

Renu Khator
University of Houston
Fall Address
October 3, 2012

Good morning, everyone! Thank you, President Litvinov for this very kind introduction. Thank you very much for joining me today at this spectacular Moores Opera House.

Henry Ford once said,

*"Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success."*

We began together with a dream, a dream of being relevant to our community, and we came together to define this dream as being Tier One.

We worked together to achieve this goal, and today we stand together to celebrate our success. What a privilege it is for me to be part of your team and to stand before you for the 4th time for my Fall Address in celebration of our joint success, but most important, to thank you for your commitment to the University of Houston.

We owe enormous gratitude to our Board of Regents, because without their vision and support, our success could never be possible. Joining us are also our former regents on whose shoulders we stand today. Some members of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board have also honored us today with their presence. We thank them for their support and leadership.

I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Elsie Myers, President of Staff Council, and Cedric Bandoh, President of the Student Government Association.

Last month, the Houston Business Journal published a story with the headline, “University of Houston joins Rice University on U.S. News rankings.” Coming on the heels of many other recent national accolades, this was very special. Just a few years back, these destinations seemed beyond our reach, but your vision, persistence and hard work have succeeded in putting our university on the national map. We have achieved a lot, but we have so much more yet to achieve.



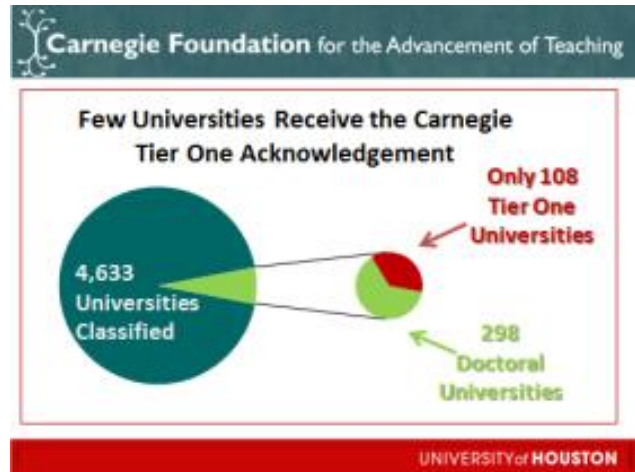
For four years now, the University of Houston has been holding itself publicly accountable by carefully tracking Board-approved benchmarks on our Progress Card.

Let’s begin by reviewing our progress in the area of research and innovation. In 2009, we set our eyes on three major goals because they were essential to our Tier One journey.

1. Tier One designation by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
2. “Top 50” public university list by Top American Research University or TARU, and
3. Qualifying for funding from the National Research University Fund or NRUF.

And we accomplished them all!

Let's remember how exclusive these designations are. Out of 4,633 colleges and universities in the nation, only 298 offer doctoral programs and even a smaller subset of 108 are ranked by Carnegie to have "very high research activity," or the same as being Tier One.



Top American Research Universities

Measures Ranked Top 50 Among Public Universities

	2009	2010	2011	Projected 2012
Total Research Expenditures				
Federal Research Expenditures				
Endowment Assets	🏆	🏆	🏆	🏆
Annual Giving	🏆	🏆	🏆	🏆
National Academy Members	🏆	🏆	🏆	🏆
Faculty Awards				🏆
Doctorates Granted	🏆			🏆
Postdoctoral Appointees				🏆
SAT/ACT Range				🏆

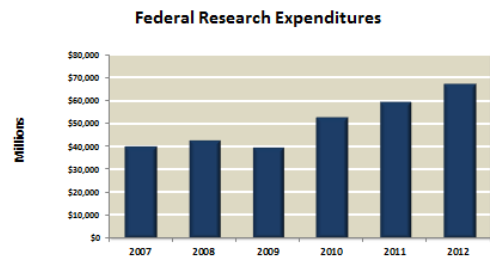
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And only a handful of universities make the TARU's Top 50 list! After dropping from the TARU list altogether some years ago, we reclaimed our position in 2009, and have held it since then, by qualifying in 3 out of 9 categories. These rankings use year old data and

therefore we already know our performance numbers for this year. Based on those numbers and assuming that other universities remain the same, which they typically do, we could be ranked in as many as 6 measures next year. I call that the joy of doubling!

