FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

As we pass the one-year anniversary of when COVID-19 was declared a world-wide pandemic and the University quickly adapted to serving our students in a manner that kept them safe, the past few months will not easily be forgotten by our staff [page 3].

In the middle of a tumultuous national election, UT Dallas served as a polling place for two different Texas counties [page 5], with our Parking staff guiding voters to their correct voting locations and our Custodial staff ensuring that citizens could exercise their constitutional rights in a place that was safe, sanitized and clean.

A record-breaking winter weather emergency endangered many Texans and caused the University to shut down operations for a week, but a Facilities Management team stayed on campus around the clock to protect our critical infrastructure [page 5].

Despite these and other challenges, our office was able to move forward with important construction activities, such as the third phase of the Campus Landscape Improvement Project [page 7] and the latest phase of the Northside at UT Dallas (“Comet Town”) complex [page 6]. In addition, we continue our plans for an Athenaeum on campus, while partnering with UT Southwestern on a new 150,000 square foot Biomedical Engineering & Sciences Building near the UT Dallas south campus. We were also happy to see our favorite golf practice facility back in business, under a new name: The Golf Ranch [page 5]. When we are finally able to welcome our students, faculty and staff back to campus, they will return to a much-improved, greener and more pedestrian-friendly University. Our continuing sustainability efforts in the midst of all this progress have not gone unnoticed [page 9].

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Dr. Calvin D. Jamison,
Vice President for Facilities & Economic Development

Economic Development Summit

This November, the University held its second Economic Development Summit —virtually. It was an opportunity for regional business, economic and educational leaders to discuss how to move forward in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The occasion also allowed UTD to demonstrate our value as a development partner and contributor to the region’s economy.

Pictured at left, clockwise from upper left, four panelists and presenters from this year’s summit: Calvin D. Jamison, vice president for Facilities & Economic Development; Robert Kaplan, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; Dr. Richard Benson, president of The University of Texas and Eugene McDermott Distinguished University Chair of Leadership; and Trina Wilson, director of Staff Counsel, Region 5, GEICO.

UT Dallas Recognized For Our Sustainability Efforts

The Arbor Day Foundation re-certified The University of Texas at Dallas in their Tree Campus Higher Education program, recognizing many UT Dallas conservation efforts, including our tree care plan and student service learning projects.

UT has also been recognized as a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly University (BFU) by The League of American Bicyclists. UT Dallas is now the 7th university in Texas to attain BFU certification, and the second BFU in the UT System.

Seen clockwise from right: The Tree Campus Higher Education mark; A tree-lined UT Dallas hike-and-bike path; UTD’s Bronze BFU mark (Bicycle Friendly University™ is a service mark of the League of American Bicyclists and is used with permission).
Pedestrian Promenade

One of the most noticeable elements in the third phase of the Campus Landscape Enhancement Project (CLEP III) is our new Pedestrian Promenade, a broad, tree-lined, 26-foot-wide path replacing much of Rutford Avenue through the heart of campus. The new Promenade will run from Parking Structure 3 south to Engineering and Computer Science West, and will be extensively landscaped on both sides to create a “legacy canopy” that the University community will enjoy for years to come. CLEP III is expected to bring 1,220 new trees to UT Dallas.

Trees being planted on both sides of the Pedestrian Promenade amidst the bases for new lamp posts; The completed north end stands of the Promenade.

I began working at UT Dallas in August of 2019. The first few months flew by! I met so many kind coworkers who helped me learn the ropes in my position. Big plans were in the making for the Office of Sustainability! Before long, my supervisor and I were gearing up to share our knowledge on sustainability efforts throughout higher education at various conferences. One of the first conferences took place in Chicago on March 11, 2020. All others were shortly canceled.

Upon my return from Chicago, I was quickly provided with a computer and tools to set up my remote office and resume my roles (remote) as a content developer, programs coordinator, and administrative guru! I could now perform my entire role as if I were on campus. All that was missing was the daily traffic jams! Even more wonderfully, our office was able to retain its student employees, whose summer plans had all been erased. I am so grateful we were able to provide a landing pad for them in such a chaotic and disheartening time. Since we had been utilizing Microsoft Teams before remote work initiated, we were already comfortable and familiar with the process I got to know several of our Facilities Maintenance staff. Despite early mornings and long hours moving furniture, taping off table tops, and covering chairs, they worked cheerfully and looked out for each other. There are several co-workers I had only known from a few words exchanged in the office. This past year, three of us formed a text chat group to commiserate, exchange information, and check in with each other up with funny animal pictures. They are both lighthearted and valued. During a time of great uncertainty, UTD has provided guidance and solace.

