I would like to return to the "three Cs": community, collaboration and connection. As we leave this Convocation and begin this new academic year, reflect on these three "Cs" to help guide and evaluate our daily work--for they define us an institution and speak to our progress and growth in the future.

Thank you."