Rhonda Montgomery

Good afternoon. May I request your attention and respectful silence during the presentation of the Colors by the UNLV Air Force and Army ROTC Honor Guards, followed by the National Anthem. Please stand.

Thank you to our vocalist Cassandra O’Toole, soprano, and Jae Ahn-Benton for the piano accompaniment. Please be seated.

I am Rhonda Montgomery, Chair of the UNLV Faculty Senate. I am an associate professor and Director of Student Success in the William F. Harrah Hotel College.

We are here today for President Snyder’s State of the University Address, and we are delighted to have many distinguished guests joining us in the audience. If you would please stand as you are introduced:

We welcome:
• Representing Congresswoman Dina Titus, Michael Naft.
• Senator Joyce Woodhouse.

From the Nevada System of Higher Education representing our Board of Regents:
• Regent Cedric Crear.
• Regent Ron Knecht.
• Scott Wasserman, Chief of Staff and Special Counsel to the Board.
• And former Regents Mark Alden and Carolyn Sparks.

We also welcome:
• John Lee, the Mayor of North Las Vegas.

Thank you all for joining us. When I campaigned for the position of Vice-Chair of Faculty Senate, I campaigned on two issues: the first was to improve the services provided to our students, faculty and staff; the second was to make UNLV’s Faculty Senate more relevant by increasing our shared governance through involving more faculty on Faculty Senate committees and making our committees more responsive to the needs of the faculty and staff.

I was thrilled when President Snyder was named as our president, because I had the opportunity to work with President Snyder when he was the Dean of the Hotel College. Although we did not agree on everything, I learned that President Snyder and I shared many common traits. We both bleed Rebel Red, we are both passionate about what we believe, and we are both willing to listen to opposing views without the need to vilify those who do not agree with us.

President Snyder is committed to improving the services provided to students, faculty and staff. You need only look to his background in industry and his work on the Fremont Street Project and The Smith Center to understand his commitment to a collaborative approach to getting things accomplished.
I’ve told many of my colleagues that I believe we have many great opportunities and challenges ahead of us at UNLV, but we have the right person, at the right time, and in the right place, to help us make the most of these opportunities and to address these challenges, and so, without further ado, it is my great honor to introduce UNLV’s President, Donald Snyder.

Donald Snyder

Thank you, Rhonda; and thanks to all of you for being here.

Good afternoon. I am pleased to welcome you to this year’s State of the University Address. This is a year of great changes for UNLV—positive changes—and I’ll be taking us through these major changes and what they will mean for all of us.

But, first, I thought I’d spend a little time telling you about how my background relates to UNLV.

I’ve had a connection to UNLV for 27 years—first as a member of the community, a freshly relocated banker from California; joining the Board of Trustees of the UNLV Foundation in 1988; serving as Chairman of that Board for five years, from 1996 to 2001; chairing UNLV’s first (and only) comprehensive fundraising campaign (the “Invent the Future” $500 million campaign) to its successful conclusion in 2009—all before officially joining UNLV as the Dean of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration in 2010; and now as President of UNLV while the formal search for the permanent president is conducted.

During this past 27 years, I’ve worked with five presidents—Bob Maxson, Kenny Guinn, Carol Harter, David Ashley, and Neal Smatresk. Each of them provided value in helping me step up to the challenge of serving as President of UNLV.

So, I’ve been involved with UNLV, one way or another, from the moment that my wife Dee and I set foot in Las Vegas, because I believe that you cannot have a great community without a great university. (I’ll tell you more in a minute about how that belief has broadened in the past few months.)

Professionally, I’ve been blessed with opportunities to serve in senior executive capacities in two industries—banking and gaming. And, I’ve had the chance to serve on corporate and community boards of directors for nearly 30 years. Among other things, this has provided me the ability to direct or facilitate several major strategic initiatives.

