



**THE INVESTITURE OF  
PRESIDENT DANIEL W. PULLIN  
Thursday, November 9, 2023  
President's Speech**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Good afternoon.

Thank you for the beautiful performance of “I Dream a World.”

Chair Moncrief and members of the TCU Board of Trustees; Chancellor Boschini, governance and city leaders; members of our world-class faculty, outstanding staff, aspirational students, engaged alumni, loving family and generous friends:

I am honored and humbled to be conferred as the President of Texas Christian University.

Foremost, thank you to my beautiful family for your unwavering support and your commitment to me during my most challenging moments. Today, we celebrate and dream.

Thank you, colleagues, students and friends; you challenge and inspire me daily.

Members of the Board, thank you for entrusting me with this incredible responsibility to make an impact for so many.

Chancellor Boschini, I am eternally grateful for your guidance, mentorship and words of wisdom as I embark on this new chapter in our collective future.

To all of you here today – whether in this state-of-the-art concert hall, which is my favorite place on campus, or watching from a campus video venue or elsewhere online – thank you for your presence, support, and courage to shape the future.

I am proud to serve as your President.

Today's celebration pays tribute to TCU's remarkable legacy of leadership and our connected community. We have come so far in 150 years: from a small school opening its doors with 13 students to the top-tier, national university we are today. Both then and now, we hold tight to our commitment to innovation and the opportunity to prepare the leaders who are the ultimate instrument of our impact.

TCU's national presence and this year of monumental achievements have been accomplished through years of dedication, vision and planning.

Today, we both honor and learn from those who came before us so mightily. Leaders who leveraged opportunities, persevered in tough times, and remained loyal and committed in all circumstances. We owe our predecessors a debt of gratitude for shaping TCU today.



In the coming weeks, a time capsule will be installed in the Brown-Lupton University Union to commemorate our milestone year – only to be opened during TCU's bicentennial anniversary in 2073. I'll be 97 years old, and I'll do everything in my power to be there—and maybe even get there early to be first in line—to help open it and reflect on how far we have come.

Regardless, when the next generation opens it, they will be reminded of the TCU of "the now" – the year we made history across all areas:

We will remember a record year in fundraising, surpassing our \$1 billion Lead On: A Campaign for TCU goal that squarely supports our people and programs;

We will remember the world-class faculty who achieved another record year of research and creative pursuits;

We will remember how the Anne Burnett Marion School of Medicine achieved full accreditation and graduated its very first class, already making an incredible impact on the healthcare industry in Fort Worth, our region and beyond;

We will remember the 2022-23 athletics season when TCU became the only school in the nation to reach the College Football Playoff, NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament and College World Series in the same academic year;

We will remember how our retention rate for first-year students reached a new high of 94.3 percent, placing us among the most elite universities, which is a reflection of our commitment to inclusion and sense of belonging;

And, we will remember that despite declining national trends, enrollment at TCU is strong with steady, strategic growth.

Future generations will look at 2023 and marvel at TCU's greatness with full appreciation of what it took to get to this point.

As you may know, I maintain my commitment as a Professor in TCU's Neeley School of Business, so it won't surprise you that I'm always thinking about organizations and performance, which I think is beautifully captured by business scholar and author Jim Collins who says,

"Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice, and discipline." <sup>1</sup>

This is evident at TCU. Our greatness today results from the choices, discipline and steadfast leadership of those who have come before us.

Our time capsule commemorates all that TCU has achieved and the greatness of "now," – and records this moment in time for future generations to remember.

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But what I'm really excited about is "The Next"!



What does the future hold, and how will we get there?

I can tell you that the "next" depends on each of us.

For 150 years, TCU has developed leaders who shape and improve the world through excellence and innovation. The "next" 150 depends on our commitment to carry forward this tradition.

One of my favorite things to do is take a walk across our beautiful campus and see students, faculty, staff and visitors connecting with one another. And, when I do, I am always reminded of what makes TCU great – our people.

Take, for example, Frog Fountain. When pausing to look at it, I can't help but think about how we are all connected in this extraordinary community. For four decades, Frog Fountain has been a focal point on the TCU campus, serving as a favorite photo spot and gathering for special occasions and vigils to honor members of the TCU community.

The design of the fountain, with its four stylized lotus leaves, symbolizes an awakening and growth above the water. The fountain's flowing water represents the importance of sharing our values and transferring knowledge to the next generation.

Frog Fountain inspires me to reflect on our purpose and the relevance of our mission.

During the past year, everyone in our community was able to participate in an exercise to re-examine and define our values.

From this exercise, we know that Horned Frogs continue to cherish the true and tried TCU culture that is built upon:

Integrity –our dedication to making a difference for the greater good;

Community – our commitment to nurturing a diverse and inclusive environment where we embrace our differences;

Engagement – our belief that learning and personal growth requires active participation, curiosity and openness to new ideas;

and Excellence – our expectation that Horned Frogs always strive for something greater, so we may leave a legacy of impact.

Our challenge together is to ensure that these values are lived and passed on to the next generation, so that they will endure another 150 years.

Even since our founding, our purpose has been not only to educate but to develop character.

TCU founder Randolph Clark wrote about his brother, co-founder, and fellow innovator Addison's desire to create a co-ed academy (a true innovation at the time) where students would "be taught how to study, would be given a purpose in life, and a foundation on which to build character." <sup>2</sup>



I believe we do this well at TCU, and that our founders would be pleased with the current state of the University. We have carried forward their desired outcomes. We are living out their dreams.

Our mission is clear: we educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community.

Think about that: We are educating the leaders who will advance our world.

