



2024 State of the University

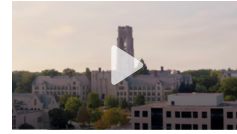
# The Power **TO DO** More

Oct. 16, 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TOLEDO**

**THE POWER UTOLEDO THE POWER UTOLEDO THE POWER UTOLEDO**



Watch  
introduction  
video.



**Matthew J. Schroeder**  
Interim President,  
The University of Toledo

Thank you all so much for being here today. Welcome to those in the room and to those watching online.

To our community, we are Toledo's university and recognize the importance of being the anchor institution in Northwest Ohio. To our alumni and donors, your support is critical to our growth and transformation. To our patients, we are committed to your health, well-being and providing the highest quality of care. To our faculty, your passion for teaching and research are key to our success and will drive our promising future. To our staff, your dedication to our students and our patients is unmatched. Your work is changing lives. And, to our students, without you, we would not be here. Please know that we are committed to your academic success and your UToledo experience. Our goal is to ensure the value of your UToledo degree only grows as we advance our University forward.

It has been 18 months since the last State of the University address. During that time, we have had challenges and successes, all of which have brought us together today. Over the next few minutes, I want to acknowledge our challenges, celebrate our successes and set the direction for our future.

As many of you know, I am a proud Rocket. I stand before you today not only as your Interim President, but also as someone who has spent his career supporting our mission as an alumnus who is passionate about UToledo. I personally understand the value of a UToledo education and the lifelong bond our graduates have with their University.

I am humbled by the awesome responsibility to lead this public research university and academic medical center. I'd like to thank our Board of Trustees for trusting me to lead the University in this moment. The headwinds facing higher education and healthcare are real, but with all challenges come great opportunities.

And my vision for UToledo reflects the many opportunities we have through **The Power To Do**. Simply stated, my vision is for UToledo to be the regional force powering opportunities to learn, care, work and play. So, what does that mean?

**“My vision is for UToledo to be the regional force powering opportunities to learn, care, work and play.”**

## LEARN

UToledo provides a world class education and a portfolio of programs that are second to none. We have the degrees that our students want and that our community needs for our region and for Ohio to be successful.

We have strength in the sciences, engineering and healthcare fields, all critically important to support a thriving world. We have in-demand professional programs in medicine, law and business. And our graduate programs are growing, offering students a chance to advance their education and further their knowledge.

I often say we have a great story to tell. I know we do. But I also will tell you that we can and must do more.

This is a challenging time for higher education. People are questioning the value of a college degree and if the credential is worth the price of tuition. There is criticism that universities are teaching people what to think instead of how to think. There is increasing competition for students among colleges and universities that look nearly identical on paper.

Our elected leaders in Ohio are counting on us to develop the talent of tomorrow. And rightfully so, they are holding us accountable for a strong value proposition. We should continue to keep the cost of

college affordable while reducing the time it takes to earn a degree. I am proud to say that UToledo graduates carry less federal student loan debt than graduates from many Ohio institutions including Mid-American Conference peers BGSU, Kent State and Miami.

We need to prepare the professional talent required to replace an aging workforce and also prepare our students for jobs that don't yet exist when they graduate, as I think about the growth in our data science and analytics and cybersecurity degree programs or the number of courses we have today about social media and artificial intelligence.

How are we responding? We are differentiating UToledo from others.

We need to continue to deliver relevant and innovative academic programs. We need to have the courage to do something that hasn't been done before and to make the hard choices to stop doing the things that no longer have value for our students and our community.

We owe it to our students to provide them with a robust education from experts in their fields who are up to date on the latest developments in their industry and professions.





We must expand experiential learning opportunities that allow students to apply the skills they learn in the classroom and prepare them to be valuable contributors to their future employers on day one.

We must make our graduates the most highly sought after candidates in their fields and create the leaders of tomorrow. It is our responsibility to activate the potential of our students and to support their determination to accomplish their goals.

I'm proud to share some recent examples of how we are doing this important work.