I’ve also been involved in other Las Vegas “firsts” since I’ve been in the city—again, because I believe in strong community involvement. Rhonda mentioned two of these: the Fremont Street Experience, and The Smith Center for the Performing Arts. For every big venture or strategic effort, I’ve approached the planning process in basically the same way—what I call my “strategic thinking” model.

During this academic year, as a way to position UNLV as ready for success when our new President will join us, I’m applying that model as our Path to Tier One. I’ll walk you through that process—and talk about why your input into our process will be crucial—but first, I want you to go on a “visioning” exercise with me. What will UNLV look like, twenty years from now, when it is an established Tier One/Carnegie Research (Very High) university?
We have a glimpse into the future already—with Skyworks Aerial Systems, a local startup company founded by two UNLV students, Greg Friesmuth, the CEO and Founder of Skyworks Aerial Systems, and Jinger Zeng, Skyworks’s Chief Operating Officer. Greg and Jinger developed Skyworks while studying at UNLV and participating in the College of Engineering’s senior design competition.

They’ve been working with Mechanical Engineering Professor Woosoon Yim, who serves as a technical advisor to Skyworks as well. Dr. Yim, could you please stand, so that we can recognize your work?

Greg and Jinger, why don’t you give us a demonstration of your UAV?

Thank you, Greg and Jinger, for your contributions to help position UNLV for the future.

Skyworks won the 2014 Southern Nevada Business Plan Competition and the Innovation Challenge competition in Chicago, where it outperformed teams from Northwestern, MIT and Cornell. The company now employs 14 UNLV students and graduates.

Let’s talk a little more about what we’ll look like twenty years from now.

Carnegie Research (Very High) universities are rare: Only 108, the top 2.3 percent, of higher education institutions rank in that Tier One. There are 75 public universities designated as Tier One in that group of 108 Carnegie Research (Very High) universities. Fifty of those 75 public universities have medical schools.

UNLV is currently ranked outside the Tier One designation but is rated in the top 4.5 percent of higher education institutions—or as a Carnegie Research (High) university.

Tier One universities have grants and contracts totaling at least $100 million, or more than twice the amount currently at UNLV. They award more than 200 doctorate degrees per year. (UNLV currently awards about half that amount.) Tier One universities have a level of overall academic excellence and six-year graduation rates that exceed the national average of 55 percent—well ahead of our graduation rate.

Of course, twenty years from now, all of those benchmarks are likely to increase as well. But my main point is that, twenty years from now, we’ll be enhancing our state budget and tuition revenue with significant grants for research and creative work; we’ll have more philanthropic support; we’ll be graduating more PhDs; our graduation rate will be significantly higher than it is right now; and our medical school will have been firmly established and will be successfully meeting the needs of our community.

Some of our changes will have occurred much sooner than that twenty-year timeframe. We have just announced that Switch will connect UNLV via its high-speed fiber optic network to Intel’s new Cherry Creek supercomputer, housed at the Switch SUPERNAP.

Intel will dedicate 60% of the supercomputer’s computational capacity to UNLV, creating a true partnership—and helping UNLV play a major role in Southern Nevada’s technology revolution.
Hopefully, you have seen some of the wonderful press coverage we have received in the past two days. But stay tuned; this will attract national news in both academic and technology publications. It is truly a big deal.

It would not have been possible without the incredible vision, leadership, and generosity of Rob Roy, Switch’s Founder and CEO. We are so fortunate to have Rob and Switch in Southern Nevada; and to now have this wonderful collaboration between Switch, Intel, and UNLV. We are now strategically aligned directly with one of our State’s highest priorities for economic development.

So, what will be different about our community twenty years from now?

What will *we* be like as a Tier One/Carnegie Research (Very High) university then? We need your input and engagement now in our strategic thinking about how to become and define our Tier One university and how to better connect us to our community and the world, as we have today, with Switch and Intel.

Let’s start on that visioning exercise:

For our academic faculty, you will have seen us invest more in our current faculty to give you the tools to win more grants. And, even for those fields which don’t traditionally compete for grants, you’ll find more support to help you do your research and creative activity. You’ll get more alerts for funding possibilities, more help in writing applications, and more help in monitoring your research expenditures. Even more important, UNLV will have found new ways to help you work on interdisciplinary issues.