Leaders who will go on to build strong communities and families;

Leaders who work to secure and sustain our environment;

Who heal and nurture the sick;

Who contribute to companies and institutions, ensuring the future of our nation;

And leaders who generate breakthroughs that allow humanity to flourish across the globe.

Now, at this moment, I believe this is more important to our society than ever before.

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So how might we get to “The Next,” and carry it forward? It depends on us – doing it *together*.

We didn't get to where we are today by standing still. While it is important to celebrate our achievements, we must continue to forge ahead;

To reach our greatest aspirations, we must dream, and work, and reach, and innovate, as we have in this country since our founding. America was the first in flight, the first to the moon. Likewise, American universities are the envy of the world, and they continue to rise today.

In 1962, in his “We Choose to Go to the Moon Speech,” John F. Kennedy told Americans:

“We shall send to the moon 240,000 miles away, a giant rocket, more than 300 feet tall on an untried mission to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to Earth.”<sup>3</sup>

It’s hard for many of us (including my students) – in our current world of AI and robots and SpaceX – to understand that in 1962 Americans were very skeptical of the idea of sending “a giant rocket to the moon.”

But indeed, we went to the moon, and generations were inspired.

If we can dream it, we can do it! That’s true in this country and that’s true at TCU. Just as JFK had big aspirations for what the future of America holds, so do we.

To give you a glimpse of the big dreams on our hearts and in our minds ...



Picture this: a TCU campus of the future that connects and engages with the local community like never before.

Through public and private partnerships, we see an enhanced Berry Street corridor with new greenspaces and amenities for all Horned Frogs and our neighbors to utilize and enjoy.

We envision improved academic facilities, and a network of open spaces that make for a more comfortable and walkable campus, connecting TCU to city trails and the Trinity River;

These plans – as part of the TCU campus master plan portfolio – will go before the Board of Trustees for review and approval next Spring.

This is just the beginning of what we will aspire to achieve together.

Together, envision a graduation rate that surpasses 90, 95 percent;

A student body where all have the opportunity to study abroad;

A day when all of our students' financial needs are met.

We will achieve these dreams and more, because of you, loyal and dedicated Horned Frogs. Everyone in this room plays an important role:

Students: You are bright, inspiring and, while you are still and will forever be learning, you have something to teach all of us; keep asking questions, engaging with new people and challenging us;

TCU Trustees: Your vision, guidance and commitment drive our mission forward and help us uphold our tradition of excellence and innovation. Thank you for giving your time and energy to help us tackle new challenges and seize upon the most promising opportunities;

Faculty and Staff: Your dedication and hard work, your daily impact on our students and willingness to innovate and Lead On ensures that TCU is living our mission daily; that TCU lives through our values, that TCU embraces your big ideas as you model the future to our students;

Alumni: You are passionate and keep our culture strong far beyond our physical campus; stay connected and engaged. You are the key to passing on our tradition and knowledge to the next generation;

Together, we will advance and, said simply, make this great place even greater.

We will better our best and meet the challenges of the future.

We will leverage innovation and explore new ideas;

We will ask ourselves:

"What can we do better?"

"How can we do it best?"

And "How can we make a difference in the lives of others?"

Working together, our diversity will drive our ability to innovate.

The late American educator and author Stephen Covey said this first – and I believe Horned Frogs know this to be true because I see you living it every day – “Our strength lies in our differences, not our similarities.”<sup>4</sup>

If TCU is to thrive in the decades and years ahead, our students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders must do so as a diverse, yet connected, community. TCU must be a leader, and continue to nurture, grow and inspire a community that cultivates a diversity of people, programs and ideas to fulfill our mission and succeed in the future.

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Today, let's begin "The Next" here at TCU.

To this end, I would like to share five priorities that can help shape our dynamic future:

1. Together, we will secure TCU's sustainability:

We will do this by ensuring our future with a forward-looking master plan; fostering a spirit of giving and surpassing fundraising goals to nurture our Endowment and support our people and programs.

2. Together, we will establish TCU as the premier destination for talent to attract and retain the best and brightest students, and the best and brightest workforce:

We will do this by living our values, upholding our commitment to inclusive excellence and prioritizing our connected culture.

3. Together, we will reach for new heights in research, creative activities and interdisciplinary collaboration:

We will do this by elevating our academic profile by generating insights into the most important issues of our time and bringing them into the classroom, so our students may then deploy and improve upon them in practice;

4. Together, we will lead the country in student success and outcomes:

We will do this by focusing on health and wellness services, safety and Study Abroad opportunities that expand horizons and prepare students for global impact;

5. Finally, together, we will advance TCU through engagement and thought leadership nationally and in our hometown:



We will do this deliberately and strategically by forging relationships and promoting the TCU brand.

Today, just like the words painted on the Berry St. mural, I issue a challenge to each of you and to myself as we look ahead:

Dream Big. Be Bold. And Lead On.

*Dream Big. Be Bold. And Lead On.*

Let our gift to future generations be more than we can even dream today and give them good reason to celebrate in the next 50 and 150 years.

Let's answer the remarkable commitment of our predecessors with our commitment to TCU's bright future.

In the words of our late beloved Chancellor Bill Tucker:

"Let us answer commitment with commitment."

"That, in the final analysis, is the highest priority of Texas Christian University today and tomorrow." <sup>5</sup>

We will dream. Like those who made this great University the place that it is today – we will soar.

Thank you and God Bless TCU.

Go Frogs!

#### Notes

1. Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, 2001.
2. Randolph Clark, *Reminiscences, Biographical and Historical*, 1919.
3. Speech by John F. Kennedy, "We Choose to Go to the Moon," September 12, 1962.
4. Steven Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, 1989.
5. Inaugural address of Dr. William E. Tucker: "A Decade of Decision: TCU and the 1980s," April 16, 1980.