



Celebrating History

FUELING **TOMORROWS**

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY
March 30, 2022



Dr. Gregory Postel
18th President,
The University of Toledo

We are at a pivotal point in the story of The University of Toledo.

As we celebrate 150 years of serving students and our community, it also is time for us to look toward the future and envision how UToledo can seize the moment and make a positive impact in the next 150 years.

Our sesquicentennial is an important moment to reflect on our past and plan for our future.

What is now UToledo was initially incorporated on Oct. 12, 1872. At that time, we were the Toledo University of Arts and Trades founded by Jesup Scott, a newspaper editor, when he donated the land that is now the Scott Park Campus.

The introduction to our story wasn't smooth sailing in those early years. The school closed just a few years later due to a lack of funds. A decade later, the assets were transferred to the city of Toledo and in 1884 we reopened as the Toledo Manual Training School.

In 1914, as we started granting baccalaureate degrees, we became known as Toledo University.

Our Main Campus began to take shape in 1931 with our first buildings off Bancroft Street — University Hall and Memorial Field House, which remain iconic symbols of UToledo.

We became The University of Toledo in 1967 when we were given the status of a state-funded university by the Ohio General Assembly.

We evolved again in 2006 with the merger with the Medical University of Ohio adding our Health Science Campus to the Rocket Nation.

How many changes are in store for us in the next 150 years? I hope many!

This University has many deeply rooted traditions that we are proud to honor and carry forward. We will continue to do that, but we also must adapt and evolve to meet the needs of the day. Students on our campuses today in 2022 are very different than the first students at the Toledo University of Arts and Trades back in 1872. It is our responsibility to prepare students for success in a changing world.

I'm proud to report that we are doing this. We recently received official notice from the Higher Learning Commission, the institutional accrediting body that comprehensively evaluates our University, that our accreditation has been renewed for the full 10-year period! Thank you to all of the individuals who served on the planning committees, gathered data for our assurance argument or participated in the on-campus site visit with the HLC team.

The collaborative strategic planning process that usually takes place every few years has a heightened level of importance in this sesquicentennial year. We are going to take our time to do it right. As we review our mission, vision and values, we are prioritizing our efforts around why UToledo is here and not simply what we have always done and how we have always done it.



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What is our purpose and what should we focus on to achieve our vision? From my perspective, we are here to serve and positively impact our students, employees, patients and this community. That is why UToledo exists. We do this through offering an excellent education, providing high-quality healthcare and engaging in workforce and economic development as well as other community partnerships.

As we refresh our mission and vision and create the strategic plan road map to guide us there, we will continue efforts to strengthen our foundation through our key initiatives. We're creating a strategic enrollment plan, reviewing our practices to ensure we are an inclusive and equitable organization, and modernizing human resources and our budgeting processes, among other important initiatives. These are not small undertakings, but they are important investments of our time, energy and resources to prepare for future growth.



PRIORITIZING INVESTMENT

Our campus is entrenched in several large projects that are key to a strong future and I sincerely appreciate the collaborative efforts to ensure they are successful!

We are developing and implementing a new incentive-based budgeting model that supports and encourages innovation and links successful outcomes to strategic investments. This is pivotal as we plan for the future of UToledo.

This budget model, while a significant change, is an important tool for prioritization. What are the things UToledo does well and can do even better with increased investment? What are our core functions that we need to not only maintain but enhance to be more competitive and positioned as a leader? And, yes, we will also identify through this process some things that we used to do that are no longer a vital part of our mission. We simply cannot be great at everything.

By decentralizing the budgeting process, we are empowering colleges and units to manage their revenues and expenses in support of their goals aligned with the University's mission. We're also working to increase transparency with review committees for the academic budget and support units that then flow up to a University-wide budget committee.

In addition to this huge effort to modernize our budgeting process, we're also working on an extensive project to modernize The University of Toledo Medical Center.

