As part of my first State of the University, I want to share highlights about UNLV’s fall enrollment as well as many of the accomplishments of the last year. There are so many that I can’t fit them all into my presentation or even this publication, but here’s a representative list. I am proud of all the efforts of UNLV faculty and staff. These achievements and many more connect to our strategic goals and continue to bring us closer to top tier status.

Dr. Len Jessup, President
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

FALL ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Enrollment continues to rise, with final numbers expected to come in around 29,000 thanks to aggressive recruitment and enhanced retention, progression, and completion efforts. UNLV welcomed its largest-ever freshman class (around 4,000) with a 15 to 20 percent increase in nonresident students. About 75 percent of the class is from Clark County.

Enrollment gains are happening in many programs but are especially evident in STEM fields, particularly the sciences and health-related majors.

Nearly 270 new students joined the Honors College this fall, bringing the total to more than 700. UNLV also welcomes 10 new National Merit Scholars and more than 60 high school valedictorians.

Last fall new freshmen took an average of 14.6 credits – inching UNLV closer to the systemwide “15 to Finish” goal. Twice as many freshmen took 15 credits in 2014 than in 2012.

UNLV welcomes more than 90 new instructional faculty, with key hires in engineering, health sciences, liberal arts, personalized medicine, and education.

Residence halls are again at capacity this fall, with 1,800 residents – the most ever.

UNLV jumped from sixth to second place on U.S. News & World Report’s annual list for “best ethnic diversity,” and with 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment, UNLV is now officially a Hispanic-Serving Institution. This milestone allows UNLV to apply for federal grants geared to student success.
TOP TIER ACTIVITY

HIGH IMPACT RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Patent applications resulting from university research, primarily in science, engineering, and gaming innovation, have more than tripled in the last two years, with 47 applications and three startup companies in FY15.

Claytee White, director of University Libraries Oral History Research Center, was recently named “Best Keeper of Our History” by Vegas Seven magazine.

UNLV engineering researchers, partnering with other state institutions, are leading the Solar-Water Nexus. The $20 million research project enhances solar energy technology and advances the understanding of the connection between solar energy, water, and the environment in Nevada.

Faculty members who recently licensed research include biologist Penny Amy and chemist Ernesto Abel-Santos. Amy developed Colony Shield, which protects the declining honeybee population, and Abel-Santos is working on a new treatment for C.Diff, a serious infection often contracted in health care facilities.

Researchers from the School of Community Health Sciences published the first book that addresses the impact of quagga mussels on Lake Mead and the Southwest.

Faculty from Urban Affairs, Liberal Arts, Education, and Health Sciences have organized a Mental and Behavioral Health Coalition to tackle Nevada’s shortage of mental health providers. The project, funded through a $1.4 million federal grant, will integrate academic programs and strengthen agency partnerships to create a pipeline of health care professionals specializing in children’s mental health.

Geosciences professor Matthew Lachniet and colleagues from the University of New Mexico received a grant from the National Science Foundation to collect and analyze cave deposits to construct drought histories for the southwestern U.S. over the past 5,000 years.

New programs include the nation’s first master’s degree in gaming law and regulation, an MFA in creative nonfiction, and doctoral programs in medical physics, interdisciplinary health sciences, and criminology and criminal justice.

The American Accounting Association presented professor Bill Messier with its national 2015 Outstanding Accounting Educator Award.
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In its first 30 years, the Graduate College conferred a total of 576 doctoral degrees. In the last seven years, the Graduate College has conferred 948 doctoral degrees despite budget woes and program cuts. UNLV is on the road to granting more than 200 doctoral degrees annually by 2025.

Members of the UNLV Latin Jazz Ensemble and their director, Uli Geissendoerfer, won the prestigious 2015 *DownBeat* magazine Student Music Award for Latin Group in the undergraduate category.

Student-invented games, created through the Hotel College’s Center for Gaming Innovation, have hit casino floors in Las Vegas and beyond. Twenty-five patent applications have been filed or are in process. One game, “Pai Wow,” is on the floor at Palace Station.

A blended team of faculty and students from business, engineering, and allied health sciences created a winning business plan for their shoe insole system that helps detect foot problems in diabetics. Their company, MovéoMedics, won the Southern Nevada Business Plan Competition and the Donald W. Reynolds Governor’s Cup.

All 17 UNLV athletic teams posted a 930 or better multi-year Academic Progress Rate (APR) score and remain eligible for postseason competition this year. Six teams posted perfect single-year APR scores. A school-record 56 student-athletes received Mountain West Scholar-Athlete Awards in 2014-15.

