



Presidential Inaugural Address

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Chancellor Hance, Chairman Long, Members of the Board of Regents, faculty, staff, students, distinguished guests and friends of Texas Tech University: It is an honor to officially be inaugurated as the 16th president of this exceptional place, Texas Tech University. This university was founded with a western pioneer spirit, indeed a West Texas spirit that has been a dream come true for those associated with this great university over the past 90 years.

In the last few months of our transition to Texas Tech and Lubbock, my wife Ruthie and I have found this university and community to be a beacon that shines bright across West Texas, the state of Texas and beyond. Our university showcases an engaged student-centered campus providing a dynamic learning environment, coupled with knowledge, discovery, creativity, and outreach that impact our state and the world.

Speaking of Ruthie, I would like to acknowledge and thank her for her support of me over many years. From our early undergraduate days in Montana to this opportunity today at Texas Tech University, she has been a special partner and supporter of me throughout.

Today, I am pleased to speak to you about my vision for Texas Tech University as a top national research university as well as provide you with my perspectives on our

university's strategic directions and my reflections on the strengths of West Texas, Lubbock, and this special star in the Lone Star State: Texas Tech University.

This is a university that has made tremendous strides in the last few years, including:

- being the first to qualify for National Research University Funding from the state of Texas, to new levels of accomplishment in student success, including our record enrollment this fall of over 33,000 students;
- faculty achievements, including record levels of research expenditures and critically recognized faculty authored books and artistic works;
- and record levels of engaged economic impact of this region and our state (including a \$6 billion dollar annual economic impact on our state, and \$1.9 billion annual economic impact on the South Plains alone). All these successes are noteworthy.

But in the spirit of West Texas and the dream that is Texas Tech, in my opinion, it is only the beginning; we must aspire to even higher levels of success. As we know, at Texas Tech, "From Here it is Possible," and as President and with this firm foundation, I am committed to a new beginning — working with our outstanding faculty, staff, students,

alumni and friends to move Texas Tech to higher levels of national excellence; to be more AAU like, indeed to be at the highest level based on the Carnegie Classification of Research Universities.

For I think we all agree that Texas Tech is about positive thinking, an energetic spirit with a can-do attitude built on the dreams of our university founders and grounded in a West Texas heritage that is unfazed by hardship, built on the principles of what is practical but the ideals of a leading-edge national and, indeed, international institution committed to unlimited possibilities.

So in the spirit of what can be, I believe to grow Texas Tech's national position requires that we continue to commit to the following five priorities:

First, we must continue to grow our enrollment toward 40,000 by 2020. And as we grow our enrollment we need to be sensitive to the quality and diversity of our student body, as we strive toward enhancing our graduation and retention rates, enhancing the number of graduate students, and continuing to grow the proportion of our students that are Hispanic, African-American, and other minority groups. And we must aggressively elevate our best students toward more national and international recognition through success in securing Rhodes,

Truman, Marshalls, Udall, Goldwater, and Fulbright Scholarships.

And our enrollment growth must focus on a more global strategy that includes our core campus in Lubbock, but with enhanced regional offerings, and an on-line global campus that can benefit from the trademark quality that is Texas Tech University.

Secondly, we must continue to grow our faculty numbers, and ensure continued high quality of our faculty hires. I was so impressed this year in meeting our 131 new faculty members and the fact they are coming from some of the best private and public universities in the U.S. and, indeed, the world. And this new group of faculty includes three members of the National Academy of Engineers. Speaking of National Academy members we need to also systematically promote our faculty for the highest levels of national and international recognition, extending our successes in such competitions as the Fulbright Faculty Awards, which this year Texas Tech tied Ohio State and the University of Illinois for first with 10 faculty Fulbright recipients.

We must also continue to grow our research expenditures, which this past year exceeded \$137 million. We have tremendous opportunities as well through collaborations with the TTU-Health Sciences Center.

And to promote our faculty and student success requires an outstanding staff with a positive attitude and a commitment toward new levels of success. I was heartened earlier this fall when a national web clearinghouse ranked our university number one in the nation as far as staff satisfaction relative to their work environment.

Third, we need to continue to enhance our efforts to be cutting edge with our initiatives

in outreach and engagement. This includes special partnerships with community and industry. The neighborhood promise grant led by our College of Education, or our National Wind Institute and its work with national agencies, research centers, and private enterprise, are examples of initiatives that are bringing national and, indeed, international recognition to our campus. And we will soon announce the largest such partnership in our institutions history with a major international corporation.

Fourth, we must promote our athletic programs to ever strive for the highest levels of success both in the classroom and on the playing field. Such athletic success gives us tremendous national exposure while serving as a bridge to promote our excellent academic programs.