This is an exciting part of our story — a turning point for our hospital. Our Information Technology team has undertaken the largest technology infrastructure project in University history implementing EPIC as our new medical record system. A leader among health record software companies, this new system will enhance the processing of patient records across all the hospital's service units, and most importantly, improve our patient experience.

Connected to that effort are plans to revitalize our clinical enterprise's web presence to be more competitive in our market and take advantage of the new technology features of EPIC that will enhance how we highlight our providers and make scheduling an appointment online easier for our patients.

Our hospital has done a truly outstanding job during the past year with efforts to stabilize its finances. We also recently received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a higher reimbursement rate through the supplemental payment program. This additional \$25 million in federal funding, which we will apply for annually and could grow with additional Medicaid patients, directly impacts our ability to expand high-quality patient care throughout our region.

That effort, which took more than a year to secure, along with the significant investment in a new electronic medical record system symbolizes our commitment to our employees at the hospital and our patients in the community. We will continue to seek ways to evolve and grow our clinical enterprise to meet the healthcare needs of our region.

Our caregivers deserve this investment for the work they do every day, and especially after the past two years during a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic. We cannot thank you enough for being our healthcare heroes.

I also want to recognize the students in our College of Nursing and other health professions programs who stepped up when our community needed them to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Thank you.





As our nation confronts systemic racism fueled by racial injustice, I'd also like to note our ongoing key initiative where we are looking inward to identify and address any concerns at UToledo.

We understand that over time there is the potential for racial bias to have impacted our policies and procedures, as has been the case in industries across our country. If we find it, we will eliminate it.

At UToledo, we believe our diversity makes us stronger. We are working to be sure our campuses are inclusive places where every individual is treated fairly, respected and valued.

We are focusing our efforts on supporting underrepresented minority students, leading to increased retention and graduation rates, and on recruiting and retaining minority students, faculty and staff. We know we have more work to do, and we are doing it.

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SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Our mission at The University of Toledo is to improve the human condition in the region and the world. We do that by providing a world-class education for our students.

The truth is, we have fewer students on our campuses today than we have in a number of years. Growing our enrollment is among our top priorities.

This is not just the responsibility of Enrollment Management Marketing and Communications. Growing enrollment is everyone's responsibility.

We are providing the framework for growth. We invested in new technology to better connect with prospective students and track their progress throughout the recruitment process. We are expanding our outreach beyond northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. We are talking to students earlier in their high school years. We are streamlining our transfer processes.

UToledo provides a phenomenal education at a great value and I feel strongly that more students need to have the opportunity to learn from our expert faculty.



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One of our initiatives in the coming months and years is a focus on our online program offerings. We learned a lot about leveraging technology to deliver education during this pandemic and we will use that knowledge to deliver more programs to more people through online education.

What new things should we do to attract students to our campus? The College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is having success with a Cosmetic Science and Formulation Design Summer Camp. Last year it hosted more than 90 students virtually, which led to a number of them applying to our program — the only baccalaureate degree of its kind in the nation.

Just as it is everyone's responsibility to recruit students to our campuses, it is the role of each and every one of us to support their success when they are here. I'm proud that our current six-year graduation rate is the highest on record at UToledo!

This is one of the areas ripe for innovation and investment on our campuses as we talk about prioritizing our resources. What resources do our students need — both in and outside of the classroom? How can we ensure their success?

The Student Experience Project partnership with the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities is a good example of collaboration and innovation. By improving our students' sense of belonging and connectedness, we can close equity gaps and improve retention and graduation. Thank you to our equity champions who are making these changes in their classrooms and positively impacting our students.

I'm also proud to share that once again, the College of Law was recognized as one of the best law schools in the nation for women.

Lavel Dumont, an offensive lineman for the Toledo Rockets, showed us this past year how an act of kindness can have a profound impact. He was awarded the Musial Award for extraordinary sportsmanship for initiating a special friendship with a Toledo-area teen.

JT Shumate, a junior forward on the men's basketball team, was recently named to the CoSIDA Academic All-America Men's Basketball First Team. He is one of only five student-athletes in the country to earn the honor. He is the team's first Academic All-American since 1998 and only the second in program history to be named to the first-team.

