



**Chancellor's Remarks**  
**Convocation**  
**September 9, 2014**

We come together today to launch our 142nd academic year. So much has happened on our campus since we last gathered for Convocation! As we welcome the Class of 2018 into the Horned Frog family, I want to celebrate the one thing about TCU that never changes — our connections to one another and to this great university.

This is a place that fosters a spirit of pride, tradition and belonging. But most important, this is a place where priority is given to people. We are proud of our challenging academic offerings. We are equally proud of the caring atmosphere and mentoring relationships that characterize this university. Because we all know that the *most critical factor* in providing the unique TCU experience is the *personal touch* provided by our faculty and staff.

Among my most important goals for the coming year is to consistently recognize such abiding commitment. Our faculty and staff are our greatest assets in honoring our mission and our values. They are our greatest strength in realizing our collective vision – to be a world-class, values-centered University.

The results of our unswerving commitment to this vision are obvious, and Forbes, U.S. News & World Report, The Economist and others have taken notice of our progress:

- We learned today that *U.S. News* has listed TCU at No. 76 on its ranking of national universities. The University has moved up 23 places since 2003.
- *Forbes* has placed the University among its "Rising Stars: 10 Top Colleges to Watch" of the nation's 3,500 colleges and universities.
- *The Economist* has ranked the Neeley MBA faculty as the best in the world.
- For the fourth consecutive year, TCU is listed among *The Chronicle of Higher Education* "Great Colleges to Work For."
- Further evidence of TCU's academic excellence and global vision was the selection of six Horned Frogs as Fulbright Scholars this year, following five named last year.

Potential students and their families continue to respond to TCU's good news:

- The Class of 2018, with approximately 1,892 new Horned Frogs, was selected from 17,000 applications, placing our admission rate again in the "highly selective" category.
- The Class of 2018 continues a trend with the highest SAT and ACT scores in TCU history.
- And the retention rate from the freshman to sophomore year has consistently improved to 90 percent, demonstrating that incoming students have been satisfied with their choice.

Support by our alumni and friends give proof that they believe in our vision:

- Since *The Campaign for TCU* ended in 2012, donors have continued the momentum with new commitments of more than \$189 million. This includes some \$66 million directed specifically to academic programs, faculty and scholarships.
- And last month we received tremendous help in realizing our long-term goals.

- Emeritus Trustee Spencer Hays and his wife, Marlene, have made one of the largest gifts in our history.
- They committed \$30 million toward a \$100 million expansion of Neeley School of Business facilities in the Intellectual Commons and Smith and Tandy renovations.
- This transformational gift allows us to dream even bigger dreams.
- More than just the sheer enormity of generosity, this significant gift from the Hays family affirms our value to those involved with TCU and sends the incredibly important message to external sources that *everything* that is happening on our campus is worthy of gifts at this level.

The Hays gift is a testament to TCU's culture of connection and to the abiding ties that culture creates. Almost 60 years after Mr. Hays' graduation, he and his wife still place the University among their highest priorities. I would like to thank Dean Homer Erekson and Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Don Whelan for their role in encouraging this wonderful gift — an amazing vote of confidence in what we are accomplishing here.

Of course, the true importance of this gift, and the other achievements we will discuss today, is that they are affirmations of how well we are educating, encouraging and supporting our students. And how well we are enabling them to pursue their dreams and become the next generation of leaders.

We remain at mid-journey in fulfilling the goals that will ensure the future of Texas Christian University. For those who are new to the campus — and for those who might want a refresher course:

- In early 2012, TCU implemented a new phase of a comprehensive strategic plan designed to help us achieve our vision – to be a world-class, values-centered University.
- This phase of the plan is titled *Vision in Action: The Academy of Tomorrow*. And it has three key ingredients that *support and drive our shared commitment*:
  - Raising TCU's academic profile and reputation
  - Fine-tuning the size and balance of the student body
  - Creating the optimal campus environment
- Simply put, the Academy of Tomorrow is all about our people and programs and the facilities in which they "live." The Academy of Tomorrow preserves our shared values, heritage and traditions while ensuring that TCU adapts to an ever-changing, complex global environment.

