

*The Inauguration of*  
**James Paul Holloway, Ph.D.**  
*19th President*

October 16, 2025

## The University For Toledo

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Good afternoon. Today is a day of celebration, for which the investiture of a president is only the excuse.

Instead, today is about something much more. Today is about the reaffirmation of a purpose, the renewal of a promise and the recognition of pride. Purpose, promise and pride.

Today is about who we are as a university. And so, I start by declaring this: From our founding, we have never been simply a university in Toledo. Rather, we have ever been The University **for** Toledo.

What does this mean? It means our mission is inseparable from the future of this city and this region. It means that when Toledo grows, the University grows. It means that when UToledo advances discovery, educates leaders, cares for patients and uplifts students, we are advancing our whole community.

To say we are The University for Toledo is to declare that this community is not simply our home, but that this community is also core to our purpose.

This is not to say that we do not welcome learners from across the nation and the world. We do welcome them. We celebrate our students from New York and New Delhi just as much as we do those from Perrysburg and Maumee.

This is not to say that we do not pursue fundamental research questions driven by our human need to understand the universe and ourselves. We do research the fundamental questions, from the

formation of galaxies to the aesthetics of Syrian art, even as we seek to understand glass in support of local industry.

But to say we are The University for Toledo does mean that we never forget our home is here within the factories, farms and fields of northwest Ohio.

I am warmed and grateful for the welcome that my family and I have received here in Toledo. This community has opened its arms to us personally, and with hope for the success of our University.

Let me pause, therefore, and recognize with gratitude those who have brought us together today. Thank you, Trustee Patrick Kenney, for your kind introduction. Thank you also, Trustee Chair Mike Miller. And for all our trustees: Thank you all for the trust, faith and support you have shown to me. Thank you for your wisdom and advice. And thank you for your selfless service to The University of Toledo.

Let me also acknowledge the others here today — students, faculty and healthcare workers, representatives from other universities, alumni, government representatives, and our Toledo community members who are here with us. And most importantly, let us thank the staff of The University of Toledo who endeavor every day to enable our work.

Eleanor Roosevelt once wrote “It is essential, above all, that in making history we do not forget to learn by history, to see our mistakes as well as our successes, our weaknesses as well as our strengths.”



Elyse Hutcheson is hooded by Dr. Wesley Bullock, associate professor in the Department of Psychology, during the Spring 2025 Commencement ceremony when she graduated with a Ph.D. in psychology.

So let us remember as a university from whence we came, so that we may better understand where we are going.

The University of Toledo was founded in 1872, through the vision of Jesup Scott, who believed wholeheartedly in Toledo's future as a great city that would be of world renown. To support Toledo's development, he conceived of a university that would promote knowledge in the arts and trades and their related sciences, and other branches of learning also. And Scott did not simply preach lofty words, but he provided practical gift. He gave 160 acres of land to serve as a trust to fund our university to support the city he loved.

There were ups and downs and our newborn institution struggled. It opened; it closed. Scott's family and friends poured in money to reopen it again in 1884, and in the new manual training curriculum, our students studied the classical liberal arts alongside courses to develop practical skills to support them in any trade.

Across the years we expanded our reach, adding pharmacy, law, art, education, science, engineering, intercollegiate athletics, business and nursing. We became a state school in 1967, and later merged with the Medical University of Ohio, bringing us a medical school, a hospital and community clinics that support the health of our region. We became a research university wherein learning occurs in an environment where knowledge is always new.

Through all our history, we have focused on education that is simultaneously aspirational and practical, balancing learning for the sake of expanding the

mind with professional development for the sake of serving self and society.

We provide learning that functions both to develop the skills of intellectual inquiry and growth, and the tools to support the future career success of our learners after they graduate. We are a professional university and our aim is to support the professional futures of each student.

This is the **purpose**.

The University of Toledo has always been tightly tied to our city, to Lucas County and to the region. This connection is the contract we made with Jesup Scott when we accepted his gift of land in furtherance of his dream. We exist only because he, his family and his friends launched us and sustained us through adversity, because they loved Toledo.

All that we are and can do, for our students and our alumni and for humanity as a whole, is tied to this place by a promise, a promise represented by 160 acres of land and a dream.

A promise to maintain a special bond to this region and its people. Not to the exclusion of all others, far from it. Our far-flung branches can embrace everyone because our roots are deep within the soil of northwest Ohio.

We are not just a university in Toledo.  
We are The University for Toledo.

This is the **promise**.

And our university is today the site of many accomplishments that bring honor to our city.

Our arts program is housed in a Frank Gehry building located on the grounds of the nation's highest-ranked art museum.

Our hospital advances research-based medical care while also providing this essential care for the neediest of our people. UToledo Health delivers kidney transplants faster than any other hospital in the nation, every year saving the lives of over 200 mothers, fathers, sons and daughters.

Our Division I athletics bring the community together in joyful competition while advancing student-athletes' intellectual and physical abilities and facilitating their future in whatever profession they elect to pursue. In combined conference winning percentage for football and basketball over the last decade, the top-ranked school would be ... well, let's just say a large university down in Columbus. And number two would be a little school out in Idaho. But number three, in the nation, is our own University of Toledo Rockets. Third in the nation.

