

**Good afternoon everyone.**

**I want to begin by offering my warmest welcome and thank you to all the faculty, staff, students, alumni, business and community partners who carved time out of their very busy schedules to attend this address today.**

**With construction underway on the new Science Complex for the next two years, we've had to temporarily move our venue from our traditional location in Stephens Hall Theatre.**

**So for the first time ever, this address is being live streamed and has more members of our Towson University community tuning in than we could ever hold in this beautiful Recital Hall in the Center for Fine Arts.**

**I want to say a special thank you and greetings to all those who are making history by tuning in online.**

**I also want to recognize members of the university's senior leadership team in attendance here today — Provost and Executive Vice-President Tim Chandler, Vice Presidents, Marina Cooper, Leah Cox, Brian DeFillipis, Daraius Irani, and Deb Moriarty, Athletics Director Tim Leonard, and Interim Vice Presidents Ben Walker and Bob Campbell.**

**I would like to acknowledge the deans of our six colleges—David Vanko, Shohreh Kaynama, Terry Cooney, Susan Picinich, Lisa Plowfield, and Laurie Mullen, as well as Janet Delany, dean of Graduate Studies and Deb Nolan, dean of University Libraries.**

**I also want to extend a special thanks to the many board members from the Alumni Association, the Towson University Foundation and Board of Visitors—and thanks to our Board of Visitors Chair Dr. Fran Soistman for introducing me—who are all joining us today.**

**And finally, I would like to thank Chancellor Bob Caret and Dr. Liz Zoltan for gathering with us today at their favorite university—at least for today.**

**To the chancellor, all of our board members and those that serve on the college advisory boards, as well as our donors—thank you.**

**Your contributions have helped advance Towson University as a nationally-recognized first-choice institution, and your support will continue to be critical as we lead this university together toward even greater success and an even brighter future.**

**Today marks two years—almost to the day—since my very first address to the Towson University campus.**

**When I look back on the university as it was then, it was and it continues to be, a campus with a growing reputation for achievement and excellence; a campus that is vibrant and vital to the future success and prosperity of Greater Baltimore and of Maryland.**

**I am pleased to report that the state of the university is strong. Less than a third of the way through 2018, we are already achieving recognition and progress that puts us on pace for our best year ever.**

**Today I will share with you some highlights of the progress we've made and the recognitions we've received. I will also report on the status of some of the Presidential Priorities—priorities that are adding to our success as a university and strengthening our impact on the region.**

**If there is one word that embodies Towson University in 2018 it is the word momentum.**

**I hear that word again and again when I talk to faculty, staff, students, legislators and partners. We see strong evidence of that momentum all over this beautiful campus.**

**We see it in the number of highly qualified students making Towson University their first-choice institution.**

**So far this year, applications for this upcoming fall semester are up nearly 10 percent as compared to last year's historic high. And over 1,000 more prospective students attended our recent TU4U recruitment celebration. Again record numbers of highly qualified students are seeking to make TU their first-choice university.**

**This spring, we welcomed more than 1,200 new transfer students to Towson University, making 2018 TU's largest spring enrollment ever.**

**Best of all, Towson University's six-year graduation rates—often cited as the indicator of a university's success—are strong and growing even stronger.**

**Data from our most recent cohort provides a graduation rate of 72 percent, up from 66 percent in 2001 and 13 points higher than the national average of 59 percent.**

**Even more notable, our data shows there is no difference between minority and overall graduation rates, and our African-American graduation rate is 74 percent greater than our overall graduation rate.**

**This data tells us that for the 23,000 students enrolled at TU, the second largest university in Maryland and the 73<sup>rd</sup> largest in our nation, student success is defined as inclusive of all our students.**

**This is a result we are all very proud of and a result that sets us apart as a national exemplar for all higher education.**

**This success has carried from the classroom to the court as well.**

**This fall, our women's volleyball and men's basketball teams both had record-breaking winning streaks. The women's volleyball team achieved 16 straight wins to place in the mid-Major top 25 and secure a spot at the National Invitational Volleyball Championship.**

