

Testimony to the Maryland General Assembly

Presented by Dr. Robert L. Caret
President
Towson University
February 2006



Testimony to the Maryland General Assembly

Presented by Dr. Robert L. Caret
President
Towson University

February 2006



*Mr. Chairman
and members of
the committee,*

Last year, I shared with you our desired future which we have embodied in *Towson University 2010*. We will continue to serve as Maryland's Metropolitan University and will continue to help a broad cross-section of society map their future and give them the tools to be confident and successful citizens. The *Towson University 2010* plan I outlined has five themes and related actions that will help us achieve the vision we desire. Today, I would like to update you on our progress related to these themes and actions. I also hope to remind you of the 2010 vision and how it fits into the State's needs, describe how we are bringing that vision to life, and explain how our students, faculty and staff, other partners, and you are engaged with making the vision more solid.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONCERNING TOWSON UNIVERSITY 2010

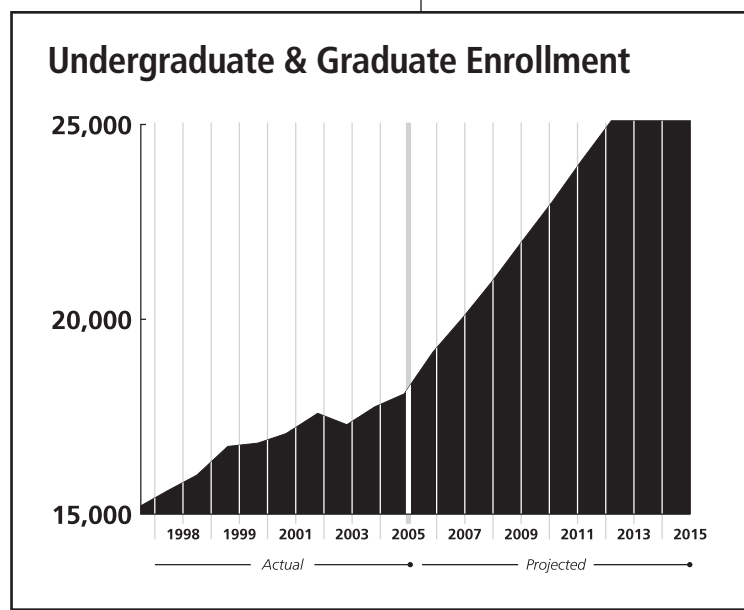
The past year was exciting for Towson University as we began steps toward achieving the *Towson 2010* vision. In January 2006 I presented a report card to the campus to “grade” our efforts during the first year of the strategic plan. The report card evaluates our major goals and the success we have achieved. Today I will share some of our advancements in bringing *Towson 2010* to fruition. We are making excellent progress across the five theme areas of the plan.

Enrollment Size and Mix

Our planning tells us that we will grow by about 5,000 students between now and 2010. We have planned our growth and how we will make it happen. Our plan tells us we will grow by another 2,000 students between 2010 and 2015. That is an average increase of 1,000 students each year for the first five years, taking us from 18,000 students today to 23,000+ in 2010 and 25,000+ in 2015. We are on track to meet those demands and reach these goals.

With our designation as one of the “Best” by US News and World Report and the Princeton Review, Towson is a first choice institution for an increasing percentage of students.

From fall 2004 to fall 2005 Towson grew by 344 students. We again set a new record with 11,750 applications for the 2,300 slots available for new freshmen. And we are not sacrificing quality or access as we do this. Although we enrolled 230 more freshmen in fall 2005 over fall 2004, we have increased our average SAT scores and the percentage of minority students. Some of these improvements were the results of a program I mentioned to you last year, a program which recruits and enrolls high-achieving (top 10 percent) students from Baltimore City and Baltimore County public schools, guaranteeing them admission and financial support.



