Today marks my second State of the University campus address. I am excited to share some of the highlights from the past year as we continue on our path to achieving our Top Tier goals. Our successes have been notable, but not all of them will fit into this publication. The items listed are representative of the achievements occurring in every corner of campus. I am profoundly grateful to the faculty, staff, donors, alumni, and students of UNLV for making all of this—and so much more—possible. I look forward to a year of continued accomplishments and to working with each of you on making our university all that it can be.

Dr. Len Jessup
President
UNLV

FALL ENROLLMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Overall enrollment continues to trend slightly up (expected to be around 29,000), with an increase in both undergraduate and graduate students anticipated.

UNLV enrolled one of its largest freshman classes (approximately 4,000), with overall new student enrollment (freshmen and transfers) up nearly four percent. UNLV welcomed five new National Merit Scholars this year.

The incoming class for the Honors College has grown close to 20 percent from 2015, with 325 new students joining the prestigious academic program. This is the largest class to enter the Honors College. Qualifications for the Honors College remain high, with students averaging a 3.84 high school GPA.

Residence halls are again at capacity—more than 1,900 students moved in this fall. It is UNLV’s largest-ever residential population, with nearly a quarter of campus residents from Nevada.

New freshmen in fall 2015 took an average of 14.57 credits—a slight increase from fall 2014 and close to systemwide “15 to Finish” campaign goals. Twice as many incoming freshmen took 15 credits last fall than in 2012.
UNLV’s six-year graduation rate is up. The rate for the fall 2009 cohort is 40.5 percent, up from 39.3 percent the previous year.

UNLV continues to add needed faculty positions, welcoming more than 90 new instructional faculty for the fall semester. The university added seven new academic advisors as well.

U.S. News & World Report ranked UNLV the nation’s second most diverse university for undergraduates.

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Research and economic development activities are up for the fourth straight year. Research awards rose by 7.5 percent, and sponsored program expenditures are steady at $49 million. Patents are up nearly 17 percent over last year, with 61 patents filed.

UNLV will host the final presidential debate of the 2016 election season October 19 at the Thomas & Mack Center. We are offering nearly a dozen courses this fall to coincide with debate-related events on campus and the 2016 election. New and updated courses tackle topics such as debates and political campaigns, the intersection of politics with gender, race and First Amendment issues, and more.

A master of education in policy and leadership and an executive master in healthcare administration are new additions this fall. UNLV also is the first university in the nation to offer a master’s degree in healthcare interior design through its School of Architecture.

U.S. News & World Report ranked Boyd School of Law fifth on a list of law schools that students want to attend. Boyd also ranked second in the nation for legal writing—the highest it has ever placed—and ninth in the nation for its dispute resolution program. The school ranked 78th overall, and its part-time program climbed up four spots to 18.

Lee Business School’s part-time MBA program climbed 14 positions to 58th in Bloomberg Businessweek’s “2015 Best Business Schools” ranking. The program ranked 72nd in 2013.

UNLV has launched the International Center for Gaming Regulation, a first-of-its-kind resource for independent education, research, and training programs to aid gaming regulators and emerging jurisdictions around the world. The center is a partnership of the International Gaming Institute and Boyd School of Law.

UNLV’s radiochemistry program is partnering with the University of California, Berkeley and a consortium of universities and national laboratories for research and development in nuclear science and security. The consortium is supported by a $25 million grant from the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Throughout September, University Libraries hosts First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare, a traveling exhibition from the Folger Shakespeare Library. The First Folio, printed seven years after Shakespeare’s death in 1616, includes 36 of his plays, 18 of which had never been printed before. Look for it in Special Collections at Lied Library.

Life Sciences professor Brian Hedlund recently co-authored a journal article in Nature Communications announcing the discovery of “Kryptonia,” a novel bacteria that lives exclusively in hot springs. Hedlund partnered with colleagues from the U.S. Department of Energy’s Joint Genome Institute and universities worldwide.

Dave Loeb, director of UNLV’s jazz studies program, recently conducted the orchestra for the CBS special “Sinatra 100” that featured today’s biggest recording artists performing Sinatra songs.

Geology professor Steve Rowland and undergraduate geoscience students Joe Woodworth and Marco Negovschi excavated a fossil mammoth tusk and molar northwest of Las Vegas. The discovery will shed new light on the history of our region. The fossils permanently will reside at the Las Vegas Natural History Museum.

History professor Todd Robinson’s A City within a City: The Black Freedom Struggle in Grand Rapids, Michigan was identified this spring as Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss’ first City Book of the Year. She recognized the book during her 2016 State of the City address.
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
UNLV marketing student and two-time Olympian Connor Fields brought home the gold for the U.S. in the BMX competition at the 2016 Summer Games in Rio. Fields’ win is the first ever for the U.S. team in men’s BMX racing.

Hannah Kelley, a junior education major and member of the Honors College, was one of 54 college students nationwide to receive a Truman Scholarship in April. The $30,000 award for graduate studies is based on academics and public service leadership potential. She’s the second consecutive Honors College student to win the award.

For the first time since 1991, UNLV basketball had two players taken in the NBA Draft in the same year. Patrick McCaw was selected No. 38 overall (No. 8 in the second round) by the Milwaukee Bucks, but the pick was traded to the Golden State Warriors. Stephen Zimmerman Jr. was taken No. 41 overall (No. 11 in the second round) by the Orlando Magic.