**Right now, our women's lacrosse team is undefeated at home, and this team is laser-focused about heading for a fourth straight NCAA tournament appearance.**

**I can't say enough about this women's lacrosse team--from beating top-5-ranked Penn State to getting unanimously chosen for a top 10 ranking in all three major lacrosse polls—they are a most impressive group of fearless female competitors!**

**But what is truly extraordinary about Towson University student-athletes is they are not only leading in competition, they are leading in the classroom and in the community.**

**TU student-athletes once again have the highest NCAA graduation rate of all Division I USM institutions. Our baseball team is leading the way in this success. They have the highest federal graduation rate in the entire CAA. And our field hockey, women's soccer and women's swimming and diving teams have graduation rates of 100 percent.**

**This spring the NCAA issued a Team Works community service challenge to college athletic teams.**

**And because student-athletes are just a little bit competitive—right Tim?—they had to make a competition out of it.**

**So the NCAA made a “March Madness” ranking for the community service contributions of college athletic teams across the nation.**

**Out of 64 teams that were ‘seeded,’ Towson University men’s and women’s basketball team earned the number one and number two seeds this year.**

**I want to commend our Athletics Director Tim Leonard, Deputy Athletic Director Tricia Brandenburg, our men’s basketball coach Pat Skerry, women’s basketball coach Diane Richardson, as well as all the coaches’ staffs and the players on these teams, for using their platforms and their competitive spirit to fuel TU’s leadership and commitment to community service.**

**It is not only all of us who see and experience Towson University's momentum. The word is out—and the national recognitions prove it.**

**Over the course of this academic year Vice President Deb Moriarty served as chair of the board of directors for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators or NASPA during its historic centennial year celebration. Vice President's Moriarty's election to this role by her peers is a national nod to her leadership as well as her 11-year legacy here at Towson University. Thank you for your leadership Dr. Moriarty**

**And, just weeks ago, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education Magazine*—a nationally recognized thought-leader in higher education inclusion—named TU's Division of Student Affairs as a place of inclusion and diversity excellence, one of only 13 universities in the nation to receive this honor and the only university in Maryland to be recognized for its exceptional work. Wow!**

**Earlier this year, our College of Business and Economics earned reaffirmation of accreditation for its business and accounting programs by AACSB International.**

**This accreditation is the gold standard of quality business schools and TU's CBE is one of less than 5 percent of business schools worldwide that have earned this accreditation and less than 1 percent that have earned the dual accreditation in accounting.**

**Dean Kaynama , my congratulations to you, your faculty, staff, students, alumni and advisory board for this outstanding recognition of excellence.**

**Each year, the Board of Regents recognizes the excellence of faculty from throughout the 12 universities that make up the University System of Maryland. These are the most prestigious faculty honors presented by the board.**

**This year, the excellence of the Towson University faculty was recognized with Board of Regents awards in three out of four categories, representing one-third of all recognitions, and more than any other university in the USM system.**

**Some of the recipients are with us today: (Please stand when I call your names and please hold the well-deserved applause until I finish the introductions.)**

**Computer and Information Sciences Associate Professor Dr. Sidd Kaza and Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences Professor Dr. Pamela Lottero-Perdue were recognized by the regents for Excellence in Teaching.**

**Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences Professor Dr. Vera Smolyaninova was recognized for Excellence in Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity.**

**And Associate Professor of Chemistry Dr. Clare Muhoro and  
Occupational Therapy Associate Professor Marlene Riley achieved  
awards for Excellence in Public Service.**

**Now please join me in applauding these remarkable faculty!**

**Momentum is not just about moving—it's about moving forward,  
leading in the right direction, world-class teaching and research,  
standing as an anchor for our community and a sought-after partner  
that is committed to making a difference.**

**That is what makes these accolades meaningful. That is what our  
outstanding faculty are doing and that is how TU is leading in a way  
that sets the standard for higher education in this nation.**