In fall 2014, the Academic Success Center assisted 5,829 students who represent 25 percent of all undergrads. Of these students, 5,189 re-enrolled for the spring 2015 semester, yielding an 89 percent retention rate.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The College of Education has created more ways to alleviate the teacher shortage in Clark County: a summer program that helps people in different professions get on the fast track for certification; Troops to Teachers, for people transitioning from the military to teaching; and the “Grow-Our-Own” program, which identifies high schoolers interested in education as a potential career.

UNLV and the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center have been awarded an $11.1 million federal grant to study Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases from the basic cellular level through clinical trials. UNLV’s National Supercomputing Center will be compiling the project database.

For five consecutive years, UNLV has been recognized by *GI Jobs* magazine as a military-friendly school. A new honor this year is making *Military Advanced Education*’s list of top military-friendly colleges and universities.

UNLV students received a “Design Excellence Award” at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Race to Zero Student Design Competition for Desert Sunrise, a net-zero home designed for the Moapa Band of Southern Paiute Indians.

The DRC-Hubo team and its robot, Metal Rebel, won eighth place at the DARPA Robotics Challenge Finals in early June, reaching the top 10 with teams from MIT and Carnegie Melon University. Metal Rebel is now training to paint a mural at the Life is Beautiful festival.

In fall 2014, the Academic Success Center assisted 5,829 students who represent 25 percent of all undergrads. Of these students, 5,189 re-enrolled for the spring 2015 semester, yielding an 89 percent retention rate.

Criminal justice researchers are working with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to study police officer body-worn cameras in a project sponsored by the National Institute of Justice.

University Libraries’ Southern Nevada Jewish Heritage Project, made possible with grant and donor funding, will ensure the Jewish community’s diverse stories survive and enrich future generations.
UNLV, working with partners Switch and Intel, brought the Intel Cherry Creek II online in July for university researchers. The high-powered supercomputer is one of the world’s most energy efficient and places UNLV comfortably within the top 10 research institutions for high-performance computing.

The School of Social Work collaborates with the Nevada Partnership for Training to provide an 8-12 week academy for new child welfare staff in Southern Nevada.

William S. Boyd Law School students are working across the state in public interest positions thanks to grants from the school’s Public Interest Law Association. They can be found in the Nevada Attorney General’s Office, Clark County District Attorney’s Office, Nevada Legal Services, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada, Southern Nevada Senior Law Program, UNLV Office of General Counsel, and the William S. Boyd School of Law’s Kids’ Court.

The nationally ranked Sanford I. Berman Debate Forum hosted the Rebel Debate Institute this summer for 25 Clark County high school students to hone their skills in public speaking, debate, and research.

**ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER**

With funding from the Nevada Legislature, the UNLV School of Medicine remains on track for a fall 2017 entering class and is working now to finalize accreditation documents (due Dec. 1), hone its curriculum, and hire faculty and support personnel.

The UNLV School of Medicine’s entire 60-student entering class in 2017 will have full, four-year scholarships, thanks to the generosity of the Engelstad Family Foundation and many in the community.

More than $3 million has been raised for curriculum development, faculty, and graduate medical education for the School of Medicine.

UNLV’s community mental health clinic, The PRACTICE, has provided in-house services to over 1,000 community clients. In addition, it serves adolescents in rural Nevada through tele-mental health care. The PRACTICE is evolving as an important partner with the medical school to provide mental health care practitioners in underserved communities.

The School of Nursing is ranked as one of the country’s top 10 online graduate nursing programs in *U.S. News & World Report*. This is the third time the school has appeared among the list’s top 20 programs.

The School of Dental Medicine provides $3.8 million in free services annually to those in need and conducts 60,000 patient visits in its clinics and outreach in schools.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND SHARED GOVERNANCE**

UNLV has added seven advising positions and is using new student success software with predictive analytics to monitor student progress and enhance course success.

University Libraries recently joined HathiTrust, a partnership of research institutions committed to preserving and offering access to digitized monographs and other materials through a shared repository. Nearly 100 partners host more than 13 million volumes of copyrighted and public domain materials.

Through added inventory campuswide and re-striping in existing lots, 682 new parking spaces have been added since last fall. More than 600 new spaces are anticipated in the near future via a planned garage across from Greenspun Hall.

The university thanks UNLV-TV, KUNV, and Vegas PBS for documenting the 2015 State of the University and making it available to their audiences. To view this year’s presentation visit: unlv.edu/sotu