Our portfolio for federal awards and expenditures remains robust. It has

Growth in Research Strength and Productivity



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Nationally Competitive Faculty Awards



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portfolio until last year. And it doubled this year!

Credit for moving the needle goes to the Cullen College of Engineering with six NSF Career Awards, and to the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics with three. These NSF Career Awards are given to junior faculty during their first three years of service.

grown steadily even during the times when total federal pool declined. While I am proud of the change in sponsored research, this year's highlight is in the area of faculty awards. Extremely competitive, these national awards are rare for any university. Here is our

NSF Career Awards to Faculty

- Jiming Bao** *Electrical & Computer Engineering*
- Jacinta (Jaci) Conrad** *Chemical & Biomolecular Engn*
- Ognjen Miljanic** *Chemistry*
- Angela Moeller** *Chemistry*
- Jeffrey Rimer** *Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering*
- Debora Rodrigues** *Civil & Environmental Engineering*
- Wei-Chuan Shih** *Electrical & Computer Engineering*
- Gila Stein** *Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering*
- Guoquan Wang** *Geosciences*

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Other TARU Faculty Awards

- Sandra Zalman** *(Art)*
American Council of Learned Societies
- Driss Benhaddou** *(Engineering Technology)*
Fulbright
- Marta Fairclough** *(Spanish)*
Fulbright
- Eric Bittner** *(Chemistry)*
Fulbright

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Added to this list are 4 other prestigious awards to established faculty in the Arts, Spanish, Technology and Chemistry. You are the inspiration and role models to our students and faculty.

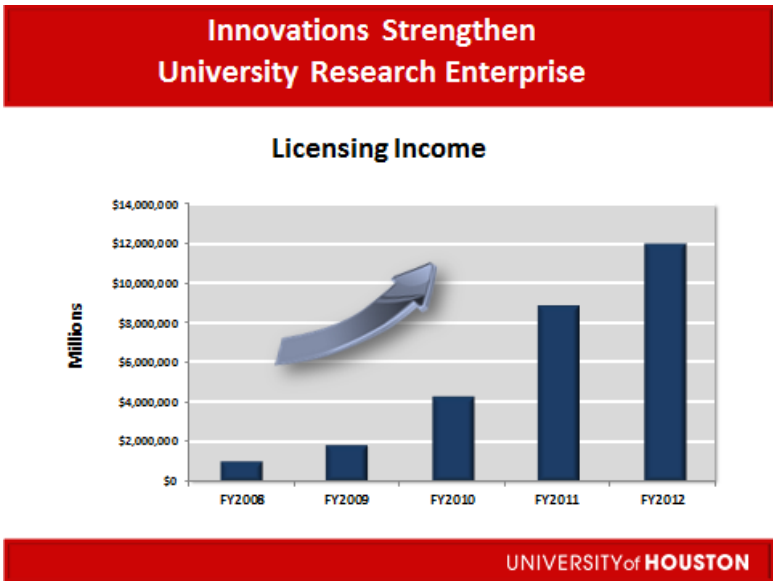
I am often asked, “Why should universities do research? They spend millions of dollars...for what?” I would like you to think of Veronica, a 17-year old girl with bright eyes and a beautiful smile who once had the dream of becoming an FBI agent. Sadly, partial epileptic seizures started taking over her life. She would suffer 4 or 5 seizures a day, totally paralyzing her.

After 11 years and 7 experimental drugs, Veronica gave up. Then Vimpat hit the market! It is an anti-Epileptic drug, discovered right here in a UH lab by Dr. Harold Kohn. Today, Veronica lives a normal life, as do 170,000 other patients who received Vimpat.

Discoveries like Vimpat have made us one of nation’s top innovation universities, judged by annual revenue from

university’s intellectual property. Five years ago, IP revenue for the University of Houston was \$600,000. This year, it was \$12 million! Truly, the joy of doubling and more!

It is not possible to leave this topic without acknowledging the impact, often non-measurable, but life changing nonetheless, made by our researchers in the areas of the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences.



