



## **University of North Texas President V. Lane Rawlins**

V. Lane Rawlins began his term as president of the University of North Texas on May 14, 2010.

Now in his third public university presidency, President Rawlins brings to UNT a proven track record of success in elevating the quality and image of the universities he has served. Throughout his career, President Rawlins has remained committed to maintaining strong connections between world-class research and top-quality undergraduate education. He also is dedicated to upholding the mission of public universities to provide the best education possible to students of all backgrounds.

President Rawlins is leading UNT during a time of considerable progress. Founded in 1890 as a teacher's training institute, UNT is now an emerging public research university with enhanced programs for research and scholarship, new infrastructure and increased opportunities for faculty and students. As Texas' fourth largest university, UNT offers nearly 250 degree programs in 12 colleges and schools and is one of the most comprehensive universities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

During President Rawlins' tenure, he will guide UNT to a stronger research profile as it seeks to become a major research university. To fulfill its vision, UNT is building on its legacy in the arts and education while investing in its faculty, students, programs and research facilities to further its impacts in science, engineering and nanotechnology.

President Rawlins is helping to launch the university's strategic plan for research, relying on his experience in leading Washington State University during its quest to be designated a top-tier research university while it substantially grew its research funding. As president of WSU from 2000 to 2007, Rawlins led the creation of a strategic plan that guided the university's drive for educational and research excellence. His leadership also resulted in increased enrollment of academically talented students; a more diverse student body; and a stronger statewide presence while still supporting the needs of its multiple campus locations.

Following President Rawlins' retirement from WSU, he served from 2007 to 2009 as the interim director of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center for Conflict Resolution, a regional program of WSU and the University of Washington.

Before joining WSU, he served as president of the University of Memphis from 1991 to 2000. He also served as the University of Alabama System's vice chancellor for academic affairs, and WSU's vice provost and department chair in economics.

He twice served on the NCAA's Board of Directors and as chair of the Pac-10, Conference USA and Great Mid-West athletic conferences. He has served on the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Governor's Council on Global Competitiveness, and more than 20 other boards, including Boy Scouts of America, United Way and WKNO National Public Radio.

President Rawlins earned his Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Berkeley and his B.S. in economics from Brigham Young University. He has focused much of his research on labor economics (especially the effects of education on earnings in people's lives) and public policy. President Rawlins is a native of southeast Idaho. He and his wife, Mary Jo, have three children and 11 grandchildren.

**Written Testimony before the Senate Higher Education Committee**  
**8/19/2010**

V. Lane Rawlins, PhD  
President, University of North Texas  
940-565-2026  
*president@unt.edu*  
1155 Union Circle, # 311425  
Denton, Texas 76203  
Submitted, August 12, 2010

**Introduction**

- Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, I am V. Lane Rawlins, president of the University of North Texas. I began my term as president on May 14, and I anticipate serving one year.
- During my year as president, I am committed to ensuring the University of North Texas progresses its campaign to become a major research university with its students' education remaining a central focus.
- For UNT, it is critical to strike the balance between our aspirations to become advance our research agenda and our commitment to a high-quality, affordable education. UNT has already attained excellence in many areas and now we must turn our attention to greater balance.
- My experience at other institutions has demonstrated that a large comprehensive university such as the University of North Texas can build greater strength in research and in lifting up our region and our state. UNT must achieve the benchmarks of HB 51 while building upon our strengths as a student-centered university and assuring that we do not sacrifice our basic mission in the process.

**Impacts of HB 51**

- Currently ranked by the Carnegie Foundation as a *Research University in the High Research Activity Category*, UNT aspires to take the next step and make the highest Carnegie category. HB 51 sharpened our focus and prompted the development and progressively correlating culture of our first strategic plan for research. The plan outlines new and aggressive steps aimed at accelerating UNT's march toward major research university status.

- I believe that HB 51 is a statement of intent to advance higher education in Texas and to identify universities where the efforts in research can be concentrated. To that end HB 51 has galvanized our University community by stimulating focused conversations on campus about our goals and providing framework for this discussion.
- UNT has the potential to become one of the institutions people include in the implicit category of *great American universities*. Such great universities do not rely on a small number of science and technological disciplines to express their excellence. Nor do institutions that excel only in the arts and humanities break into their ranks. However, these universities must be balanced and have excellence across the board.
- UNT is already a comprehensive university. National and international prominence has been built in several corners of the institution's broad array of academic programs, scholarly disciplines, and research niches. Currently, our strongest areas tend to be in the arts, humanities, business, education, and related areas.
- As a result of HB 51, UNT now plans to embark on a sustained effort to develop research excellence in other areas critical to the institution, the community, state, country, and society at large, particularly in science, technology, and engineering.
- The plan to become a major research university is also a plan to infuse more research and scholarship emphasis in undergraduate and graduate education and in our outreach efforts.