I know that most rewards come to faculty at the unit level and not at an interdisciplinary level, but we will have established easier ways for you to work together across units.

That point about interdisciplinary work is important: universities cannot have academic silos if we want to think about the hardest of “hard issues” and if we want to think about creative ways to solve real world problems.

Twenty years from now, UNLV’s Tier One status will have brought together various disciplines to share ideas and research, through innovation and collaboration—research that makes our society and our community better.

What else will be different for our academic faculty? We will have found new ways to publicize your teaching, research, creative activity, and community outreach to all of Nevada (and beyond). We will have added colleagues to increase the size of our academic faculty: additional research faculty and additional faculty who will join you in doing high-quality and creative teaching.

Some of your disciplines will see more graduate students—and more graduate student support. You will have the tools you need to innovate, across all of your varied disciplines. And, UNLV will be recognized as an “academic brand name”—a useful benefit of being a Tier One university.

For our administrative faculty and those who are members of our classified staff: you will see better processes and better communication about those processes.
You will be able to do your jobs more efficiently and, I hope, that in turn, those processes will help you find more job satisfaction.

The increase in grant funding that I just mentioned will help to fund critical support positions, will restore operating budgets, and will help us invest in technology solutions to, for example, help us monitor the status of our work and projects.

You will have more opportunities for professional development programs, some of which will also have been funded by grants. You’ll be able to take even more pride in the UNLV brand name, and all of this increased research activity will have spurred more economic development in Las Vegas and in Nevada.

Part of making UNLV a world-class institution must include ensuring that the campus is literally built for success, where the facilities and co-curricular offerings attract and retain students, and where all of us can come to work knowing that we have the tools to do our work better.

This issue is partly about physical infrastructure and partly about the ethos of the institution—and, in both cases, the goal is to create and sustain attributes that bring people to the university and create a lasting bond. We will be a place where we can all “up our game” and get better satisfaction out of our time here.

A stronger UNLV will mean that your family will have more economic opportunities as well; that our region will have seen an improved economic environment; and that a significant part of UNLV’s research will have resulted in a strong return on investment of state funding for UNLV—so that we can generate more investment in our people and in additional and repurposed facilities.

You may have gotten a feel for what additional investment in UNLV will be like, having just read the announcement of a $1 million grant from Tesla to fund advanced battery research. Tesla’s agreement to build a gigafactory in Reno will also result in UNLV getting to work on this very important project.

I’m very pleased that Tesla’s review of our capabilities in battery research prompted it to select us as a partner in its most critical research.

Two of our battery research team members are in the audience. Doctors Kwang Kim and Yushen Zhao, could you please stand so that we can recognize you?

The state’s return on its investment in us—and the additional influx of private and other government investment—will be rewarded, not just on campus but throughout our economy.

If you’re a student, the overall benefit of UNLV’s Tier One status twenty years from now is that your degree will be worth more. The better we are as a university, the more doors will open for you, not just at the start of your careers, but throughout your lives.

The principal hallmark of highly esteemed research universities is an engaged faculty that includes many leading thinkers in their fields. This engagement of faculty in research and innovation infuses
their teaching with the most current knowledge and connects them and their students to the latest thinking in academia and in industry.

In this way, students benefit from the research activities of their professors, and their professors benefit from the engagement inherent in world-class programs.

In particular, if you are a graduate student, you already understand the importance of research funds and faculty mentoring.

Twenty years from now, you will have enjoyed the benefit of your degree for a while, and your successors will have experienced more funding for their graduate research and for their own stipends. The increased faculty size will have translated into more faculty mentors to guide your successors with their own research.

What about our undergraduates? Of course, twenty years from now, UNLV will have been long recognized as an academic brand name, opening up more opportunities for our students, both while they’re here and after they graduate. But there’s more: our undergraduates will enjoy significantly better graduation rates.

