



NOVEMBER 2010 UPDATE

Centennial Events:

What a great Centennial Celebration we've had. Commencing with our Founders Day celebration in Austin on 17 February 2009, the magnificent Centennial Gala on 13 February 2010, our Centennial Birthday party and opening of the time capsule on 17 February 2010, the Centennial Convocation with the heroes of Apollo 13, and the many memorable exhibits in the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum and Cornette Library, we have been able to celebrate those who have gone before us to build this great institution and to reflect on exactly why this institution exists. Our celebration will conclude on Founders Day of 2011 when we seal our new time capsule.

Our reflections of what has been accomplished in the past remind us of the awesome responsibilities we have to continue with and build upon the legacy and traditions of WT – to constantly keep in mind the purpose for which this university exists, and, like those before us, to advance WT to higher levels of performance and service.

Construction Projects:

In my last Update I discussed the many new construction projects in which we are engaged as we prepare the university's physical plant for the next 100 years. Progress on some of the projects has been on schedule, some not. Completion dates for the various projects are as follows:

- Recreation/sports complex: **Mid December 2010.**
- Parking Lot, 23rd Street (portions of lot are already open for use): **January 2011.**
- Phase I renovation of old Palo Duro Hospital as research center **January 2011.**
- Phase IV renovation of the ANS Building (includes enhancing the quality of science teaching labs, classroom space, and faculty offices): **January 2011.**
- Phase IV renovation of Virgil Henson Activities Center (includes a new more efficient entrance and a three story climbing wall): **February 2011.**
- New modern undergraduate residence hall that will provide living space for up to 340 students: **Fall 2011.**
- Phase I renovations of Mary Moody Northen Hall: **March 2011.**

Projects in the planning phase include:

- Renovation of the mothballed Ag/Nursing Building, Phase I, for engineering programs: **Fall 2011.**
- JBK expansion to include additional meeting rooms, a multi-purpose room, study spaces, student lounge, Veterans Resources Center, additional food service areas, and a catering kitchen for multi-purpose room: **Fall 2012.**

Additionally, over the next several months, we will begin a tree planting project across campus. Many of the trees on campus are at end of life. Many are weak and diseased, and likely to fall during high winds. This is especially true for our inventory of Elm trees. During Phase I of this project, we will be planting some 55 new trees across campus.

Budget Update:

With the national economic recession and sluggish recovery, economic activity in the State of Texas has slowed over the past couple of years. With this slowdown in the Texas economy, there has been a decline in tax revenues collected. As a result, there is a shortfall of State government revenues relative to projected expenditures. The latest figures I've seen is a \$4 billion revenue shortfall for this biennium relative to what was appropriated, and as much as a \$25 billion shortfall for the upcoming biennium (next two fiscal years). From what I hear elected leaders are skeptical about the \$25 billion number because it is based on the premise of "current services" (i.e., that such functions as education and Health & Human Services, and state employee benefits will continue to be funded at current levels. That is not going to happen. Thus, their number is somewhere in the range of an \$11-15 billion gap.) Nonetheless, there are projected shortfalls for both this biennium and next.

As a result, we are anticipating an additional reduction in our general revenue (GR) appropriation this year over and above the 5 percent cuts we have already sustained; and additional cuts in our appropriated GR budget for the upcoming biennium. At this time, the amount of the cuts is unknown. I expect we will learn from the leadership in State government later this month, or sometime during the first couple of weeks in December, the amount of additional cuts for this fiscal year. It will not be until later in the upcoming legislative session or special legislative session that the amount of the cuts for the next biennium will be known.

For planning purposes, I have asked division heads to prepare for an additional reduction in their budgets of 5 percent this year, in addition to the 5 percent we have already cut, and to prepare for budget reductions of 5 percent, 10 percent, and 15 percent below 95 percent of this current biennium's GR budget appropriation. The 5 percent, 10 percent, and 15 percent reductions represent approximately \$2,000,000, \$4,000,000, and \$6,000,000 annually, respectively. Budget proposals are to be submitted to me and the Vice President for Business and Finance by 17 December 2010. As we finalize plans for the upcoming biennium

budgets, we will be meeting with all key stakeholder groups of the university. Additionally, we will keep everyone informed as to plans developed.

In both the short and long terms, the only means to realistically deal with these cuts AND progress as a superb institution of higher education is ***growth in enrollment***. In the short term, as we grow enrollment at a rate faster than the rate at which we can increase the size of the faculty and staff, we are going to have to find ways to be more productive. This will most assuredly mean larger class sizes, increased advising loads, and increased loads in financial aid, counseling, tutorial services, etc. The alternative is deep cuts in programs and positions. To grow enrollment we need to continue to recruit students aggressively, market our programs, seek scholarship dollars to attract and retain students, and seek external funds to enhance programs. We need to provide to those students we recruit high quality educational programs and outstanding service.

Like those individuals who dealt with periods of great challenge throughout the first 100 years of WT's history, we will deal successfully with the budget challenges currently confronting us. More importantly, as we meet these challenges we will continue to serve well the citizens of the Panhandle and State of Texas, we will continue to grow enrollment at WT, and we will continue advancing WT as a superb university.

Have a great Thanksgiving break!

GO BUFFS!