You may have seen last week's Houston Chronicle editorial on Brene (brah-NAY) Brown, a UH alumna and professor of Social Work. Her research on vulnerability and shame is helping millions of people deal with their insecurities and accept their imperfections.

As we move forward, focus, strategy, and discipline will define our future. Tier One research funding we now receive from the state will be used to build core facilities where multiple researchers from multiple disciplines can maximize the use of world class equipment, and, while doing so, can synergize their efforts.

We will also continue with our plan to recruit in STEM areas, critical not only to enhance sponsored research, but also to produce more STEM graduates and meeting the needs of the energy and healthcare industries. We will look for ways to further strengthen our areas of research excellence in the arts, humanities, social sciences and professional disciplines.

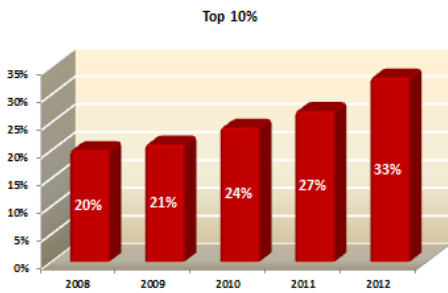
This brings me to student success, which is not just a priority, but a “No Excuse” priority, because it is the part of our work that defines us as a university.

It is no secret that our student success rate, measured nationally by the 6-year graduation rate for full-time freshmen, is below state and national averages. To close this gap, we initiated a 9-point plan 3 years ago, which promised to build residential life, launch cutting edge academic programs, provide seamless student pathways, and most important, build a culture that values not only student enrollment, but their success. Needless to say, the needle is moving.

We have more students – 40,759 to be precise – who are better qualified and are graduating at a faster rate than ever before! Consequently, the University of Houston is now on two national lists for the quality of our undergraduate education – The Princeton Review, and as of last month, the U.S. News & World Report.

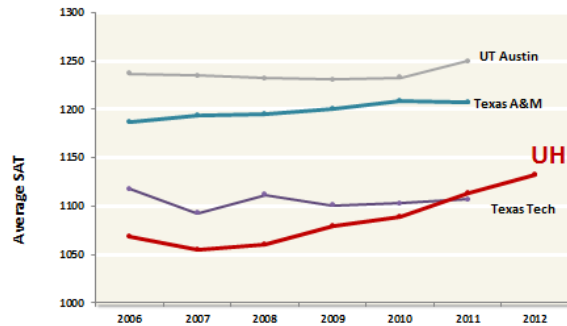
While the story is good on many fronts, I have chosen to highlight this year’s freshman class as an example of moving the needle.

Growth of Entering Student Graduating in Top 10% of High School Class



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Average SAT of Freshmen Class

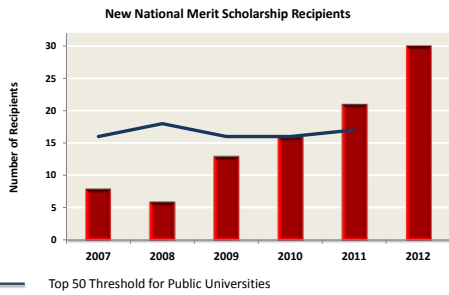


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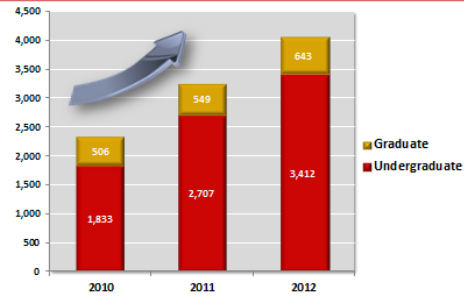
One-third of our freshman class came from the Top 10% of their high school class, a steady increase since 2008. Their average SAT score of 1134 is higher than any class before, and competitive in the state.

The class includes 34 National Merit Scholars, a number that has more than doubled in recent years, placing the University of Houston well above the top 50 public universities threshold.

Freshmen as National Merit Scholarship Recipients



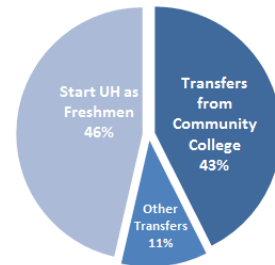
New UH Students Majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Fields



More of them – freshmen and others – are majoring in STEM, which is a state and national priority.