Fifth, we must seek more resources to grow our university enterprise while extending our cutting edge learning environment simultaneously with extending our outreach and economic impact. I appreciate the continued investments of the state in Texas Tech, and we want to work hard every day to leverage those dollars into greater return on investment and, in general, enhance the educational experience for our students and leverage more economic development while contributing towards a higher quality of life. Through individual, company, and friend support of Texas Tech, the TTU system recently became one of a limited number of university systems that exceeded \$1 billion dollars in the capital campaign. Thanks to Chancellor Hance and many others who made this campaign goal a reality. It is through such investments that Texas Tech can distinguish and elevate itself among national research universities.

Speaking of Chancellor Hance, I would like to compliment him for his many successes

during his past seven years as Chancellor of the Texas Tech University System, as the components of this system have matured to significantly higher levels of success. I certainly wish the Chancellor all the best in his new role as Chancellor Emeritus. Coupled with the Chancellor's leadership, I believe our Texas Tech Board of Regents have played an integral role in this progress while also committing with me to continued growth of Texas Tech as a major national research university.

I also believe that 21st century land grant-like research universities, including Texas Tech, need to focus on five key themes to achieve a more forward-thinking approach while better serving the people of our state, nation and the world. One is to be more entrepreneurial. Now what do I mean by that? To be more creative and innovative, and where we have joint venture opportunities to partner with others. Secondly, we must be committed to being more inter-disciplinary, breaking down the traditional silos to work more collectively to solve some of society's greatest challenges. Third, we must be more engaged as an institution, extending the engagement theme from engaging students differently in new learning environments to engaging communities and industry partners. We must engage communities more fully to enhance student learning through application while benefiting communities through community progress. For industries, we need to create synergies for industry advancement while extending faculty and student research and creativity. Fourth, with an ever-increasing global economy, we must enhance our global connections. We must encourage more of our students to study abroad, while also recruiting more international students to our campus community. In addition,

we must build and develop additional international research opportunities.

And the last dynamic approach, is that we must be committed to enhancing diversity, with a sensitivity to recruiting a more diverse student body, faculty and staff, while enhancing the environment for success.

Overall, Texas Tech University will move forward, advancing itself as a beacon for global learning, discovery, creativity, and engagement on the plains of West Texas and beyond.

Last Spring, when Ruthie and I arrived here in Lubbock for the announcement of my selection as the 16th President of Texas Tech University, there was a major dust storm that came through Lubbock arriving mid-evening on a late March day. Ruthie and I were just coming out of the United Spirit Arena after attending a women's NCAA Tournament game, and we had the chance to experience this storm first hand. We thought it was fascinating. We went back to the Overton Hotel and the next morning the phone rang at 7 a.m., and it was Chancellor Kent Hance. The Chancellor said, "Duane, are you and Ruthie still here in Lubbock?" I said, "Of course." He said, "Oh thank God. I prayed all night that you hadn't left after that dust storm."

But Ruthie and I have come to love this university, and what this area represents. And I have had time in these first inaugural

months to poetically reflect on Texas Tech and West Texas:

What is it that makes this area, this city, and Texas Tech so special?

Is it the occasional dust storms that sculpture patterns reflecting the artistic expressions of the wind; or the vast distances that reflect the great open of the giant side of West Texas.

These South Plains have compensations that bring peace of mind to me; the special West Texas people—with genuine hearts of gold and a friendliness that shines like the sun during bright summer days.

I see the beauty, where some may see none in the spectacular skies, the colors of the rainbow that define the arrival and departure of sun rays on the vast landscapes of the Texas High Plains.

Or the artistic expressions some call playas, that tease the human soul with a landscape limited in water, but bountiful like a sudden rain refreshing the whispers of the past that included bison, Native Americans, and early Spanish explorers.

And there are other human rays that paint the West Texas landscape in hues of colors some call cotton, corn, and sorghum, with moving parts that include cattle and ranches that reinforce cowboy traditions of today as well as a time gone by.

And the brightest ray centered in a town called the "Hub City," with a university called

Texas Tech, a beacon of light that reflects dreams, transforms lives, and is a catalyst for discovery and creativity extending the human spirit, and yet reaching further, yet further toward a global scale.

There is a sense of warmth and comfort I feel from the people here, the soft voices but a rugged spirit that reflects West Texas, transformed into bright rays and voices focused on what is Texas Tech University.

So, let me conclude by saying that Texas Tech is poised for higher levels of greatness, and we need to have ambitious but attainable goals; goals that reflect on our powerful history but focus on moving us to new levels of national prominence.

So today, I am excited about our future, proud to be your new president, and ask each of you here today, who are part of the Texas Tech University family, to join with me as we work passionately, energetically, and strategically, to continue the progress of recent years of this great university, as we capture the promise of tomorrow that will collectively elevate Texas Tech to new levels of national and indeed international visibility.

Fearless, Love, Pride, Striving for Honor—all parts of the alma mater and all parts of this bright beacon, Texas Tech University, indeed this bright star in the lone star state.

Thank you.