Our previous exercise science program wasn't broken, but we had the courage to see that it wasn't as relevant as it once was and to replace it. So, what did we do about it? We launched a new health sciences degree program to better prepare students for careers in a variety of healthcare occupations.

Graduates who complete this program are well prepared to continue their training in any number of health professions, from medical school to physical and occupational therapy and more, further building a strong pipeline of future talent to care for our community. The number of students in this program nearly tripled in its second year.

We recently created a new undergraduate degree in neuroscience bringing together the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and College of Medicine and Life Sciences to support the surging interest in the field of brain research.

Our undergraduate program in Cosmetic Science and Formulation Design is a jewel in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and a leader in the nation. We were the country's first such undergraduate program and we continue to attract students from across the country and around the world to our nationally recognized program. It was natural to expand that expertise with our new fully online Master of Science program this fall. It launched with a class of 24 new students, outperforming year one assumptions, and I look forward to watching it grow.

And, in May we announced an amended academic affiliation agreement with ProMedica that supports the College of Medicine and Life Sciences. The new agreement reaffirms a commitment to offer high quality medical education to our students, residents and fellows to serve Northwest Ohio. We appreciate our ongoing partnership with ProMedica.

At the same time, we continue our program prioritization process. We've taken those first steps to modernize our academic portfolio. This is not a one and done effort. It requires constant collaboration across all colleges. I'd like to thank our faculty for their strong work and encourage them to continue to think creatively about the educational needs of our students. We will review our degree programs to identify those that are in high demand now and five years from now and provide the resources to make them competitive.

Simultaneously, we need to continue to identify those programs that are in low demand or under-enrolled and ask ourselves if this is something we continue to offer at UToledo. We will constantly evaluate our portfolio and move with urgency to update our programs to remain relevant with an eagerness to deliver innovative, cutting-edge programming that excites our students and our faculty.

If we do not have the programs students want to study, we will not be able to recruit them to UToledo. Our elephant in the room – declining enrollment. It's no secret that our student enrollment has been struggling for more than a decade.

It is easy to place some of the blame on the changing demographics of fewer high school graduates or the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is easy to hire consultants and have them give you the same advice they give every other college and university and to believe their promises of quick fixes. This obviously hasn't worked well for us. The need to change is not an indictment of our past performance. Under my leadership, there will be no more excuses.

The harsh truth is that we took our focus off the thing that makes us great – our own backyard. We need to get our swagger back! To do so, we are getting back to the fundamentals and putting in the work. We have been busy in recent months.

We have a new Enrollment Plan that outlines our initiatives and tactics for the next three years. And over the summer we created a new Recruitment Plan with clear goals and objectives that holds our team accountable for results. And in about a week, we'll welcome a new Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management who is passionate about recruiting students and dedicated to making sure they graduate so that we can both grow new student enrollment and improve student retention rates.

Enrollment with a capital "E" requires diligent effort from that first conversation with a recruiter to walking off the stage with a diploma in hand. We all must work together to grow enrollment. In addition to the Enrollment Plan and the Recruitment Plan, we are creating a Student Success Plan to ensure all students have the support they need for success both in the classroom and on campus.

We are doing more. And upon execution, I am confident that our class of new students in Fall 2025 will be up. I look forward to celebrating that with the campus community less than a year from now.





## CARE

We are proud to provide safe, comprehensive and compassionate care for our community. This summer we introduced you to UToledo Health, our new identity for our clinical enterprise that brings together our hospital and physician practice group into one organization to better support the health and well-being of our community. Today our clinical enterprise accounts for over half of our business at The University of Toledo.

Again, I will be the first person to say we have a great story to tell. I know we do. And I will also tell you that we can and must do more.

Our kidney transplant program is the envy of others. A record 203 kidney transplants were performed in 2023, including the 3,000<sup>th</sup> procedure in the 50-plus year history of our program. A point of pride is that on average our patients spend just less than two months on our transplant list before getting a new kidney. That compares to a national average of a little more than two and a half years.