Student Experience and Success

Much has happened in the student experience and success area. Our Student Affairs team has launched several major initiatives aimed at engaging more students with the campus. The Student Government Association and its leadership have been supportive of these efforts and have launched many of their own. The goal of improving the student experience on campus is being embraced strongly. A Student Affairs Leadership Team has been formed, as has a Council of Student Leaders; the first “Leadershape” student leadership development program was launched; a “Welcome to Towson” first week program was implemented; our Career Center was reengineered to better meet student needs; and the idea of developing a belief in, and commitment to, civic engagement both while a student here and when one graduates is becoming a major tenet among the educational outcomes we will achieve.

Resources for Success

You have helped to provide us resources for success for the current fiscal year. Thank you. These funds are being used for needed increased compensation and benefits for our faculty and staff, and to take the beginning steps we need for our planned growth for items such as new faculty positions (\$1.6M), improved salaries of graduate assistants (\$500K), renovated office space for the Mathematics Department (\$500K), our Capital Campaign (\$250K), enhancements for our nursing program (\$400K), and improved funding for marketing, utilities, maintenance, and financial aid.

We are also helping ourselves secure additional resources to assure success. The Jess and Mildred Fisher College of Science and Mathematics is one major example of what we have done, bringing the university its first named college. A \$10.2 million gift tied to this naming is a model for similar efforts in other colleges and similar efforts across the campus.

Accomplishments Concerning Towson University 2010, continued

Partnerships Philosophy

Our partnerships philosophy continues to help us serve as Maryland's Metropolitan University by making direct links with entities in the community. This effort helps all of us meet regional needs more effectively. Let me mention just a few successes under this theme:

- Our Center for Geographic Information Systems launched a region-wide Emergency Management Mapping Application which helps address homeland security needs for all of Maryland's Emergency Operation Centers
- Our Office of Technology Services partnered with Cisco Systems to create a campus wide wireless infrastructure
- Our award winning radio station, WTMD, is now an affiliate of National Public Radio
- Towson was recently designated as the new National Headquarters for the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities
- In academic programs we are collaborating with the Hagerstown Higher Education Center with the launch of our Nursing Program at that site in fall 2006 and we recently were approved to offer a joint MBA with the University of Baltimore

There is a lot going on that links Towson University to the world outside our campus borders. That outcome is core to the philosophy of Metropolitan Universities, and we will continue to strengthen our relationships.

Telling and Selling the Story

We have been telling the Towson University story to anyone who will listen. It is paying off. We are now viewed as an institution that is involved, creative and entrepreneurial, and on the move. We have only begun. Our faculty are out telling the story of what Towson University accomplishes through their leadership in professional organizations and excellence in teaching. For example, Dr. Elizabeth Clifford, in our Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, established the annual Baltimore Immigration Summit, which explores the future of immigration and its impact on Baltimore; Dr. Martha Joynt Kumar, in our Department of Political Science, continues to teach her course on the relationships between the press and the White House. Using teleconferencing, Dr. Kumar guides discussions between Towson students and major White House staff and members of the press.

Staff are also telling Towson's story. Dr. Debra Moriarty, Vice President for Student Affairs, tells the story through her involvement in organizations such as the Baltimore Collegetown Network. Even I have been known to talk about our story in various venues to those who would listen, and even sometimes to those who might not.

All of that telling is beginning to pay off; we are selling the TU story and people are listening and applauding. One of the most important efforts related to this theme began this past fall when we launched a year-long media and marketing campaign to carry the Towson University message and mission to the region. Our "Thinking Outside" campaign illustrates how Towson University is opening its doors to the world through TV, radio and billboards, and our new Web presence, which was recently launched on February 1, 2006.

TOWSON UNIVERSITY AND THE STATE OF MARYLAND IN 2010

It is important to remember what achieving *Towson University 2010* will mean to the state of Maryland. Last year I shared my thoughts of what Towson University will look like in 2010. This year, a year closer to the vision, I want to revisit that view and highlight what it means for Maryland.