**From the very beginning, Towson University's success has, as these  
prestigious recognitions demonstrate, been rooted in a strong  
foundation of world-class teaching and research.**

**This year, our faculty have built on that foundation to win historic research grants, develop community-impact programs and provide undergraduate research opportunities that give students transformational experiences in their fields.**

**And some of them combine all three.**

**Computer and Information Sciences faculty Josh Dehlinger, Sidd Kaza, Blair Taylor, Michael O'Leary, Nam Nguyen and the late Shiva Azadegan secured a \$3.9 million grant from the National Science Foundation to expand our Cyber Corps program, which develops qualified cyber security professionals who are critically needed across the country.**

**What's more, nearly half of the students supported by this program come from populations that are traditionally underrepresented in computer science. And even more impressive, students in this scholarship program have had a 100 percent success rate with internship and postgraduate placement.**

**Josh, Sidd, Blair, Michael and Nam, please stand to be recognized for this incredibly important work for our students, for our campus and for our nation's security.**

**I am proud to say that Towson University's tradition as one of the finest Colleges of Education in the nation continues today as we create new models for teaching teachers. Dean Mullen your outstanding leadership of the college is continuing this legacy.**

**COE faculty recently were awarded a \$2.2 million EMPOWER grant which they're using to help educators better serve increasing populations of English-language learners in the classroom.**

**The award is the largest College of Education grant in Towson University's history, and when combined with similar programs in other states it will train more than 10,000 pre- and in-service teachers nationwide. It is led by Associate Professor Dr. Patricia Doran, along with Betsy Neville, Gilda Martinez-Alba and Ray Lorion, who are with us today. Would you all please stand so we can congratulate you on this outstanding achievement.**

**What sets Towson University academics apart is access to one-on-one experiences with faculty who are leaders in their fields.**

**It is this relentless commitment to mentorship that you might not expect from the second largest university in Maryland. It is this unique difference that makes a TU degree so very special.**

**Let me give you an example.**

**Professor Johnathan Leshnoff is one of the most performed musical composers alive today. In the past 17 years he has completed more than 55 works performed by over 60 orchestras across the world, including in Carnegie Hall.**

**And he's done all of that while being dedicated to, and excelling at, teaching and mentoring Towson University students.**

**Students in our College of Fine Arts and Communication essentially get front row access to Professor Leshnoff's master class.**

**He mentors his students in music and works side by side with them to teach them about the creative and entrepreneurial skills they will need to be successful contemporary professional musicians.**

**And now, Professor Leshnoff has generously donated his archive of work to the TU Special Collections so that future artists will get the rare opportunity to learn from a master for generations to come.**

**Professor Leshnoff is with us today. And I want to thank you professor for your generosity and your dedication to our students and our university.**

**As I said, our momentum is strong.**

**And it is reflected in the record levels of support across campus, in our community, and, increasingly, in Annapolis.**

**The 2018 Maryland legislative session ended just two days ago and I am pleased to report that Towson University is experiencing a renaissance among lawmakers and the governor who are eager to support Maryland's fastest growing university.**

**Their funding support means that our new Science Complex is just a little over two years away from completion.**

**You couldn't miss that "big hole" being dug this fall on York Road. That hole will soon be filled by the future home of STEM research and learning at Towson University. Even now the foundations are being poured and the outline of the building—TU's largest academic building (yes bigger than CLA)—is taking shape.**

**The new Science Complex will hold 50 teaching labs, 30 research labs, 50 classrooms, a planetarium, observatory, rooftop greenhouse and more—all to support innovative instruction that educates students who will drive Maryland’s STEM economy. Dean Vanko, your vision of STEM on our campus is indeed taking shape.**

**During session, we also secured funding to drastically improve and redesign the South Campus athletic fields located behind SECU Arena as part of an initiative that will also build a new women’s field hockey field.**