Our faculty will have enhanced their expectations for our students in terms of challenging you intellectually, giving you a deeper support network, and providing you with fellow students from around the globe. Twenty years from now, our students will be able to expect more from us (and from each other), and we’ll be able to deliver on those expectations.

We will have more faculty members, which will allow us to offer more courses and more opportunities to sequence those courses and provide a variety of times for you to take them.

Of course, our undergraduates experience the opportunity for hands-on research now, such as Professor Mark Yoseloff’s Gaming Innovation Course, which saw students patent twelve new games in one semester. This innovative course received national attention as a news story from CBS.

Imagine: twenty years from now, our students will enjoy many more courses, just as creative, which will give them similar opportunities. We’ll be able to celebrate even more successes like our students’ recent success in the Solar Decathlon.

Last fall, an interdisciplinary team of UNLV students and faculty—with financial and in-kind support from community businesses—topped every other American university and finished second overall in the Decathlon.

This U.S. Department of Energy competition challenged university students to design, build, maintain, and market a sustainable solar-powered home, DesertSol, which is now on permanent display at the Springs Preserve.

The effort took two years and a team of more than 60 students to complete. Eric Weber, an Assistant Professor of Architecture, was the principal investigator for the team. It’s a testament to our students’ ability to compete and succeed on the biggest stage with the world’s top universities, and I think that this team, and Professor Weber, all deserve a round of applause.
The Solar Decathlon is just one example. And, twenty years from now, our students (including our undergraduates) will have even more opportunities to work with our faculty on research.

And, what about our alumni who are in the audience? What will be different twenty years from now? Here’s what you’ll be able to do for each other: when you contact a fellow Rebel, that person will take the time to help you, because we will have established a tradition that Rebels will “pay their education forward.”

You’ll have found ways to “pay it back,” too, with increased opportunities for connections with professors and students at UNLV. You’ll come back to campus for support as you advance in or change careers throughout your lifetime. And you’ll have experienced increased pride in the prestige of UNLV and the value of your degree. More doors will open for our Rebels all over the country—and all over the world.

And while we’re talking of alumni, how many of you saw The Smith Center’s presentation of Kinky Boots? A UNLV alumnus, Steven Booth, starred in that production. Steven’s a 2004 UNLV graduate with a B.A. in Theatre Arts and performed on this very stage as well.

You’ll see Rebels throughout our community—both local and worldwide—as UNLV’s influence continues to grow.

Remember when I said that, when I came to Las Vegas, I knew that we couldn’t have a great community without a great university? Well, I’ve changed my view slightly—now I believe we can’t have a great community without a great university connected to that community—and beyond. So when I think about Las Vegas, Southern Nevada, Nevada as a whole, and beyond, I think about how the broader community will have benefitted from our Path to Tier One.

For one thing, in twenty years, our medical school won’t just change health care here in Southern Nevada (although it will obviously do that). It will be a true academic health center. Its high-quality research will help people all over the world.

We project that the UNLV School of Medicine will more than double our federally funded research by the time that it is ten years old. In my 27 years of work with UNLV, I know of nothing that will elevate UNLV and its impact on our community more than this new UNLV School of Medicine.

I am very proud of the work being done by our new Planning Dean, Dr. Barbara Atkinson, in leading this effort. Dr. Atkinson, could you please stand so that we can recognize and thank you?

Nevada is unable to meet the current healthcare needs of its citizens now, and Las Vegas is the largest urban area in the United States without a public medical school. The UNLV School of Medicine will be an innovative center for teaching built on areas of current strength—both at UNLV and in our broader medical community—and in terms of meeting the health care needs of our region.

For instance, our School of Medicine will develop early research programs that will coordinate with the Cleveland Clinic/Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health, whose focus is to care for patients with Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and multiple sclerosis, and provide high-level clinical trials research.
We will collaborate with UMC, the new VA Hospital, private hospitals and health care professionals, Touro University, Roseman, and of course our state’s current public school of medicine, the University of Nevada School of Medicine in Reno. But, we will also have wonderful opportunities to build on existing programs already in place at UNLV.