Consider Towson University in the year 2010. Towson University is a highly selective campus of 23,000 students located on just under 350 acres in the county seat of Baltimore County with satellite locations in Baltimore City and several of the surrounding counties. Our campus has approximately 80 percent Maryland residents and 20 percent students from other states or countries. Degrees offered include the Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees. The majority of the graduate programs, which comprise approximately 20 percent of enrollment, are in applied, professional fields. The 25th/75th percentiles for the SAT of incoming freshmen is in the 1050-1250 range, the average GPA is approximately 3.6, and 80 percent of the students rank in the top quarter, and 25 percent in the top 10 percent of their high school class. The undergraduate campus is 40 percent residential.

The core of Towson University is the high-quality arts and sciences education, real faculty in the classroom, small and interactive classes, a residential climate, and a place where education and learning are at the core of all that we do. Fewer than 5 percent of our classes are classified as large classes and 80 percent of our classes fit the small size category. We remain known in Maryland and the region for a focus on excellence in teaching. We have developed a strong program of applied research to solve regional problems, and we bring in approximately \$40 million annually in funds through grants and contracts with business and government and through fundraising efforts. The six-year graduation rate is over 60 percent. The alumni giving rate is above 30 percent. The highly successful athletic program competes at the Division I level in 23 sports in the Colonial Athletic Association, and many teams compete in postseason competition. The student-athlete graduation rate remains well above that of the student body as a whole.

Now consider the state of Maryland in 2010. Because of our partnerships philosophy and our commitment as Maryland's Metropolitan University, Towson University has developed stronger relations with other government and private entities. For example, the professional development schools network (118 schools in 2006) established among Towson University, Baltimore County and Baltimore City, is viewed by the external community as a way to enhance K-12 education through new curricular and instructional practices. Similarly, partnerships with our local hospitals to enhance infrastructure needs of the various entities, such as steam and power, is viewed as a way for capital funding from various sources to go as far as possible. In 2010 we will celebrate the largest graduating class of students from the Towson University/University of Baltimore joint MBA program to date. We expect the new joint MBA to be incredibly successful in meeting the workforce needs of the state. Towson University will continue to be a leader in educating teachers and nurses in Maryland, and will showcase models of how partnerships can help to meet regional needs in effective and efficient manners.

Enacting the Vision

By examining our current progress, and envisioning the state of Maryland and Towson University in 2010, we realize there is much to be done to enact the vision I have shared. We are making progress, but we also recognize there are various needs that will arise as we bring *Towson University 2010* to reality. I will touch on some needs to be addressed now and over the next few years.

Need for Additional Tenure Track Faculty

If we are going to grow at the pace I have described (1,000 students each year), we will need additional faculty. We hired 48 tenure track faculty (23 new and 25 replacements) this past fall. To maintain our current high-quality teaching, and to grow our external research grants and contract programs, we will need to add 28 new tenure track faculty this coming year and appropriate numbers as enrollment grows. Adding more part-time faculty provides teaching for more students, but it does not develop curricular programs, enhance advising support to students in their majors or lead to more research contracts and grants. New tenure track faculty members are needed to continue building and modifying strong academic programs to meet regional needs.

Towson University and the State of Maryland in 2010, continued

Need for Operations of Additional Space

Our capital projects are creative, aggressive and on target. Much progress is being made and space is being added to the campus: classrooms, laboratories, studios and clinics, offices, parking and housing. It is all coming together. This fall we opened the Center for the Arts—the first new academic space on campus in 25 years. We are progressing on the timetable for the construction of the new Childcare Building and the College of Liberal Arts Complex, including the major infrastructure changes needed to handle the Complex and to get us ready for the full Master Plan development. The initial planning for a new College of Health Professions Building is also underway as are efforts related to increased parking and housing.

With the growth of the physical facilities to support the learning and teaching experiences of our students and faculty comes a need for more operational support of these facilities. For example, new space requires additional utilities, housekeeping, maintenance, technology and security needs. Growth of the student body requires more faculty to teach them, but it also requires additional police to provide security, more student services staff to provide assistance with topics like advising and financial aid, more library staff to assist students with more complex knowledge needs, and more technology staff to provide technology services for areas such as the university financial accounting system and online learning courses.