**This is an important project that will give our student-athletes five times the number of currently available practice hours, as well as establish equitable playing conditions for our women’s soccer, lacrosse and field hockey teams.**

**I want to thank the chancellor, the System office and the regents for all their leadership and support they gave Towson University to achieve these stellar results for our Capital Budget.**

**This fall we will begin the “from-the-ground-up” total renovation and 85,000 square foot addition to our current University Union, Yes, that Union that was built 40 years ago when TU had under 7,000 students; that Union that will be transformed as the hub of student life and the most-utilized building on our campus.**

**The “New U” will house our world-class Career Center, a remarkable first-of-its-kind innovation that will provide career education and support for our students and for our alumni throughout their careers.**

**The “New U” will provide first-class meeting and collaborative space for student groups, a theatre that seats 300, a ballroom that can serve as meeting space for over 1,500 as well as a 33,000 square-foot food marketplace modeled after contemporary gathering places like the R House in Remington.**

**The New U marketplace will have almost double the seating capacity of Susquehanna and Patuxent as well as an outdoor terrace that**

**connects the building to the Tiger Way promenade that passes in front of our bigger better Burdick which opened this past fall.**

**And for some of you—this might be the most important part—the renovated and expanded new Union will house the campus's first Dunkin' Donuts.**

**By now many of you are used to seeing cranes and cones around campus. And while the construction does pose challenges, it is a tremendous sign of the vitality of our campus and the confidence that the chancellor, regents, governor and legislature have in the world-class scholarship and teaching happening right here at Towson University.**

**You've heard me mention that since last year and looking ahead to the next six years, we will invest almost \$700 million in our physical plant—more than has been invested in the past 20 years.**

**That is a very big number. And it includes the new Science Complex, the University Union renovation and the upcoming Marriott conversion.**

**This summer, the hotel will be converted into a residence hall. It will provide a first-ever residence hall option for our transfer students and forge new pathways between the university and uptown Towson.**

**And it sold out in just days!**

**That \$700 million of capital also includes a new and long-awaited building for our College of Health Professions. Am I right Dean Plowfield?**

**The dean will tell you that TU graduates more health-care professionals than any other university in the state—public or private.**

**She will also tell you that there is a critical shortage of health-care professionals in Maryland, with more than 21,000 unfilled positions.**

**The dean also does not need an invitation to tell you that TU is better positioned than any other university in the state to fill this gap. But we need the space and we need the facilities to do it.**

**Securing funding for the College of Health Professions building will be our main priority for the next legislative session, and with the dean's and chancellor's support, I am looking forward to sharing the story of how this building will drive improvement and innovation in Maryland's health professions.**

**So yes, I hope you're getting used to the cranes and cones. Because we are just getting started.**

**I want to thank Associate Vice President of Facilities Management Kevin Petersen, as well as Scott Guckert, David Mayhew, Kris Phillips, Nick Gingue, Ken Keady, and the entire Facilities Management team**

**for helping to create these truly exceptional buildings on our campus—on time, on project and on budget.**

**Now I'd like to share our progress in achieving a few of our Presidential Priorities. We regularly post updates on all eight priorities through a dedicated microsite, and I invite you all to visit [towson.edu/priorities](http://towson.edu/priorities) to learn about the great progress being made.**

**The priorities are no exception to the momentum happening all over campus.**

**As a presidential priority we began our BTU Initiative just two years ago. One of the goals of BTU was to wrap our arms around all of the many important partnerships and initiatives TU's faculty, staff and students had already created and partnered on in Greater Baltimore and across our state.**

**What we were looking to do through BTU was to give greater presence, purpose, and priority to those efforts and to better understand and extend TU's reach.**

**Well, TU's reach was much larger than we ever imagined.**

**We have 190 active engagements with BTU Network Partners.**

**Across these engagements, we are working with 329—that's right—over 300 organizations in Greater Baltimore. We will be celebrating these partnerships at the BTU Partnership Showcase on April 24<sup>th</sup> and this gathering has gotten so large that we now hold it in SECU Arena.**