Currently, the most *visible* result of our strategic plan is the physical transformation of our campus over the last 10 years. It is hard for those of us who have been here for a decade or more to remember when there was no Campus Commons and seven fewer residence halls, when applicants and their families visited a crowded — and in the opinion of many, crummy — office in Sadler Hall to speak with an admission counselor, and when Reed and Bass halls retained their 1950s ambiance.

After today's recessional, we will gather for our Founders' Celebration near the amazing new entrance of the Mary Coats Burnett Library and the phenomenal new Rees-Jones Hall, which will ultimately connect with the library. Across the Intellectual Commons, is the remarkable new addition to the Annie Richardson Bass Building. The classical facades of these facilities speak to our heritage and traditions. Inside, there is some of the best 21st century media and technology for our students and faculty. All three buildings are designed to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative investigation. They are ideal settings for the work of TCU's doers, dreamers and trailblazers as we examine the world's most significant challenges in an atmosphere characterized by diversity of thought.

We will continue to add facilities, including new academic buildings in the Intellectual Commons, the Worth Hills residential development and Greek Village, upgraded facilities for athletics, and two parking garages. These facilities will better serve our campus community and will provide our students, faculty and staff with an optimal campus environment.

But the most important thing we can do now is to make even greater investments in our academic profile and reputation by directing even more effort and resources to our people and programs. Then imagine how those investments in students, faculty/staff and academic offerings can grow exponentially over decades through the power of endowment. The cumulative effect on this University will be nothing short of profound.

In American higher education, the correlation between great universities and well-funded endowments is significant, demonstrating the power of endowment in sustaining academic scholars and scholarships. Consequently, we intend to double the size of our endowment to gain the competitive advantage and financial and academic strength to achieve our vision.

We are also directing resources immediately and over the next few years to address needs of our people and programs. These include:

- Larger departmental chair stipends
- Greater operational support for holders of endowed chairs and professorships
- Larger faculty travel budgets to give our amazing professors the national and international visibility they deserve
- And a larger salary increase when faculty members are promoted

We are making these increases to better support our faculty and to be more competitive with other universities.

Two other initiatives are certain to have a significant, positive effect on teaching and learning at TCU.

When we recruit students, we promise them small classes taught by outstanding teacher/scholars. In order to fulfill one part of the promise — classes with a 14:1 or better student/faculty ratio — we have increasingly come to depend on adjuncts. Consequently, over the next three years, we intend to add approximately 20 new faculty for CORE sections now taught by adjuncts.

Second, it is extremely important that we honor faculty who have exemplified all that is best of the teacher/scholar model throughout their careers. Accordingly, I have asked the Provost to develop two new ranks of faculty. The first is "Distinguished University Professor" to be earned as a career capstone at TCU by those who have given the University truly outstanding and sustained service in both teaching and scholarship. The second rank will recognize those professors who, over the course of their careers, have risen to the status of a "Master Teacher." The program will be limited to approximately 20 faculty and will be phased in over two to three years.

Now I would like to speak about progress on some of the academic initiatives that are essential to achieving the goals of *Vision in Action: The Academy of Tomorrow*.

Without a doubt, the John V. Roach Honors College is a TCU flagship, and it was selected through our strategic planning process as an area of increased focus. Robust external and internal assessment will enable us to celebrate its strengths and also identify how it can best be enhanced. Dr. Sarah Robbins and Dr. Phil Hartman are co-chairs of a committee of TCU faculty, staff and students preparing a self-study, and a distinguished external review committee is tentatively

scheduled to visit campus as part of a formative assessment of the college. Among topics considered will be undergraduate research, faculty course development and study abroad grants.

ePortfolio, another of our academic investments, enables faculty mentors to work with students to develop a digital intellectual identity. Last year's pilot project of FrogFolio — as ePortfolio is known here — encouraged students to integrate and reflect on their learning experience, while developing a potentially career-building academic portfolio. Deemed a success by the 400 TCU students who participated, FrogFolio this year expands to more than 1,000 students.