We are the first and only hospital in the region to offer deep brain stimulation therapy. The advanced neurosurgical procedure significantly improves the shakiness and movement problems experienced by patients with Parkinson's disease and essential tremor.

We are known for our orthopaedics program that has successfully returned so many members of our community back to their daily lives after joint replacement and successful rehab. We are excited to add a new state-of-the-art robotic surgery platform that first builds a 3-D model of a patient's joint and then guides the surgeon to make extremely precise cuts.

Healthcare has its critics. The cost of care is too high. Medical insurance is complicated. It can take a long time to get an appointment with the specialist you need.

We are dedicated to meeting the needs of our community while serving our students as an academic medical center. We can do more.

As part of our efforts to create UToledo Health and optimize our performance, we are taking a closer look at how our patients access our providers and our facilities. We want it to be easier for you to get an appointment with a provider when you need it. We are recruiting physicians. We are analyzing our operations and finding ways to improve productivity. We are taking a hard look at our clinic locations and the specialties we offer.

We just launched our new Mobile Health Unit to bring UToledo Health to you. It is traveling our region providing preventative screenings, like checking blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and connecting patients to primary care providers at UToledo Health for follow-up.

And leaning into our identity as an academic medical center, we are going to ramp up our clinical trials and medical research that will create new and innovative procedures. We are proud to be an important healthcare teaching institution in our region where our experts train the providers of the future. We are committed to a relentless pursuit of excellence in healthcare.

## WORK

UToledo is proud to be Toledo's university. We are interconnected with our community. We have a multi-billion-dollar economic impact on the regional economy. UToledo alone has a network of more than 173,000 living alumni, many of whom stay in our region and in our state.

We were proud to welcome many graduates back to their alma mater earlier this month for Homecoming activities. I had a great time as the grand marshal in the Homecoming parade and really enjoyed hearing all the stories from our graduates about the impact that UToledo had on their lives. Over and over again, I heard how UToledo positioned each graduate for success. Our ability to find the potential in every student and guide them to achieve their goals is remarkable. Our network of alumni throughout Rocket Nation are ready and willing to engage with UToledo.

In addition to recruiting those students who become lifelong Rockets, we also are a net importer of talent to Toledo through not only our faculty and staff, but also our residents, fellows, grad students and undergrad students.

Our faculty researchers are among the best in their disciplines. UToledo brought in \$72.2 million in competitive external research awards in fiscal year 2024. That is the second highest in the University's history. We are proud that more than 82% of those research awards were federally funded, led by projects with the National Institutes of Health and Department of Defense.

We also are proud to have two faculty members who are among the world's most influential researchers. With papers that rank in the top 1% of citations, Dr. Jon Elhai in psychology and Dr. Yanfa Yan in physics are on this prestigious list.

I firmly believe we have a responsibility to attract and retain the best and brightest talent to UToledo. We need to do both. I am an example of how we can invest in our own people and provide them with opportunities for advancement throughout their career. We need to provide more professional development opportunities for those committed to UToledo.

At the same time, UToledo deserves exceptional talent and shouldn't settle. We need to seek out new Rockets who can provide fresh perspectives and challenge us to do things differently.

There is nothing more important than a high performing team dedicated to achieving our mission with a sense of urgency and accountability. Those are the types of individuals who are willing to do more.





## PLAY

How about them Rockets? Athletics is a powerful example of what success looks like at The University of Toledo. We could not be prouder of how our student-athletes represent UToledo on the field, in the classroom and in our community.

UToledo won five Mid-American Conference championships last year and a record six conference championships the year before. Our football and basketball programs have been among the highest in conference attendance for several years running. And we were recently awarded our third straight Cartwright Award recognizing UToledo as the top university in the conference for excellence in academics, athletics and citizenship. We hold the record for the most awards with four and we are the only school to win it in three consecutive seasons.

We are all Team Toledo. We need to take advantage of this mindset to accomplish the impossible. We need to be bold. We need to be ambitious. We need to do more, together. And we are.