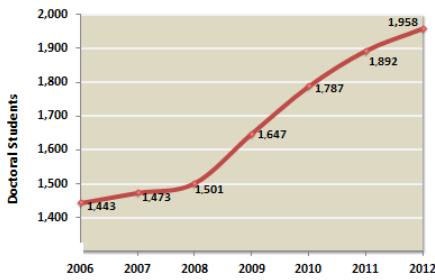
This class of 3,400 freshmen emerged from a pool of 23,000 applicants. With increasing selectivity, one may question our commitment to accessibility. I assure you that access to UH is guaranteed because more than half of any year’s entering class comes not as freshmen, but as transfers from other universities and colleges. A number of recruiting and advising initiatives in partnership with community colleges help us provide seamless pathways to the University of Houston.

UH is a Popular Destination for Transfer Students



The University of Houston ranks 2nd in the nation for our diverse student body and early this year, the U.S. Department of Education designated UH as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). We are now one of only three Carnegie Tier One universities in the nation and the only one in Texas to be so ranked. UH is also classified as an Asian-American serving Institution.

Doctoral Student Enrollment

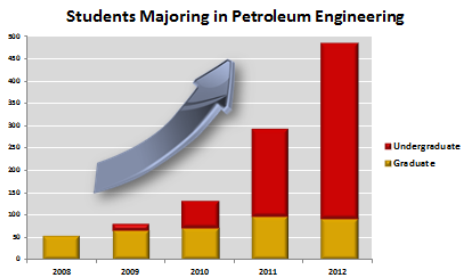


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The University of Houston is the only university in the UH System to offer Ph.D. programs. The number of doctoral degrees awarded is a measure for all national research rankings. Recent years have seen a tremendous growth in this area as well.

But, we recognize that student success goes beyond enrolling and graduating. So, let me raise the question – how well are we responding to the needs of the community?

UH Energy Initiative: Meeting Petroleum Engineering Needs of Gulf Coast Region



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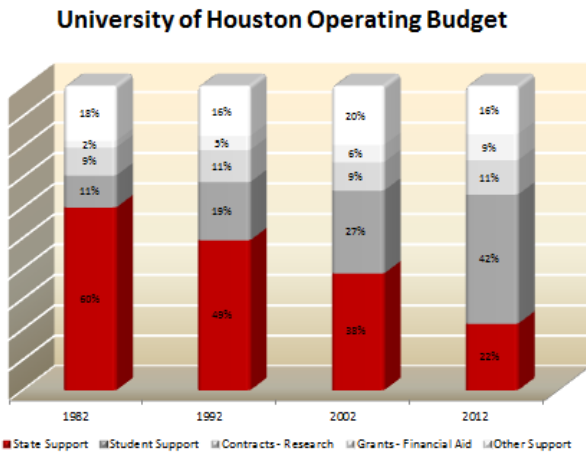
To support the energy industry, an undergraduate petroleum engineering program was launched in 2009 with 25 students and today, enrollment in the program is nearly 500. To support the healthcare industry, we now have joint admissions programs with UT Health Science Center, UTMB, and Baylor College of Medicine to train doctors and nurses.

Houston has one of nation's biggest arts economies and we are responding to this need with equal enthusiasm. Our latest offering is a master's degree in Arts Administration and Leadership, the first in any Texas public university!

Finally, an initiative with which we can express our gratitude and pride at the same time! It is estimated that nearly 30,000 veterans will return from wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and settle in the Gulf Coast region. 5,400 of them are expected to suffer from "Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder.” The University of Houston, with our research center and graduate training program, has geared up to serve these veterans.

It is said that it takes a teacher to teach, but a village to educate. Our Cougar village includes each and every one of us. We all play a role in our students’ success, but today, I would like to thank one special group of staff members who remain behind the scenes, and yet do a monumental job of maintaining a nurturing and welcoming physical environment for all of us—our custodians, groundskeepers and landscapers along with other staff from Facilities Management.