Enthusiasm continues for the "great themes" courses that examine critical challenges facing our planet. This fall we have begun to address the theme of water with courses such as The Poetry of Water and The Art of Water, as well as others that examine the Nile and the Trinity River. A seminar series is under development and other courses will begin spring semester after Faculty Senate approval. The creative possibilities for this theme seem unlimited: for example, two composers are commissioned to create new works with a water theme, while the Honors College has chosen the Trinity River Vision as the subject of the Honors Convocation keynote speech.

We are also experiencing great results through Discovering Global Citizenship, our Quality Enhancement Plan to internationalize the University. This plan is characterized by initiatives designed to engage the TCU community with the world, while providing international experiences for students.

For example, our students in the Global Academy have made two trips to Panama's City of Knowledge to participate in this booming international community and learn about sustainable, knowledge-based development. As one student noted, "We have developed a holistic view of Panama, past, present and future."

Global Innovators are groundbreaking individuals from developing countries who come to our campus to participate in multi-disciplined curricular and co-curricular programs. Following the visit, engagement between the TCU community and the Global Innovator is sustained through virtual correspondence and an ongoing project funded by a grant awarded to one or more academic departments.

The fall 2014 focus of Discovering Global Citizenship is the Middle East and Central Asia. We are delighted to have this semester's Global Innovator with us today, Dr. Hassan Azzazy [Hassan Ah Zazz (like Jazz) E] of Cairo, Egypt.

As you learned earlier, Dr. Azzazy is a distinguished professor of chemistry at the American University in Cairo and leader of the university's Novel Diagnostics and Therapeutics Research Group. He has more than 24 years of biomedical research experience with a focus on developing new diagnostics for the detection of infectious agents and cancer biomarkers. Dr. Azzazy is the author of more than 140 scientific publications and has received numerous prestigious awards for his work.

Dr. Azzazy's academic credentials are impressive, but even more impressive is the fact that he has moved beyond the academy to create a startup firm that develops affordable medical tests for Hepatitis C, tuberculosis and bladder cancer. Not only is he on the frontline of his nation's most pressing medical challenges, but he is transforming higher education in Egypt through the creation of academic research laboratories and the pursuit of external grants and patents.

Dr. Azzazy even has ties to the DFW area as he completed his PhD at the UNT Health Science Center in Fort Worth in the early 1990's.

In his role as a TCU Global Innovator, Dr. Azzazy will work with Dr. Giri Akkaraju [Gear-ee AH-kuh-RAJ-you] and Dr. Jeff Coffey [Koffey] of the College of Science and Engineering on a long-term project related to the use of nanoparticles in the diagnosis and therapy of infectious disease.

Dr. Azzazy, please join me at the lectern. It is a pleasure to present this small token to you in appreciation for being a vital part of Discovering Global Citizenship, a program that is essential to TCU's future. [Lead applause. The award is under the lectern.]

Now I would like to touch on an important topic that has the potential to greatly impact all of our people and programs.

TCU is clearly in a very fortunate position, and we wish to do nothing that can interfere with our upward trajectory. Because universities today operate in a highly regulated environment, we must fully monitor, understand and comply with regulations to protect and empower our faculty, staff and students. Noncompliance with regulations can impact areas such as research, distance education and federal financial aid.

Currently, a small core of dedicated faculty and staff oversee our compliance efforts. However, the ever-increasing and complex compliance world calls for centralization and coordination of this work. To that end, I am establishing a position for a universitywide chief compliance officer. This person will report to me and sit on the Chancellor's Cabinet. I am pleased to announce that Andrea Nordmann has been hired to serve in this new position and will assume her duties as Chief University Compliance Officer beginning October 15.

In closing, I would like to once more note that the University is a place where people are the priority. This is a hallmark of the TCU experience — so much so, in fact, that we have launched the Center for Connection Culture to further spread the ethos: "We are better together." The center coordinates and supports connection initiatives and brings thought leaders to campus, such as Bob Beaudine, a nationally recognized speaker, who spoke during the spring semester.

Which leads us again to the importance of investing in *people and programs*. In short, this means developing leaders who are doers, dreamers and trailblazers — leaders who are ready to find solutions to significant challenges and, thereby, change the world.

During the remainder of our program, you will meet individuals who are enabling our students to do just that.