Have you seen how our Rockets come onto the football field? In collaboration with Rocket Motorsports, a student organization that builds a Formula One-style racecar, we are now showcasing the amazing talents of our students in the classroom with the talents of our students on the field.

We added a new varsity sport with women's rowing. This is UToledo's 17th varsity sport that will bring to campus a full roster of 50 to 60 students and enhance our community partnerships with Metroparks Toledo and the Toledo Rowing Foundation. We're also energizing our efforts to increase the size of the Rocket Marching Band to provide more students with that unique experience and bonds that last a lifetime.

By working together, we can create new experiences for our students and positively impact enrollment. We continue to explore more opportunities like these. This is how we do more.

The Rise Together five-year strategic plan for Rocket Athletics gives us a strong blueprint for our future. Among the priorities are a new Champions Complex and other initiatives to set the Rockets apart that are gaining traction thanks to our supporters.

We recently announced the generous \$4 million gift from Roy and Marcia Armes. This is a transformative donation that will help elevate our athletic program to national prominence. Roy is a graduate of the UToledo College of Engineering and the Armes family has given generously to his college and our athletic program over the years. A capital campaign is on our horizon and with generous supporters like the Armes family, I am confident we will be successful in engaging donors to support our vision for the future.



I challenge our University of Toledo Foundation to ramp up the campaign efforts and I challenge our network of donors and alumni to consider how they can offer their support, whether in athletics, our academic mission or our clinical operations. Every gift counts and we need your help to do more.

The Rockets are a great front porch to our University introducing UToledo to new audiences and engaging our community. We need to do more to get people on our campuses.

The total solar eclipse this spring was a great example. We attracted fantastic crowds of people from near and far to experience this once in a lifetime event from the Glass Bowl and Centennial Mall. It was heartwarming to see our campus full of so much energy and excitement.

We're creating demand by hosting conferences, camps, concerts and more. We have beautiful campuses that should be a destination for events in our community. One such event is a new Thought Leadership Series cosponsored by UToledo and The Blade titled Perspectives. In this series, we will utilize our campus spaces for important discussions with national panelists and feature UToledo faculty who are subject matter experts. I'm excited to announce that the first of four events will focus on leadership and take place on Dec. 3 in our Doermann Theatre in University Hall.



I am also excited about the updated campus master plan that envisions a new one stop center off Bancroft Street connected to the historic Scott and Tucker Halls to serve as the front door to campus for future Rockets and their families. We will break ground in spring 2025 to move our student support services closer to the heart of campus.

We also have plans for multiple building renovations and the removal of some others that have served UToledo well over the years but are no longer needed. With enhancements to our capital plan, we will improve the spaces most used by our students, faculty and clinicians. And we will utilize the capital market to find ways to do more. Our campuses truly are destinations, and we should proudly show them off.

And, can I just say, speaking of showing off, our students are amazing. With over 400 student organizations, our students are engaged and doing more on campus and in the community every day.

Earlier this fall we had a campus activities fair on Centennial Mall. I was blown away by all of the student engagement on campus. The energy and positivity surrounding the activities happening in and around UToledo was special.

And just two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to send off 155 sleepy students at 5 a.m. as they boarded a bus to attend a leadership retreat at Kalahari run by our Office of Student Engagement. Our student leadership on campus is inspiring. Our students are doing more.





## How do we achieve this vision for UToledo to be the regional force powering opportunities to learn, care, work and play? We do it together.

Our Board of Trustees announced last week they have selected a firm to assist with a national search for UToledo's next permanent president. I 100% agree. The Board should do a national search. I am glad they are. And I intend to participate, compete and succeed against what I hope is a pool of very strong candidates for this top job.

In the meantime, this search cannot slow us down. We have a lot to do and must focus on what we can control and our goals to move UToledo forward. As I near the five-month mark as interim president, I recognize our University is more complex than most, but our problems are not unique.