**But it is not just about the numbers, these are meaningful partnerships with great impact. More than 61 percent of the BTU engagements are ongoing and sustainable collaborations that serve the community and the region.**

**One major and historic partnership we have is with Maryland National Guard. Earlier this year, we formalized and expanded our partnership**

**with the guard, establishing the guard's very first university partnership in Maryland.**

**Together, we will create opportunities for guard members and students through internships, cyber security training, and professional development opportunities. We are giving each other access to the combined knowledge of our organizations. It strengthens both of us, and it strengthens Maryland.**

**Recently, local legislative leaders advocated to expand the state's RISE Zone—a special designation used for institutions that are the state's top economic drivers—to include Towson University.**

**They want to give TU this special designation to support the innovation and job creation happening on campus through the TU Incubator, which has helped to launch more than 80 companies and generated over \$150 million in economic impact, and greatly expand those efforts in the years to come.**

**TU's efforts to achieve RISE Zone designation is one of several new connections that the university is making with Towson and Greater Baltimore. We're calling this connectivity-building work Together Towson to emphasize this historic partnership between the university and our community.**

**In the coming months and years to come, Together Towson will continue to grow and take many forms. New buildings, housing options, stores and restaurants, and arts and recreation are all examples of projects underway or those that are possible. So stay tuned, because there are great things ahead for Together Towson.**

**Talking about increased connectivity—have you seen the bright orange bikes around campus?**

**Last week we celebrated this wildly successful SPIN bike share program. In its first month, during the cold snap, there were more than 2,000 rides and nearly 2,000 miles biked by our community. The bikes are everywhere, and they make it easy for our students, faculty and staff to ride into uptown Towson and back.**

**I want to thank Bobbi Laur, Kathleen Crostic and the entire BTU Council for their work on our BTU Initiative, and Vice President Daraius Irani for working to establish TU as a RISE Zone.**

**I also have to recognize Pam Mooney, Cathy Norris, Paddy Watson and the entire Parking & Transportation Services group for bringing the Spin bike share program to our campus. I know there are many others who are, or will soon be, involved in our Together Towson work. A thank you to you all as well.**

**Earlier I mentioned that the brand “New U” will include a World-Class Career Center.**

**World-class because it breaks existing paradigms—and in their place, it will offer a tremendous resource to our students and to our alumni to support their career development and success throughout their lifetime, not just for the four years they are on campus.**

**The Career Center we aim to create will help students and alumni understand their career interests and career options as well as offer access to internships, shadowing opportunities and mentorships to explore those interests.**

**This world-class Career Center will be a first to offer a pathway for the TU student who says ‘I want to be an entrepreneur,’ and for the many entrepreneurial high-growth businesses in Maryland with under 100 employees—the biggest job creators in our state and our nation—that are looking for the kind of talent our TU graduates provide but that miss out on large job fairs because they don’t have the large corporate recruiting staffs to support them.**

**The new Career Center will be the destination for Greater Baltimore’s and Maryland’s fledging entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial firms.**

**In fact, the development of the new Career Center is coming closer to reality and has moved from the planning to the implementation phase.**

**This spring, the university opened three new sections of a core curriculum course on Career Exploration and Professional Development to engage students in forward career thinking early in their academic careers.**

**In the coming months, the Career Center will host TU's first-ever joint student and employer service project to provide non-traditional networking opportunities and strengthen our students' connections before they head into the workplace.**

**There is great progress being made, and many things ahead to look forward to, including an Alumni-only Career Fair planned for early this summer. So to the entire Career Center team and its leader Lori Logan-Bennett—Thank you.**

**I have often shared my strong belief that a diverse and inclusive campus supports student success during and after college.**

**Students who learn to thrive and support others to thrive inclusively are competitively advantaged when they enter the global world of work.**

**Students who learn to participate in and enjoy discourse with those holding opposite viewpoints and perspectives will simply be better educated and prepared for a lifetime of learning as well as better positioned to be the mediators and solution-seekers who are always in high demand.**