Two existing areas of strength within UNLV include radio-pharmacology and computational science with large databases—both of which will be leveraged as the UNLV School of Medicine develops.

Imagine, too, the interactions with our other health-related programs, including our schools of Allied Health Sciences, Dental Medicine, Nursing, and Community Health, all working with colleagues from across campus and across the community, to make the lives of Nevadans—and those who travel to Nevada for medical care—better.

Another connection for our medical school is The PRACTICE, a UNLV community mental health clinic that provides a greatly needed resource to Southern Nevada. The clinic is operated on UNLV’s campus and doubles as a teaching, training, and research clinic for faculty and students in the Colleges of Education and Liberal Arts. Stay tuned for more developments about the medical school and the whole academic health center as this year progresses.

Now, you’ve also heard me talk a lot about our stadium project in the past two or three years. I firmly believe that UNLV needs a stadium—it needs to be part of our campus. And, we will get there. But you may also have heard that we have stretched out the timeline for this project.

As important as a stadium is, and as much as a new stadium will contribute to life on campus and better connect us to the community, we have to make certain choices about priorities. Right now, as we move forward on the Path to Tier One, our top priority is the new medical school, which is why we’re temporarily placing the stadium project on a longer timeline.

In addition to our medical school and our overall Path to Tier One working to improve our community and beyond, our increased ability to innovate will touch people’s lives in all sorts of ways.

For example, we have recently unveiled plans for a new master’s program in Urban Leadership, a revival and enhancement of the educational leadership program that was affected during recession-era cuts. This program, built through a strong partnership with the Clark County School District, will start next spring and is designed to prepare future school and civic leaders to meet the complex challenges of urban communities.

And, here is another concrete example of something happening right now, as an illustration of the ways in which our innovation already changes lives and creates even greater promise for the future.

You may have read about a four-year-old girl, Hailey Dawson, who has a hand with only a thumb and a pinky. Her mother, Yong Dawson, reached out to UNLV engineers to see if they could help develop a Robohand for Hailey. They did.

Dr. Brendan O’Toole, Professor and Chair of Mechanical Engineering, and Dr. Mohamed Trabia, the Associate Dean for Research, Graduate Studies, and Computing and a Professor of Mechanical Engineering, worked with students from here and from other universities to get Hailey her new hand.
She’ll need new Robohands as she grows, but her ability to use her new hand started with UNLV. Hailey, Mrs. Dawson, and Professors O’Toole and Trabia, can you please stand and be recognized?

And, here’s yet another example: earlier this year, Dr. Paul Oh left Drexel University to join our Department of Mechanical Engineering as a Lincy Professor of Unmanned Aerial Systems. He is clearly one of the world’s preeminent experts in UAVs and robotics technology. His involvement in the advanced research related to robotics and in international competition related to this field is one of the key accomplishments of his career, and he’s bringing that expertise to UNLV.

The DARPA challenge—“DARPA” stands for Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency—focuses on creating a robot with the ability to act as a first responder to disasters that may be too dangerous for humans. The humanoid robot—or HUBO—is a significant prospect for becoming that first responder.

Dr. Oh will lead UNLV’s team in the upcoming competition, which is expected to have President Obama and Japan’s Prime Minister Abe in attendance.

Let me give you a feel for the magnitude of this project by showing you a clip of how DARPA describes Dr. Oh’s project (and, just remember, every reference to Drexel will now become a reference to UNLV):

And there’s so much more. For example:

- UNLV will partner with the Association of American Colleges & Universities in leading a national project focused on increasing access to college for historically under-served students.
- The UNLV University Libraries have been awarded a large, multi-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- And, Professor Martin Schiller has been named the executive director of the new UNLV Quantitative Health Sciences Initiative.