There is a time and a place for every leader. In our UToledo history, our presidents have all served this University and its needs in that moment. I believe, in this moment, my background and experiences position us well to do more. I am not a visitor. I am not an outsider. I am not going anywhere. Like many of you in the audience, I have dedicated my career to UToledo and am invested in its success. It is time for all of us to get comfortable being uncomfortable.

I believe in our students, patients, faculty and staff. And I believe in this vision to position UToledo for success. We are not in a crisis. Through a series of difficult decisions, we have been fiscally responsible, and our plans to thoughtfully grow enrollment are in place and happening. There is no race to the bottom. We are a strong university with the potential to be even stronger.

It will take collaboration and creativity from all of us to reposition UToledo. It will take courage to try things that haven't been done at UToledo before. It will take bravery to stop doing the things that we have traditionally done. It will take hard work to change the way we do things. But doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result is insanity. In this role, I see things differently and I respect the roles all of us play at the University. I encourage others to see things differently as well. We have to work together to effect change. We can do more.

I hope you have all noticed our new brand — **The Power To Do**. It is the first time we have used the same framework for both our academic and clinical operations. We are stronger together. Through The Power To Do, we can better tell the story of the transformational impact we have on the students we graduate and the patients we care for.

Launched this summer, our brand celebrates the determination of Rockets and our resolve to find solutions and accomplish goals. UToledo has always amplified the initiative of our people for transformative outcomes, and we need to do a better job of telling our story.



**Watch The Power To Do brand anthem video.**

It is the story of our longstanding expertise in solar energy that led to UToledo being named a leading academic partner for the Northwest Ohio Glass Innovation Hub. And it is the story of the innovative work of our solar experts, like Dr. Randall Ellingson who is working with the U.S. Air Force on space-based solar cells to harvest even more energy from the sun.

It is the story of our water quality researchers who have spent the past decade committed to better understanding toxic algal blooms and protecting our drinking water, leading to UToledo being named a leader of the federal Great Lakes Center for Fresh Waters and Human Health.

It is the story of our amazing students, like our two 2024 Goldwater Scholars, Sophia Durham and Chloe Villa, drawn to UToledo for the opportunity to participate in undergraduate research.

It is the story of twin sisters Lyndsey Matus and Alex Best completing medical school at UToledo and entering family residency programs together at Nellis Air Force Base to begin their military medical careers.

It is the story of our faculty making a difference. Researcher Dr. Bina Joe recently earned the American Heart Association's prestigious Hypertension Research Award for her work studying how an individual's gut bacteria plays a role in high blood pressure.

It is the story of education faculty members leading important initiatives to recruit and retain science teachers and support early literacy programming.

It is the story of our astronomers who continue to earn competitive observing time on the James Webb Space Telescope, including two faculty members and a graduate student on this third and so far most competitive cycle.

It is the story of getting the Rocket name out there. Like when Rocket Athletics earned both the Jacoby Award and the Reese Trophy in the same year for the first time.

These are just a handful of the amazing UToledo stories we are sharing each and every day.





Rockets are doers. It is time we all do more!

If you are a Rocket, you need to embrace that pride and tell everyone why.

If you are a student, I encourage you to get involved and share your story, so more students get excited about all we have to offer.

If you work here, I welcome your ideas for us to do more. I am seeking out the doers. Together, we will move forward and grow excitement for UToledo.

If you live in the region, you need to understand the value of UToledo to our community and celebrate it.

We need to get our swagger back! We can be both authentic and aspirational. We can balance both the present moment and future impact. We are the regional force powering opportunities to learn, care, work and play.

We will grow new student enrollment. We will modernize our academic portfolio. We will expand experiential learning opportunities. We will make our graduates the most highly sought-after candidates in their fields. We will optimize our UToledo Health enterprise. We will ramp-up our clinical trials and medical research. We will attract and retain the best and brightest talent. We will launch a capital campaign. And we will make UToledo a destination.

The State of our University is strong and yet we also have the power to do so much more. At The University of Toledo, we're shaping the next generation of doers. Those who dare to do what others only dream. Please join me in doing more to accomplish our dreams.

**Thank you and Let's Go Rockets!**