### Our Plan

- Our plan to become a major research university is very ambitious and requires our institution to remain intensely focused on our goals. At the same time, it will require state and private at higher levels.
- **Ambitious external research goals**
  - Reach the threshold level of research expenditures in the next five years.
- Continue that rate of growth for the next decade.
- **Our plan to expand external research funding**
  - The plan centers on hiring more than 150 research-active faculty in selected areas by 2016 whose external funding can contribute substantially to restricted research expenditures.
- **Improve Undergraduate Education**

- This research emphasis will help us to build on our excellent reputation for high-quality undergraduate education and will further improve undergraduate education by improving curricula, improving and expanding student services, and attracting the best possible high school students to UNT as freshmen through targeted recruiting and merit scholarships.
- UNT will also continue contributing to *Closing the Gaps* by recruiting and graduating a diverse student body.
- Expanding external funding will benefit both our undergraduate and graduate students. Star researchers will be in classrooms, as will their graduate students and other collaborators. UNT students will have the opportunity to have cutting-edge educational experiences not available in textbooks through their exposure to top researchers and lab facilities. The talents of researchers must extend to the classroom to enrich the educational experience of students and to ensure our top scientists maintain focus on the educational goals of the institution.
- **Expand Research Facilities and Resources**
  - UNT plans to significantly increase research space to accommodate the projected growth in research activities through a combination of space reallocation, renovation of vacated space and new construction (altogether, about 300,000 square feet).
  - Our top priority is a new science and technology research building.
  - UNT will continue to expand and upgrade research facilities and build new laboratories, specifically in the areas of strategic priorities.
  - The Office of Advancement is aligning its goals with this strategic plan to help meet ongoing needs and to build UNT's endowment.
  - In addition, UNT continues to develop a research park (UNT Discovery Park) with technology incubator facilities on a 290-acre property near the main campus.
- **Expand and Improve Doctoral Training**
  - Based on the results of a comprehensive study of existing doctoral programs, UNT will sustain and promote the productivity of current high-quality programs, enhance the quality and productivity of all programs through outcome-based investments, establish new doctoral programs in targeted areas, and reallocate resources from low-producing programs not aligned with UNT's strategic objectives.

- UNT will increase its pool of doctoral applicants, improve retention, and increase selective admissions. UNT seeks to:
  - Award 200 Ph.D.s annually by 2015; and
  - Award 300 doctoral degrees annually (90 percent Ph.D. degrees) by 2020.

### **Texas Research Incentive Program**

- The Texas Research Incentive Program has been an important component of UNT's fundraising efforts. In the 2010 distribution, UNT was awarded \$857,593 based on eligible donations of \$2,813,316.
- To better improve fundraising, UNT has a new vice president of advancement, Lisa Baronio, aboard as of January, and she is in the process of a top-to-bottom evaluation of the department. While the current financial climate has required UNT to implement a hiring freeze, exceptions have been made in Advancement to further improve our efforts.

### **In Conclusion**

- Every aspect of the UNT community will be engaged in roles actively contributing toward those portions of UNT's mission crucial to attaining recognition as a major research university.
- Our aggressive hiring plan alone will play a major role in transforming the research culture of UNT.
- By 2020, we expect that more than 200 new faculty will be in place. Their research skills and accomplishments will directly contribute to the institution's key goals of increasing funded research, producing Ph.D. students, and achieving national recognition. They will in turn serve to broaden the educational opportunities available to UNT undergraduate and graduate students, allowing us to preserve our student-focused culture.
- Our highly valued humanities scholars, creative artists, and researchers from across our remaining disciplines will be actively engaged in doctoral training, influential research, scholarship, and creative endeavors that garner national and international attention – maintaining and progressing our excellence as a comprehensive student-centered institution.
- All faculty at UNT have critical roles to play, including those who focus almost exclusively on providing a high-quality undergraduate educational experience. This culture of faculty promoting institutional excellence is a hallmark of a great research university.