That initiative has been funded with $2.5 million from the state’s Knowledge Fund and is designed to build excellence and research capabilities at the university and in the state by leveraging industry partnerships, current strengths at UNLV, and existing infrastructure. Dr. Schiller, could you please stand so that we can recognize you?

UNLV already has countless stories like the ones I’ve highlighted today, and the handouts today describe more of these achievements. These are just a few examples of how UNLV changes lives here—and how much more it will be able to do as a Tier One University.

What we know about Tier One universities is that they can double or even triple the economic impact of a region: when UNLV becomes Tier One, we expect that our economic impact will go from $1.5 billion to as much as $4.5 billion. That will affect all of us—not just here on campus, not just in Las Vegas, but throughout Nevada and beyond.

There is probably no better example of how UNLV has connected beyond the Las Vegas area than our internationally recognized William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. Twenty years from now, that connection will be even greater. We will truly be the intellectual hub for global
gaming and hospitality.

Since Governor Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature approved the planning funds for a new academic building for the Hotel College in 2013, we are raising private funding and are moving forward toward obtaining the state support for that building in the 2015 Legislative Session.

I’m proud of the collaboration between Dean Stowe Shoemaker’s team at the Hotel College and David Frommer’s Planning and Construction team in preparing us to proceed with a building that enhances our position as a true world leader in hospitality education.

If I had to sum up UNLV as a Tier One/Carnegie Research (Very High) institution twenty years from now, I would say that it will be a place where we will all want our kids and grandkids to go to school, where our faculty and staff will look forward to coming to work and discovering new ways to make things better, and where people from all over the world will look to us as we develop the specific expertise that can only come from being located right here in Las Vegas.

That’s my vision of UNLV twenty years from now. Now let’s talk about how we get there.

As I stated at the beginning of my address today, every time that I have been faced with moving an organization forward in significant ways, I have started with this model (or a variation of it). I believe that change, especially systemic change, happens only when you think strategically about how to make it happen—and then execute accordingly.

Normally, I would start with a situational assessment, which would help shape a vision and a mission statement, but at UNLV, the foundation has been laid for Tier One for a while now. President Carol Harter started us on this path by positioning us as a research university during her eleven years as UNLV’s President, and her successors have taken us further in that regard.

President David Ashley brought his engineering background to strengthen that commitment. President Neal Smatresk brought his planning expertise and leadership to sharpen the focus and to label the vision as “Tier One.”

We know we want to be a Tier One/Carnegie Research (Very High) University. That means that we can look at our situational assessment a little bit differently than we may otherwise have, had that vision not been so clearly established.

We already know the general markers of a Tier One university, so the first thing that we have to do is figure out the difference between where we are now and where we need to be.

To help us in this phase of our Path to Tier One—in fact, to help with the complete process displayed in this model—we’ve engaged Academic Leadership Associates to guide our discussions and help in our analysis.

Academic Leadership Associates brings us the advantages of people who have played key roles in advancing the University of Southern California over the past two decades. The company is also familiar with UNLV, having worked closely with the Lee Business School to assist in the development of a new strategic plan.
Dr. Mark Power Robison from Academic Leadership Associates is in the audience today. Mark, will you please stand so that we can introduce you to our audience?

Working directly with ALA will be two committees: the Tier One Initiative Executive Committee and the Tier One Initiative Committee.

The Executive Committee, whose membership is displayed on the screen behind me, is charged with working with ALA to determine the critical issues that UNLV must address to achieve Tier One status, to identify key metrics to be used in tracking progress toward that vision, to develop the core strategies to achieve these goals. Members of the Executive Committee will chair subcommittees of the broader Tier One Initiative Committee.

The list of subcommittees is displayed behind me. That subcommittee structure will ensure that the Executive Committee accomplishes its work with timely input from a broad range of relevant constituencies.

Will the members of the Executive Committee who are here with us today please stand as a group, so that we can recognize and thank you?

Working hand in hand with the Executive Committee and ALA will be the broader Tier One Initiative Committee.