We are among the top users of the most advanced scientific instrument of our age, the James Webb Space Telescope.

Our Wright Center for Photovoltaics Innovation and Commercialization is one of the few centers in the world with expertise in the study of both CdTe and perovskite solar cells, and has played a key leadership role in Ohio's development of a photovoltaic manufacturing industry.

Thirty-five of our faculty appear on the Stanford/Elsevier list of the top 2% of researchers in the world.

Our students graduate with the fifth lowest level of debt among all Ohio university graduates, and they are top five in earnings one year, five years and 10 years after graduation.

Students in our sales program consistently place in the top 10 in national sales competitions, and our engineering students graduate with one full year of real work experience.

We are not just a university in Toledo, we are an amazing University for Toledo, with a host of astonishing accomplishments that we should shout from the rooftops.

This is the **pride**.



Dr. Randall Ellingson, professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy and Wright Center for Photovoltaics Innovation and Commercialization Endowed Chair, has been exploring space applications of thin-film photovoltaics with the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory since 2002.





President Holloway poses with UToledo student Presidential Ambassadors Alex Hudson Villafan and Haley Charville on his first day on campus July 15, 2025.

The **purpose** — We are a research university dedicated to supporting the professional learning and future success of our students.

The **promise** — We remain in service to our place in the greater metropolitan region of Toledo, and to its people.

The **pride** — We recognize for ourselves, and will share with others, that we are providing world-class contributions to human knowledge and health.

We have The Power To Do all of these things. We can achieve our purpose, keep our promise to Toledo and be proud of our achievements as a place of learning and discovery.

UToledo faces challenges, as does all of higher education. Our value is questioned. Our enrollment has declined. The government funding streams for our missions in education, research and patient care are increasingly uncertain. And our society has less trust in expertise.

Yet we have weathered difficult times before. At such moments, we must look forward and take big steps. We have done so before, and we must do so now.

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Ten years before our founding, Abraham Lincoln said, “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew and act anew.”

And so must The University of Toledo think anew, and act anew.

We have an existing strategic plan reaching toward 2028. While its six goals are reasonable, it is inadequate to address the challenges that face us. We will not neglect its objectives, but nor will we define our path solely in terms of those goals. In a few years we will renew it, but that is not where we will begin.

Starting today and over the next several years, we will instead define three launch pads that will define the Rocket trajectory.

One launch pad, **Advantage Toledo**, will distinguish us in our educational mission and attract new learners.

The next launch pad, **Innovate Toledo**, will grow our research impact and strengthen our region economically.

And the final launch pad, **Healthy Toledo**, will support the health and well-being of our region.

The three areas covered by these launch pads support our tri-partite mission: education, research and patient care. And they support the essential triad for the success of any community: education, economic opportunity and health.

Together they will help us to grow our student enrollment, support the aspirations of learners from our region and across the nation and globe, expand our research capacity and impact, and connect us more strongly to the communities and place of our institutional birth and life.

## Advantage Toledo

Let me start with **Advantage Toledo**.

For a student, the commencement ceremony, experienced in this very arena, is not the end. It is the beginning. Student success must be defined not simply as passing from matriculation to graduation, but must rather be defined by a student's ability to pursue their own professional aspirations after they graduate.

Advantage Toledo will direct every undergraduate student at UToledo into a professionally meaningful trajectory that prepares them to succeed post-graduation. This will be accomplished by having all students participate in experiences that prepare them to apply knowledge, bridging from class to practice, and developing their ability to address the complex ambiguities of the world. These opportunities can include research in our labs and field sites, study abroad, internships, clinical placements, co-op assignments, leadership in student government or public exhibitions of artistic craft.

The goal is to step beyond the traditional classroom and ensure our students have experiences that develop their wisdom while simultaneously introducing them to the habits and skills needed to succeed in the world beyond the academy. Advantage Toledo will launch our students on a trajectory toward their own dreams. Many prospective students will resonate with this opportunity and come here because of it.

We are already doing it. Our health students have clinical placements, our engineers participate in co-ops, 85% of our business students have internships and many other students are similarly provided.

I believe we can ensure that every undergraduate student entering UToledo next fall can have such an Advantage Toledo experience. I will charge the Provost to develop and implement a plan to make this happen for every undergraduate student. We will need your help, too. Faculty, staff and community partners must all step in to make this idea a reality.



UToledo students Meredith Harrison and Kurt Meiring received industry experience at Dana Incorporated as part of the College of Engineering's integrated co-op program.

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## Innovate Toledo

Next, **Innovate Toledo**.

As a research institution, it is core to our purpose to advance human knowledge. We make new discoveries about the universe in which we live and seek to thrive. We create new methods of understanding and new techniques to meet our daily needs and desires. We develop new treatments for diseases. We create new books, plays, music and art that help us explore meaning and bring us joy.