Need for Salary Enhancements

Salaries have to be made more competitive to continue building a strong academic infrastructure. Thanks to you we have improved our salary competitiveness from a national perspective across the campus. If we are to recruit, hire and retain additional tenure track faculty, we need to continue to offer competitive salaries. To meet the University System of Maryland target goals of the 85th percentile of our funding peers, we need an additional \$1.92 million to bring our current faculty

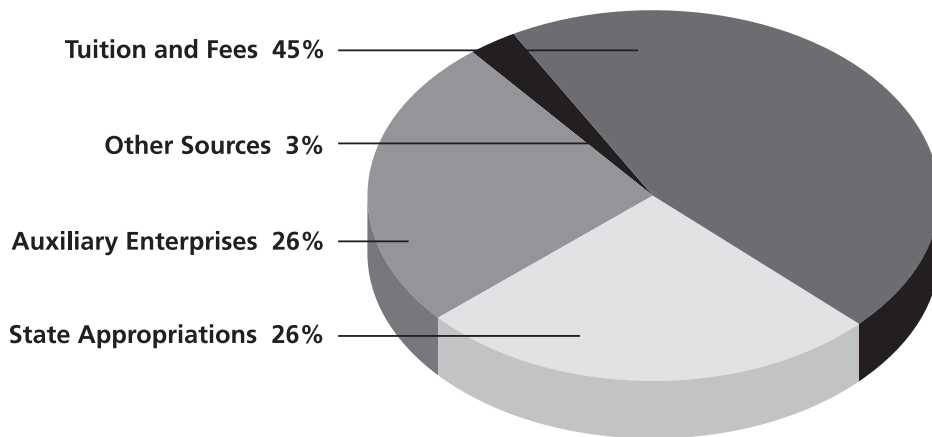
median salary to that goal. Similarly, additional resources are needed for our professional staff that provide high-quality services to our students. Enhanced salary competitiveness is particularly needed in light of escalating housing prices in the Baltimore area. We have lost several new faculty hires because they felt our offers were not compatible with the cost of living in the Towson area.

Need for Restructuring Financing

The legislature’s commitment and advocacy for proper per student funding highlights the need for an appropriate balance in state funds paired with tuition and fees. Necessary steps toward access and affordability are being taken with the funding of enrollment growth. Growth without funding now or in the future is not an option; this budget realizes those needs and with your support we can continue to re-balance the funding mix to ease the financial burden on our students while at the same time help the State meet the demands for accessible and affordable higher education.

Towson University is committed to providing a well-educated citizenry—particularly in education, nursing and information technology areas—and with your support we look forward to doing so at the rate necessary for the State of Maryland.

FY 2007 Revenue Sources



ENGAGING TO REALIZE TOWSON UNIVERSITY 2010

Last fall during my annual address to the campus I asked the students, faculty and staff to consider a number of questions about how to get involved with *Towson University 2010*: “What can I do to address these needs? What can I do to move us closer to the kind of campus we say we want to be? What can I do to make *Towson University 2010* a reality for our students and our entire community? How do I get engaged, get involved? How can I help make it happen?” On campus our students, faculty and staff have responded to these questions through their actions, some of which I described earlier, such as the development of new academic and student life programs. I also cited examples of how collaborations with old and new partners responded to these questions. Towson University’s students, faculty and staff are fully engaged in making *Towson University 2010* a reality. Our partners—both government and private (for and not-for-profit) entities—are also becoming more engaged in making *Towson University 2010* a reality as we work together to bring knowledge and financial resources to bear on regional issues. I hope you will become more engaged in making *Towson University 2010* a reality by visiting us, telling our story and providing the support we need.

We have accomplished a great deal, yet there is always so much more to do. That is why it is so important to look backwards every so often to see what has been done. There is always more to do and more to accomplish, but we can get from now to 2010 if we all do our part.

I thank you for your involvement.

Office of the President
Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001
www.towson.edu