And congratulations to our Rocket basketball teams! This year was the first time a MAC school has won both league titles in the same season.



ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE

A high-quality education that prepares students for a lifetime of success is our promise to students who choose to become Rockets. It is our world-class faculty who allow us to fulfill that promise.

From water quality and solar power technology to biomedical engineering and infectious diseases, our faculty experts are leaders in their fields.

Our research enterprise continues to surge. External research funding for last fiscal year climbed to \$65 million, an 18.3% increase in one year and 70% higher than research awards five years ago. Competitive federal research grants alone jumped more than 20% in one year.

The world watched on Christmas Day as NASA launched the new James Webb Space Telescope into space. Successfully deployed and in place, we are anxiously awaiting the final steps in the process so that researchers can get to work — several of them on our campus!

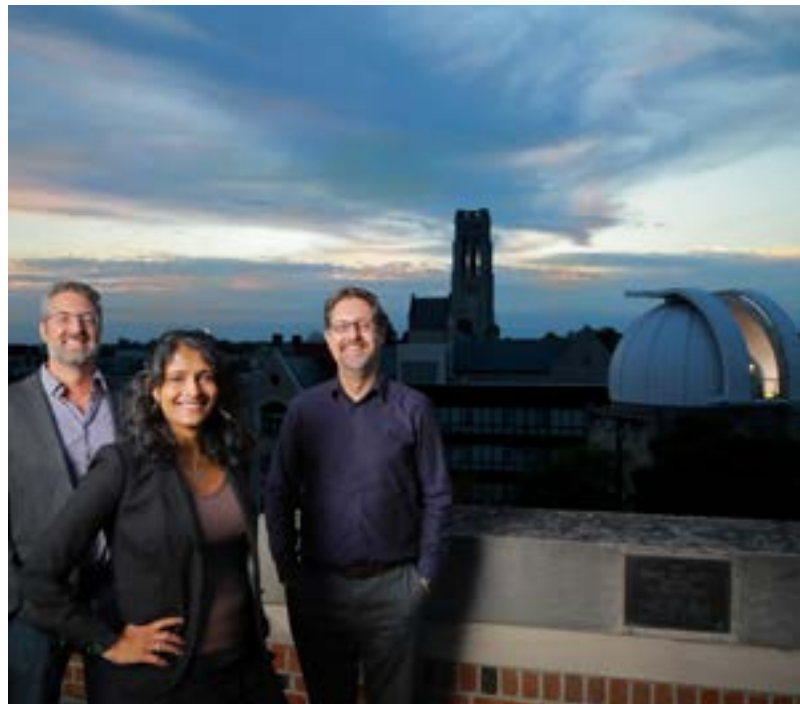
UToledo ranked No. 6 among all institutions worldwide in successful proposals for the first cycle of observing time and our astronomers secured nearly 20% of the hours reserved for star research. Congratulations to Dr. J.D. Smith, Dr. Rupali Chandar, Dr. Mike Cushing and Dr. Tom Megeath. The world cannot wait to learn what you discover.

The College of Arts and Letters also has a unique partnership with NASA. Arts students are working under the guidance of faculty members Brian Carpenter and Eric Ziegler to build a 3D prototype for NASA of a spacecraft that will make history carrying potential evidence of life on Mars back to Earth.

Back on earth, we have many faculty experts making a positive impact on our environment through sustainability research.

Dr. Sridhar Viamajala in the College of Engineering is developing technology that speeds up the capture of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to grow algae for bio-fuel and Dr. Bill Hintz in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics made national headlines for his research on how we can prevent damage to our Great Lakes and other freshwater resources from the overuse of road salts to melt snow and ice.

In the healthcare fields, the College of Medicine and Life Science's Dr. Ritu Chakravarti is developing an experimental protein-based vaccine that shows significant promise in preventing rheumatoid arthritis and Dr. Jian-Ting Zhang, an expert in cancer biology research, was recently selected for the prestigious honor of being named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences.