UToledo is on a strong path, with over 100 doctoral graduates and research expenditures of over \$70 million annually, giving us recognition as a Carnegie R1 institution. But we must continue to develop our human capacity and prepare faculty to successfully pursue team-based research and craft grants supporting large research centers. We must diversify the sources for funding to support our research work, and we must also encourage research efforts that cross our traditional intellectual boundaries and our own geographies.

Our Lake Erie Center, along with the UToledo Water Task Force, provide an excellent example of crossing such boundaries. They successfully brought together faculty and students from multiple departments to understand basic research questions that directly impact the quality of our region's drinking water, and are providing novel, practical solutions from that basic understanding.

Innovate Toledo will expand these efforts. This launch pad will initiate, facilitate and scale interdisciplinary research that is inspired by the opportunities of our region, and develop and grow our regional capacity to drive innovation.

As a research enterprise, this project has three goals:

1. To facilitate and grow research tied to and inspired by research questions aligned with the needs and opportunities of our region.
2. To cross the disciplinary boundaries of our University, creating a more fully integrated UToledo.
3. To expand our capacity to do research and to launch major research efforts based on external funding.

Innovate Toledo will be founded on a one-time multi-million-dollar investment to support teams with both developmental funding and professional support to form effective interdisciplinary faculty teams, to ripen their initial ideas and results, to create partnerships and to move teams towards new external funding.

Innovate Toledo will also commit UToledo to serve as a leader and partner across our region to support an entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem, incubating new companies and helping existing companies to connect with our expertise to expand their operations.

As a major research university, UToledo can provide an important platform to facilitate the growth of our economy. And because we are not just a university in Toledo, but rather The University for Toledo, we have not just the ability, but also the obligation, to do so. I will direct our new Vice President for Research to focus on building our research infrastructure and innovation ecosystem through Innovate Toledo and other efforts.



Doctoral student Prince Atiti assists Dr. Kennedy Doro, associate professor in the UToledo Department of Environmental Sciences, in installing a soil sensor at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.



Dr. Kunal Yadav, UToledo Health transplant surgeon and director of the new pancreas transplant program, performed Taylor Iceman's successful kidney and pancreas transplant surgery at UTMH in February 2025.

## Healthy Toledo

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Finally, **Healthy Toledo**.

The 2022 County Health Rankings and Roadmap lists Lucas County 79th out of the 88 counties of Ohio in health outcomes. This is not acceptable.

We have only one physician per 1,000 population in our county, 38% of deaths in driving accidents involve alcohol, only half of our population receives an annual flu vaccination, and over half of children under 5 are covered by Medicaid.

Healthy Toledo will work to improve the health of our region. Healthy Toledo will bring renewed focus to our public health efforts, to our clinical treatment platform, and to educating the healthcare workforce. Only UToledo can do all three.

We will structure our clinical footprint to create an optimal system that allows patients to access our healthcare services with ease. We will continue to improve our clinical metrics and achieve key, nationally recognized quality outcomes. We will partner with local health systems to support their work to provide critical healthcare to our communities.

We will improve our infrastructure to undertake health-related research, including the expansion of research on important health conditions that

challenge the people of our region, such as cancer, diabetes and hypertension. And we must expand our capacity to perform clinical trials and translational research. I will ask our EVP for Health Affairs, in partnership with others, to work together to advance this effort, with resources developed from governmental, philanthropic and other sources.

Every launch pad needs the right support equipment – the gantry, the acoustic suppression system, the liquid oxygen tank – whatever. And indeed, the Rocket launch pads require a new structure within UToledo to ensure success because each of them relies on the engagement of our community.

Therefore, to support the launch pads announced above, the President's Office will be developing **UToledo Extension**, an effort that aligns existing efforts and provides a focus on external service and relationship building, including relationships with community groups and organizations, and company partnerships.

The UToledo Extension will provide a one-stop shop for external partners who can benefit from UToledo's expertise and who can help us meet our goals for the launch pads. The extension is just that, a way to extend who we are into the community that supports us.





# WE ARE THE UNIVERSITY *for* TOLEDO

Imagine The University of Toledo five years hence.

Thousands of learners from across the world are embraced here. They develop themselves as creators and innovators whose professional success will impact their families, communities and nation.

In our labs, our libraries, our studios, our clinics and at our field sites in Ohio and beyond, new discoveries are being made that illuminate our place in the universe, that improve the technologies that enrich our lives and ensure our health.

In our hospital and clinics, patients find hope.

On the athletic field, our competitions bring tens of thousands of our community together in excitement, fun and pride.

Across the region, our students are working with companies, gaining skills and connections to ensure their future success, and across the world, our students are having the transformative experiences that come from engaging with other cultures.

As a metropolitan research university and academic health center located in a region with a strong manufacturing and agricultural future, we are unabashed in our focus on professional education, unswerving in pursuing research that advances our region, unrelenting in seeking cures for our patients and unafraid to declare our achievements.

With the partnership and efforts of you all, we have the Power To Do all that I have described, and more. We have a purpose, we thrive on our promise, and we are proud. **We are The University for Toledo.**