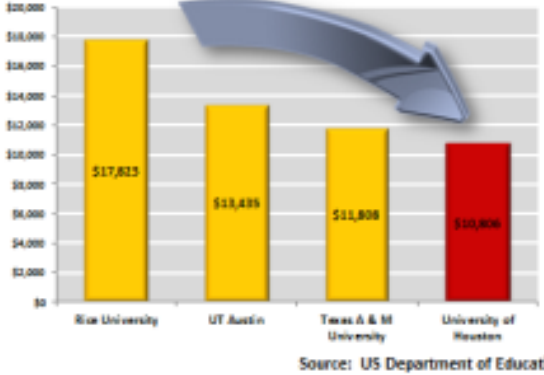


Now we turn to university resources... fund-raising and friend-raising that helps us keep the cost of education affordable and our work meaningful. State support, as percentage of total institutional budget, continues to decline.

At the same time nationally, tuition continues to rise faster than the family median income. Without doubt, college affordability is an issue of serious concern.

I am proud to say that we rank #7 in the nation for graduating students with the least amount of debt at the time of graduation.

Net Price of Attendance Cheapest at UH



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The net price of attendance at UH is the lowest among comparable universities. Considering that undergraduate tuition was not raised this year, we will continue to be one of the best values for Tier One education in the nation.

You have heard me say before that great universities are built by great communities. The generosity of our community and giving by our alumni continues to put the University of Houston among the top performers in the nation.



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2012 Construction Completions



The building boom on campus continues, thanks, in part, to the comparatively affordable cost of construction. Ten major projects were completed this year, including Building 1 in the Energy Research Park, Stadium

Parking Garage, the Cougar Woods Dining Facility, expansion of the Blaffer Art Museum, the Health and Biomedical Sciences Building, and the University Classroom and Business Building, home of the new Insperity Center.



Scheduled to open in the coming year are several renovated research facilities, two residence halls – Cougar Place and Cougar Village II –another parking garage, and of course, beginning to get off the ground, the yet-to-be-named football stadium.

On the issue of athletics, what a year it was! The University of Houston was invited to join the Big East Conference and with that, the Cougar name sparkled on Times Square in New York. And how can we forget the thrill of hosting ESPN Game Day on campus?

The University of Houston was once again in the national spotlight thanks to our winning football team, but also thanks to a very special group of people who took every opportunity writing blogs, using social media, writing



press releases, and contacting reporters to leverage every success story, whether in athletics or research. The relentless pursuit of visibility has painted the city of Houston red.



Going forward, one vision, two priorities and four rocks will continue to guide us. Our one and only vision is to be relevant to the community – both local and global!

Our two priorities remain unchanged: first, to be nationally competitive in everything we do, from student success, to research, to athletics, and second, to increase the college completion rates to the national average.

Houston, with its demographics, is what the rest of America will be in 25 years, and the University of Houston, with its diversity, is what the rest of higher education will look in 25 years. We are the model for tomorrow's America, a model which we cannot allow to fail.

Our four rocks – Energy, Health, Arts and Stars – will continue to guide our decision-making. We all know that our challenges are huge, from lack of research space, to ever-increasing student-faculty ratio, to the continuously growing burden of federal and state regulations.

We are about to enter another state legislative session, and it will be at least as difficult, if not more, as the last one. There are several challenges on the national political scene as well, from Pell Grants, to student loans, to mandatory sequestration, all of which could slash billions of dollars from higher education budgets.

However, the biggest challenge in higher education, I feel, will most likely come from a disruptive technology that could and would challenge all our assumptions. Think about it... nationally, only 27% of today's students are traditional, full-time students. Only 20% live on campus. And only 12% of higher education demand is within the U.S. borders. Courses from the most prestigious university are now available online and free.

For all of us, innovation is essential. Change is inevitable. The bus is here. We can decide if we want to be on it or under it?

Houston is a creative place. The University of Houston is a bold place. We have experimented with change before, like having the first educational television station in the nation, and like having the first NCAA regular primetime and nationally televised basketball game. We can innovate again. We can seize the moment and lead again. Doing anything else will be to not live up to our potential!

I am honored to be part of your team and I look forward to exploring new possibilities together.

Thank you.