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In the Judith Herb College of Education, Dr. Revathy Kumar showed through research how motivation is the key for K-12 teachers to overcome racial bias in the classroom, emphasizing the need to recruit and enroll more diverse students in teacher education programs.

Dr. Janet Hoy-Gerlach in the College of Health and Human Services published the first empirical evidence that emotional support animals can provide quantifiable benefits to individuals with serious mental illness who are experiencing depression, anxiety and loneliness.

In the John B. and Lillian E. Neff College of Business and Innovation, Dr. Jenell Wittmer, and Dr. Margaret Hopkins, showed how leaders with higher emotional intelligence were better at remote management in a crisis.

Dr. Youssef Sari in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences spent part of the academic year in Saudi Arabia as a Fulbright Scholar advancing his research area of therapeutic agents to treat patients suffering from drug addiction.

And the future of our academic research is strong. A number of our junior faculty have earned competitive CAREER Awards this year from the National Science Foundation as evidence of their strong trajectory in academic research. Their peers across the country recognize them as rising stars in their fields. Congratulations to four faculty members in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics: Dr. Qian Chen, Dr. Emanuela Gionfriddo, Dr. Matthew Wohlever and Dr. Michael Young on this prestigious honor. We look forward to the new knowledge you will create throughout your career.

Our students, likewise, are earning prestigious honors. Two doctoral students in the College of Medicine and Life Sciences recently earned the F31 Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award from the National Institutes of Health: Rachel Golonka, who is conducting research on treatments for liver cancer, and Joshua Breidenbach, who is studying how cyanotoxins from harmful algal blooms impact individuals with asthma. Congratulations, Rachel and Joshua!



EMPOWERING CHANGE

We are ready to write some new chapters in the story of UToledo and I look forward to welcoming new leaders who will play an important role in what that looks like.

Our new Vice President for Advancement, Floyd Akins, joined campus last month in a critical role that has been vacant for far too long. We need resources to accomplish our goals. Our generous alumni and donors play an important role in ensuring we can be creative and innovative in the ways we tackle challenges.

We also have new individuals recently named to leadership positions with Dr. Dilip Das as the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Bryan Blair serving as our next Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics and Athletic Director. I want to note that we have added the word equity to our diversity and inclusion efforts thoughtfully and strategically to better reflect the scope of responsibilities for this office.

We also welcomed this year Doug Huffner to lead our new enterprise risk management initiative, Dr. La Fleur Small as vice provost for academic administration and faculty affairs and Dr. Anne Fulkerson to lead institutional research as we more intentionally use data to inform or decision making.

And congratulations to our new Police Chief Rod Theis who has spent his nearly 25-year career in law enforcement on our campus and is now in the lead role protecting UToledo.

New leadership brings new ideas, and I look forward to how these Rockets will collaborate with existing leaders to realize the future of our institution together.

As the saying goes, the only constant is change. Plot twists, whether they be planned or unexpected, are not something to be feared or concerned about. I embrace the opportunity to alter our course when needed and innovate to do things even better.

Our campus is changing with the times. This year we said good-bye to Carter Hall that served generations of students well but wasn't part of the plan for residence life moving forward. And we also enhanced Centennial Mall, an important part of our beautiful campus, to ensure it would serve us well for years to come.



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I look forward to the new National Pan-Hellenic Council Plaza that will provide a physical representation on our campus for the nine historically Black fraternities and sororities at UToledo and all that they do to promote leadership, scholarship and service among their memberships.

Our campus is beautiful and can do better at being a hub for community engagement and connection. We are putting in place a more streamlined process for community partners to be able to hold their events on our campuses, creating an open invitation for all to join Rocket Nation.

Thank you for the opportunity today to reflect on the history of this amazing University and the endless possibilities for our future chapters. The University of Toledo is a sum of its parts and our people are our greatest asset. Thank you for all that you have done and will do to ensure UToledo is living up to our legacy as a leader in education, healthcare and community engagement.

Happy 150th Anniversary. And Go Rockets!

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