**I recently wrote an opinion piece about our diversity efforts for the *Baltimore Sun*. I proudly shared that our fall 2017 incoming class was the most diverse ever, with more than 44 percent of first-time, full-time students identifying as racial or ethnic minorities, and 22 percent as African American.**

**We are currently implementing new hiring and retention practices to support and encourage robust diversity among our faculty as well.**

**Our membership with the Ph.D. project is aimed at providing greater access to pools of prospective faculty of color to support diverse and high-quality applicant pools for all faculty positions.**

**After that new faculty member is hired, our membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity offers resources to support their success.**

**I want to reiterate that there is still much, much to be done to support faculty diversity and inclusion. We are not where we want to be.**

**But the focus on this important priority for the university has not waned but has grown over the last two years and will continue to be a top priority for us going forward.**

**There are so many in our community who are working to make TU better in this most-important space, but I want to take a moment to thank Vice President Leah Cox, Associate Vice President Santiago Solis, and Provost Chandler for their leadership in advancing TU's relentless commitment to diversity and inclusion on our campus.**

**I've talked about our momentum today and the programs and people that exemplify it. Those programs and people would not be possible without resources and funding from private monies.**

**That's what makes a culture of philanthropy so important for all public universities, and TU is no exception.**

**Under the leadership of Vice President Brian DeFillipis, we have completed the feasibility study and prospectus for our upcoming capital campaign.**

**Brian and his team, with help from the Board of Visitors and Foundation Board development committees, are finalizing TU's campaign case and recruiting key volunteer leadership for this most**

**important upcoming campaign.**

**I am thrilled to share that they have already secured the campaign's first multi-million gift—and the campaign hasn't officially started yet!**

**Over the coming months, Brian and his team will be working to finalize the campaign case for support and secure more lead gift commitments to ensure a strong start to the campaign.**

**I want to thank Brian and all of University Advancement, as well as the members of both board development committees, for their thoughtful and strategic work toward building a culture of philanthropy on our campus and making the upcoming capital campaign historic in its efforts and impact.**

**Again, I invite you to visit the Presidential Priorities microsite at [towson.edu/priorities](http://towson.edu/priorities) to access updates and information on all eight of our priorities.**

**Today I've shared some proof points of Towson University's momentum as an institution. What's powerful and meaningful about our success as an institution is that it's rooted in our interactions as individuals and lifelong learners. I think this story illustrates it well.**

**Professor James Overduin in the Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences had been working on a massive but flawed code within mathematics, a technical computing program that is world-renowned Wolfram Research's flagship product. The code was used to calculate and plot the properties of spinning black holes. (Just everyday easy stuff, you know).**

**Dr. Overduin also noticed that one of his students, Max Coplan had become a student ambassador for Wolfram—pretty cool. He also noticed that Max had, what he called, an omnivorous curiosity.**

**So even though the subject matter was master's if not doctoral level work, Dr. Overduin sensed that Max was up for a challenge and invited Max to work alongside him on updating and refining the code.**

**Max didn't just refine the code. Within a few months, Max had found the flaw, fixed it and presented his results to the Wolfram headquarters.**

**With the confidence and support of Dr. Overduin, Max literally explored the inside of rotating black holes mathematically. That's the type of transformational experience that fuels a lifelong curiosity and interest, and a lifetime successful career.**

**Max's story speaks to me because it embodies so much about what is the very best about Towson University:**

- **faculty members who are not just world-class scholars in their fields but avid mentors and trusted advisers;**
- **students who use their ingenuity and ambition like Max to boldly go where no one has gone before;**

- life-changing opportunities that spring up on our campus each and every day;
- and the impact that TU makes on the world of knowledge innovation and culture.

**These are the heart of our success and the fuel for our momentum.**

**I hope everyone here today and everyone watching on livestream joins me in knowing, there is much to be proud of at Towson University and there are indeed great things ahead. Thank you!**