A team of UNLV engineering students, Rebel Rescuers, took first place in the recent Drone Focus Conference competition in North Dakota. The team’s drone can detect the frequency of human voices for use in locating people in natural disasters or hikers lost from a trail.

Team Las Vegas is back in the Solar Decathlon. UNLV is one of 14 university teams worldwide to compete in the 2017 U.S. Department of Energy contest challenging students to design, build, and operate homes that are energy-efficient, affordable, and innovative. In 2013, UNLV finished first among American universities and second overall.

UNLV’s dance team, the Rebel Girls, won the national title in Hip Hop at the 2016 Universal Dance Association College National Championship. This is the team’s fourth national title, with wins in 2008, 2010, and 2013. Members of the team appeared on NBC’s TODAY Show following the win.

Nikki Davis, a student in the Greenspun School of Journalism & Media Studies, was named one of the most promising multicultural students of 2016 by the American Advertising Federation. Students represent the top of their class and have shown potential for success in the industry.

ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER
For the third consecutive year, U.S. News and World Report ranked the School of Nursing among the nation’s top 10 percent of online graduate nursing programs. The school’s master of science in nursing program ranked 13th out of 149 programs.

The Harrah Hotel College is working with healthcare leaders to incorporate best practices from the hospitality industry into medicine to improve the patient experience. This includes collaboration with the UNLV School of Medicine to integrate hospitality principles into the new school’s curriculum.

The Department of Physical Therapy jumped more than 40 spots to 79th in the latest U.S. News & World Report survey of Best Grad Schools. In addition, every student in the program’s 2016 graduating class passed the national board exam on the first attempt -- with two students earning perfect scores.

The UNLV school of medicine’s “high-tech, high-touch” curriculum and program details were submitted to accreditors in December, and the Board of Regents approved the school’s M.D. degree at its December meeting. The school is on track to begin recruiting students this fall for an anticipated first class in summer 2017.

The Clark County Commission formally transferred more than nine acres to UNLV for its new medical school building, a historic move that will transform the Las Vegas healthcare landscape. The future medical education building, to be located near the UNLV Shadow Lane campus and University Medical Center, will be the primary academic home for the school’s teaching, research, and clinical programs.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
UNLV, along with partner The Midby Companies, officially broke ground on The U District, a new student housing community on the north end of campus. The first phase, expected to be complete in 2017, will add more than 750 beds to ease UNLV’s heavy demand for student housing.

UNLV’s pollen monitoring program, a partnership between the School of Community Health Sciences and the College of Sciences, tracks when and how much pollen is in Southern Nevada’s air. Daily counts at six valley locations provide a useful tool for researchers, local meteorologists, and allergy sufferers.
UNLV and the Brookings Institution have announced a four-year renewal of Brookings Mountain West, a collaboration that brings the think tank’s high-quality and independent research to the region. The partnership includes a continuation of the Brookings Public Policy minor coordinated through the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs.

School of Community Health Sciences faculty Courtney Coughenour and Jennifer Pharr helped the City of Henderson and Southern Nevada Strong win the American Planning Association’s 2016 National Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach for its leadership and innovative approach to resident and stakeholder engagement.

The UNLV Care Line expanded to serve the College of Southern Nevada in August, in time for the fall semester. The Care Line is sponsored and run by the UNLV Women’s Center. The program offers 24/7, confidential, peer-to-peer support for victims and survivors of sexual assault, relationship abuse, and stalking.

UNLV and the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health earned $11 million from the National Institutes of Health to tackle Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases. Psychology professor Jefferson Kinney, the university’s National Supercomputing Institute, and the Nevada Institute of Personalized Medicine at UNLV will play key roles.

Close to 50 UNLV faculty and student researchers are up and running on the Cherry Creek Supercomputer, along with a dozen researchers, as part of UNLV’s National Institutes of Health-funded partnership with Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health. Cherry Creek can process in one day what would take an average computer 20 years.

UNLV and Tesla Motors announced a research partnership in October to pursue advanced topics in battery manufacturing related to Tesla’s Northern Nevada “Gigafactory.” A team of UNLV engineering researchers will focus on water recycling and treatment, and a separate team of chemists will work to improve recycling of metals from lithium ion batteries.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND SHARED GOVERNANCE**

Construction projects are underway or nearing completion across the campus. The Anthony and Lyndy Marnell Baseball Clubhouse opened this spring; work on Hospitality Hall is well under way; U District and University Gateway projects are on schedule; and a $72.5 million upgrade to the Thomas & Mack Center will wrap up this fall.

UNLV’s oldest residence hall, Tonopah, received an overhaul for its 50th year.

Much-needed parking is on the way with the University Gateway project, a public/private partnership that will add 610 new parking spaces near the southeast corner of campus by next year. The project also will include space for a future UNLV police station.

Technology leader Switch donated an ultra-advanced private fiber connection between the campus and Switch’s SUPERNAP data center that ties UNLV with Switch and its more than 1,000 global partners. The connection, which just was recently completed, makes UNLV the nation’s most connected university.

To view the State of the University address, please visit unlv.edu/sotu. The university wants to thank UNLV-TV, KUNV, and Vegas PBS for documenting the 2016 State of the University address and making it available to their audiences.