



Reimagining UToledo

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DR. GREGORY POSTEL

Celebrating History. **FUELING TOMORROWS.**



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

I am pleased to stand before you in this historic building — University Hall — our first building on the Bancroft campus, completed in 1931. This is a fitting location for today's event as we continue a year long effort to recognize our sesquicentennial.

Throughout the past year we have celebrated with a variety of activities and events — most notably Founder's Day on October 12, when 150 years ago, the Articles of Incorporation were first drawn up for what was then The Toledo University of Arts and Trades. And later today we will continue the celebration on 419 Day in honor of our role as Toledo's university. I hope you will join us on Centennial Mall this evening for our Rocket Spring Festival!

As we wrap up this momentous year and embark on our new strategic plan, let us take a few moments to celebrate the accomplishments that are central to our mission to "improve the human condition as a public research university and academic medical center focused on educating students to become future-ready graduates, cultivate leaders, create and advance knowledge, care for patients and engage our local, national and global communities."

Our commitment to student success — from recruitment through graduation — remains steadfast. This is not only central to our mission, but also the foundation of our region's economic growth and prosperity. Our students are achieving their dreams thanks to the support and encouragement of our amazing faculty and staff.



Tara Smith
Gilman Award Recipient

Tara Smith, a double major in English and art history, received the prestigious Gilman Award to support her studies abroad this summer in Madrid, Spain. Along with her academic studies, she will be interning at the renowned art gallery, The Colnaghi.



Derek Kluczynski
Goldwater Scholar

An aspiring physician and biology major, Derek Kluczynski was recently named a Goldwater Scholar. Derek has been studying infertility under the mentorship of Dr. Tomer Avidor-Reiss. As a member of the Honors College, Derek plans to pursue an M.D./Ph.D. degree so he can practice medicine and continue his research.

Forty-five-year-old Rodney Braziel recently completed his university studies degree while working full time, graduating in December. He was the first graduate of the HOPE Toledo parents program to earn a bachelor's degree — congratulations, Rodney!

At UToledo, we're affording life-changing opportunities for students around the world. A new Rocket Kids program led by Dr. Sammy Spann, vice president for student affairs and dean of students, provides a unique opportunity for college students to help active-duty service members while exploring the world.



Rodney Braziel
HOPE Toledo Scholar

Through the program, which is funded with an \$11.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense, college students earn 15 credit hours while providing quality child education and care at U.S. Army bases in Germany, Italy and Belgium. In its first year, more than 250 students from 20 different universities have inquired about this amazing opportunity.



Our Rocket athletes are on a roll! Last fall our women's cross country team won its second consecutive MAC championship and returned to the NCAA championship for the fifth time in program history and the first time since 2014.

Football won both the MAC Championship game and a bowl game this season for the second time in Toledo history and the first time since 2001.

Men's and women's basketball teams tied school records for wins. Both teams won the regular season MAC Championship titles. And both teams were powered by MAC coaches and players of the year.

And most importantly, our student athletes are achieving success in the classroom. This is the fourth consecutive year that the Rockets have achieved a graduation rate of 92%.

Our curling team led by Andrew Thomas, a senior studying computer science and electrical engineering, competed in the national championships.

A recent addition to our club sports, the curling team is only in its second year and is already competing on the national stage.



Our curiosity and innovation continue to push our faculty and students to advance research and creative works as leaders in their fields.

Announced last fall, The University of Toledo is leading the U.S. Department of Energy's Cadmium Telluride Accelerator Consortium to advance domestic manufacturing of solar cells that are less expensive and more efficient. As part of a \$20 million federal investment in solar technologies, the initiative aims

to spur technological advancements that will strengthen national energy security and clear the way for widespread use of clean solar electricity.

A team of UToledo scientists and students are examining shoreline vegetation, soil and hydrology in the Great Lakes as part of a U.S. Department of Energy project to test the resiliency of coastal ecosystems amid climate change. The \$20 million COMPASS project, which stands for Coastal Observations, Mechanisms and Predictions Across Systems and Scales, aims to forecast the future of wetlands, uplands and ghost forests and their greenhouse gas emissions.

In the arts, UToledo is proud to now be officially recognized as an All-Steinway School, achieving a nearly 20-year goal to place Steinway pianos in every practice room, faculty studio and performance space on campus. UToledo is one of fewer than 300 schools worldwide with the title of an All-Steinway School.

A UToledo College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences expert in substance abuse and addiction is leading a new federally funded research project to further develop an experimental drug that could reduce cravings and lessen withdrawal symptoms when chronic drinkers attempt to get sober. The \$2.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health supports research into a potential drug target.