This Committee is intentionally quite large, because we want to make sure that all of our stakeholders have a chance to weigh in on the issue of how we move forward on our Path to Tier One.

Because of the size of the Committee, I'll refer you to the Tier One website for its specific composition, and we'll be following up with an announcement to the campus community that provides a link to the website.

Would the members of the Tier One Initiative Committee who are here with us today please rise, so that we can recognize and thank you?

I thank the members of both committees for their willingness to serve.

Helping me with this process is Nancy Rapoport, my Senior Advisor and the Gordon Silver Professor of Law at the William S. Boyd School of Law. (She's actually behind stage right now, helping me with logistics.)

She brings to this position significant administrative experience, having served as the dean of two law schools before coming to UNLV, and having served as Interim Dean of the Boyd School of Law as well. Her research area includes the study of how incentives shape behavior, and I'm glad to have her as part of the team.

She has also recently added a new honor: earlier this month, she and her dance teacher, Sergei Shapoval, became national dance champions in the United States Dance Championships. Congratulations to Nancy for this wonderful accomplishment, and I look forward with working with you on the University's Path to Tier One.
Once we have undergone the situational assessment, we will develop the success metrics and set the goals and objectives that will sharpen our focus. I already have a sense of some of these metrics, goals, and objectives, but the Tier One Committees will be tasked with defining—and refining—them further.

We will then develop the core strategies and action plans that will move us toward Tier One. You have heard me talk about the medical school, about research and economic development, about recruiting and retaining students and faculty and ensuring their success, and about the campus master plan, which will help make all of these initiatives happen.

Again, our Tier One Committees will refine and, possibly, broaden these four general areas.

Once we’ve determined the appropriate core strategies and action plans to make Tier One a reality, it will then be time to ask ourselves if we’re built for success, both strategically and operationally.

Those are the next parts of the model: do we have the right organizational structure, the right people in the right places, and the right support structures and resources to set us up for success?

Finally, I firmly believe that, if you can’t measure something, you can’t manage it, so we will develop a report card that we can use as we move toward Tier One status and beyond—to monitor and report back to you on how we’re doing.

Overall, what we are doing this year is laying a stronger, more informed foundation on which to build—to more effectively be able to move toward being a true Tier One/Carnegie Research (Very High) university.

But, let’s talk about how you will be part of this whole process. As I have already mentioned, we have created our Tier One committees to make sure that you have the opportunity to tell us what you think: what’s working, what we must improve, and what we must change.

We need you to participate in meetings, surveys, town halls, and other discussions. Please put the dates of October 1 and October 2 on your calendar, because we’ll start the outreach process then, and we will also find additional times and ways to hear from you.

Please, too, put October 3 on your calendar as well. On that date—at 11:30 a.m., in the SEB Auditorium—the Vice President for Research and Economic Development and the Research Council will host a lunch to update the campus and community on research and economic development activities at UNLV. I will be there as well to welcome you to the event, and I look forward to seeing you there. We will, of course, more formally communicate these and subsequent dates to you and your colleagues.

It’s time to take stock of where we are and to put plans in place to realize the dreams that we all share. We’ve been through a lot, especially during the Great Recession, and I know that things have been tough. But, we’ve made it through, with purpose and vision, for what we can—in fact, must—become.

Many of you have already thought about ways that we could do things differently. We need to hear from you. Please don’t sit on the sidelines. If we’re going to be very different twenty years from
now, we have to start down that road immediately, so that we can hand off to the next president a UNLV that is better positioned to take us on our Path to Tier One.

When I think about our history, I think about how many incredible things we have done in just over 50 years. Take another look at that handout of some of our achievements from this past year alone. I look forward to you joining me—joining all of UNLV—as we take the next great strides forward.

I love this university. Even more, I love what this university can be.

Thank you again for your time and attention today, and I look forward to your active involvement. I wish each of you the best.

And now, let’s welcome Hey Reb to help us celebrate the launch of this academic year!