We remain committed to providing access to exceptional healthcare for our community, focusing on each patient's individual needs and providing the best possible care. This commitment was recognized last summer when the University of Toledo Medical Center earned a four-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, a designation that reflects the hospital's continued revitalization and forward momentum.

As part of the financial turnaround of UTMC, since 2020, the hospital has invested more than \$20 million in capital improvements, including the new EPIC electronic medical records system, a new MRI scanner and upgrades to the cardiac catheterization lab.

EPIC makes it easy for patients to connect with UTMC and UToledo Physicians through their computer or cell phone. The platform enables patients to pre-register for appointments, view test results, request medication refills and send a message directly to their healthcare provider.

Our healthcare services continue to grow. In December, UTMC opened a new surgical intensive care unit to enhance the hospital's ability to care for the most complicated trauma and surgical cases. As a provisional Level II trauma center, UTMC is prepared to provide life-saving care for the most serious injuries 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We recently celebrated 200 successful kidney transplants in 2022, a 15% increase over the previous year. The hospital also completed the region's first robotic-assisted kidney transplant surgery in April of last year, putting UTMC among a select group of hospitals nationwide offering the innovative, less invasive surgery. Congratulations to all involved!



As Toledo's university, we continue to engage our local, national and global communities in a variety of ways. Each year, hundreds of students volunteer at more than a dozen sites to give back to the community at the Big Event, which just took place last month. It is the largest student-run service project and an annual tradition.

Through the student-run CommunityCare Clinics, students and faculty in the colleges of Medicine and

Life Sciences, Nursing, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health and Human Services deliver quality healthcare to underserved populations reaching thousands of patients each year. Students work in interprofessional care teams at the clinics, giving learners from different programs an opportunity to collaborate in a way that will prepare them for their future roles in clinical healthcare.

And our UToledo law students provide important services for the community as part of their experiential learning. A new mediation partnership this year at Rogers High School expands opportunities for law students in addition to the established clinics for civil advocacy, immigrant justice and tax controversy and externships for corporate counsel and public service.



Each year, students in our Jesup Scott Honors College participate in a community engagement class designed to connect students with semester-long projects to support Toledo-area nonprofits. Now in its fifth year, the course has partnered with a number of community organizations throughout Toledo and northwest Ohio, including the United Way, Metroparks Toledo, Toledo Public Schools, YMCA, Imagination Station and the Boys & Girls Club.

And for the past 30 years the Family Business Center has provided access to local, regional and nationally recognized business experts and affiliates to more than 250 small businesses throughout the region.

We take these successes forward with us as we envision the future of UToledo.

Looking ahead to the next 150 years, we are reimagining the future of public higher education and our role as a leading public research university. Our new strategic plan sets the direction for the next five years as together we focus on building a stronger, sustainable institution with a redesigned brand that showcases the value of our education, research and patient care.

Our plan outlines six priority areas which will help us accomplish these ambitious goals.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 1:

Ensure Student Success From Recruitment Through Graduation

Student success is and must continue to be at the heart of everything we do. As a public university committed to making a college education accessible and attainable, we must continue diversifying our program offerings and modalities to meet the needs of students today and tomorrow. We will continue to diversify our student recruitment to include growing online and transfer populations as well as attracting new students from outside of our region.

Our commitment to student support extends beyond the classroom. In the fall, we opened the new Center for Advocacy and Student Experience. The CASE Center, which brings together several support areas within the Division of Student Affairs, is the first place students should turn to when they need help at The University of Toledo. The CASE Center is located in the Thompson Student Union and is staffed to connect students with resources and services across the University based on their specific needs.

Despite limited resources, we have completed and are prepared to complete multiple campus enhancement projects. We have been following our campus master plan and are revising the plan to guide our path forward.

Completed projects include north engineering, the Pan-Hellenic Plaza, parking lot enhancements, the CASE and Student Success Centers in the Student Union, and multiple technology upgrades at UTM. Projects in the planning phase include residence hall renovations, a bridge over Douglas Road, renovation of the west Centennial Mall, research lab renovations, Ottawa riverbank stabilization, and multiple athletic facility improvements.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 2:

Deliver Relevant and Innovative Academic Programs

We must continue to refine and develop academic programs that are rigorous and relevant — not just for today’s job needs, but for those of the future!

Recently, our colleges of Medicine and Life Sciences and Natural Sciences and Mathematics announced an exciting new joint undergraduate degree in neurosciences. Building on our successful doctoral program in neuroscience, the new program provides students a unique opportunity not only to learn how the brain works but also to train alongside established biomedical researchers who are working to solve pressing questions about complicated brain disorders. The combination of biology and medicine will give graduates a unique advantage.

Other recent program additions include a Bachelor of Science and Arts degree in health science, a new interdisciplinary program offering students pathways to health professions programs and non-delivery aspects of healthcare and health equity.

We’ve also recently added a new Bachelor of Science in radiation therapy. The creation of the degree program is in direct response to high demand for radiation therapists in the region who specialize in operating the complex equipment used to deliver radiation to patients.

And the College of Arts and Letters will offer an associate of liberal arts degree to students on their way to earning a bachelor’s degree. The goal of the degree is to support student retention.

We continue to expand our online program offerings, building on our national recognition of top online bachelor’s programs. Overall, UToledo is ranked 150 out of 381 total institutions listed in the U.S. News and World Report 2023 Best Online Programs ranking. We also recently received a 2022 Quality Matters award recognizing our quality-focused online course design.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3:

Set the Standard for Health Education and Patient Care

With the support of our Board of Trustees, we recently announced a new healthcare structure — UToledo Health — bringing together our academic medical center and other clinical operations to better support how we serve the healthcare needs of our community.

UToledo Health will be led by the CEO of UTMC and a chief physician executive. A separate board made up of stakeholder representatives and external members appointed by institutional leadership also will be created to oversee clinical affairs and report to the University's Board of Trustees.

We will continue to support continuing education and training for our healthcare providers — empowering them to support the healthcare needs of our community.

UTMC's Todd Stec did just that when he completed his nursing degree last December after 24 years working in the field. He served as a nurse and then as a lead nurse in the emergency room, as house supervisor for the hospital and as operations supervisor for the ER. After completing UToledo's R.N. to B.S.N. program, he is now serving as the nurse assistant director for senior behavioral health.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 4:

Distinguish UToledo Regionally, Nationally and Internationally

A university on the move, we must leverage our recent successes, building momentum for the future. Last fall, UToledo was recognized for the first time among the top universities in the country in the 2022-23 U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges rankings, but this is just the beginning!

The University also was recognized by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities with its 2022 Public Impact Research Award at the APLU annual meeting in Denver. UToledo and its Water Task Force were lauded for efforts to protect Toledo's drinking water.

And in 2022, we launched a new initiative to enhance our community engagement efforts, naming Valerie Simmons-Walston to serve as special assistant to the president for community engagement and strategic partnerships.

The momentum continues — just last week, we officially submitted our application for funding from the U.S. Department of Energy's \$8 billion hydrogen hub initiative. If successful, the Great Lakes Clean Hydrogen coalition will advance commercial deployment of hydrogen in a variety of transportation and industrial applications in the Midwest.



Dr. Karen Bjorkman

American Astronomical Society Fellow



Dr. Kevin Czajkowski

Distinguished University Professors



Dr. Revathy Kumar



Dr. Michael Heben



Dr. Amira Gohara

College of American Pathologists Lifetime Achievement Awardee



Dr. Mark Merrick

National Academies of Practice Distinguished Fellow

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 5:

Foster a People-Centered Culture

At The University of Toledo, our greatest asset is our people, and to achieve these ambitious goals we must recruit and retain outstanding talent.

Many of our faculty and staff have received national and international recognition, including our former provost and a Distinguished University Professor of astronomy, Dr. Karen Bjorkman.

We also named our 2023 Distinguished University Professors, recognized a Fulbright Scholar, celebrated a Lifetime Achievement Awardee, and honored a Distinguished Fellow.

Congratulations to all!

To realize our vision, we will need the continued support and encouragement from our amazing alumni and donors.

During our recent Day of Giving, our supporters set a new milestone with \$2,193,302 in gifts. The total is a nearly 11% jump from 2022 and a record in the six-year history of the campaign. A total of 3,177 donors collectively participated online and during live events in Toledo during the 36-hour fundraising effort. To each of our donors, thank you. We cannot do this important work without your support!



STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 6:

Position UToledo for Future Success Through Financial and Operational Effectiveness

Higher education is being challenged across the country as we move forward in a post-COVID environment with increased competition to recruit a declining number of high school students and innovate to prepare successful future-ready graduates.

UToledo is responding to make sure the high value of a UToledo degree remains a great investment. This will require us to make strategic decisions in the months and years ahead that address historic challenges.

With limited resources, we need to prioritize opportunities for growth and innovation, which will mean reducing or eliminating some aspects of our organization that no longer align with these priorities. These are difficult decisions, and we will have to make them together. Student success and our new Strategic Plan will guide our path forward.

This is indeed a pivotal moment for our University, requiring each of us to be a part of the solution. Bring forward your great ideas! Let us face challenges head on! Together, let us embrace this opportunity to reimagine UToledo!

I am confident that together we will not only persevere as we have for 150 years but position the University for great success in the future.

So today, let us learn from our past, celebrate our present and look forward to our future. Thank you for joining us today and thank you for all that you do for The University of Toledo!