I have now worked at UT Dallas remotely longer than I have worked on in person. It may sound sad, but I take it as a blessing. I have heard stories of family, friends, and friends of friends losing their jobs, having their roles entirely rewritten, or being put at risk of exposure every day. I may not have been working at UT Dallas long, but I take solace in the fact that our leadership is prioritizing science and caution. The Office of Sustainability still has big plans. Even during a pandemic, I am proud to be a Comet!
Working at UT Dallas during COVID-19 has deepened my pride in our Comet community, as I have seen our students, faculty, staff, and leadership meet the challenge with compassion, flexibility, and resilience. In my role, working in Facilities Management and working closely with students in the classroom and in co-curricular settings, I’ve had a unique perspective into UTD’s response. I’ve seen how UTD has taken care to implement social distancing in classrooms and ensure safety in public areas of campus. I’ve seen the heroic work of our custodial staff as they have made sure that every possible precaution is taken to protect our community. I’ve seen the thoughtful guidance that has been given by University leadership that has placed safety above all else, as we have continued to strive for excellence in all that UTD does. I’ve seen the progress with Phase III of the Campus Landscape Enhancement Plan continue so that our campus will be more beautiful than ever when we emerge. I’ve seen our departmental partners respond to the challenge presented by COVID, and continue to serve students with more urgency than ever. And most notably, I’ve seen the response from our students.

I was teaching a course — Sustainable Development Goals and Local Action — when President Benson announced that Spring Break would be extended by a week, so that everyone could transition to offering fully online classes. We wanted to share student reflections on Reduced Inequalities, lecture on Sustainable Cities and Communities, and develop our class project to provide North Texas Food Bank an analysis over how the UN Sustainable Development Goals provide a tool for addressing root causes of food insecurity. As we reconvened virtually after Spring Break, we continued to do all that we set out to do, with renewed commitment to the importance of our work and our studies. So did UT Dallas.

Students in the Sustainable Development Goals and Local Action course pivoted to provide more-urgent support to North Texas Food Bank by launching the #WhooshAway Hunger fundraising campaign to provide support to the important role that was thrust upon the food bank. UTD students raised $3,600 to support NTFB. As the class moved forward, students saw the application of their education in addressing challenges related to ending hunger and reducing inequalities. Their response to COVID provided context while showing that they are up to the challenge.

These examples of how UTD responds to challenges are just a small sample, and there are countless others we can point to. The resilience of our students and our UTD community is up for this challenge, this one or the next, as we continue to transition to our “different normal,” we’re been provided flexible scheduling options while ensuring necessary accommodations on campus. I also have absolute trust in the University community that they will follow all guidelines in place whenever I come on campus. Business on campus continues to flow smoothly and progress has not slowed down at all because of the safe environment UTD has created for all its stakeholders.

Benjamin Hong
Administrative Project Coordinator I

Working at UT Dallas during the COVID-19 outbreak has been a challenge, but I am impressed with the resiliency of our team and the fact that everyone has stepped up to ensure we are providing the best possible support to our customers during this time.

We successfully made the switch to all on-line permit sales, removed physical decals in favor of virtual permits, virtualized all of our departmental forms, increased our ability to provide service via email, phone, and Teams messaging, and made DART GoPass the standard bus pass option.

I feel it is important to note that all of these items have been goals of our department for months, and even years! So although the pandemic has completely changed our way of business and brought its own set of challenges, I am encouraged by the fact that the steps we took years ago to move towards streamlined services has paid off immensely! I do not think we would have been able to manage our services remotely if not for the actions we took in previous years.

Elena Galli Grant
Assistant Director, Parking and Transportation Services

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many unique challenges for the receiving department. Deciphering regulations and keeping with safety protocols is a complicated endeavor when you interact with 100+ people daily. Besides this, along with on-campus restrictions, the receiving staff continues to deliver mail and parcels to the campus and has not ceased operations since the University transitioned to remote operations in March.

Troy McFarland
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In the face of the pandemic, UT Dallas has shown that the safety of its staff, faculty and students are of the utmost importance. We were provided ample resources to work from home, and as we continue to transition to our “different normal,” we’re been provided flexible scheduling options while ensuring necessary accommodations on campus. I also have absolute trust in the University community that they will follow all guidelines in place whenever I come on campus. Business on campus continues to flow smoothly and progress has not slowed down at all because of the safe environment UTD has created for all its stakeholders.

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FACILITIES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT • fed.utdallas.edu
North Campus Development Continues

The latest phase of Northside at UT Dallas (A.K.A. “Comet Town”) features smart-home technology that allows residents to control everything from lighting to air conditioning from a phone app. It also brings a second Starbucks to campus. The next phase of Northside, still under construction, will provide housing just steps away from the upcoming DART light rail station. When completed, the entire Northside complex will cover over 1 million gross square feet.

Winter Weather Emergency

Along with the rest of the DFW Metroplex, the University endured some unusual winter weather this February: snow, ice, and rarest of all, sub-freezing temperatures that reached -3ºF in some places. Facilities Management crews stayed on campus around the clock during this emergency to protect vital infrastructure and deal with problems that most Texans never see. For example, special anti-freeze was procured to protect emergency generators that aren’t used to running below 16ºF, the point where their fuel starts to thicken.

Election Day at UT Dallas

During our recent national election, Callier Center Richardson was prepared to receive Collin County voters by a team of Facilities Management custodial workers, who deep cleaned and sanitized the polling place. Further south, the UTD Visitor Center was given similar attention in anticipation of receiving Dallas County voters. Lots near each poll were reserved for voter parking, Parking & Transportation workers helped direct traffic, and signs deployed around campus guided visitors from both counties to their respective polling locations.

Golf Practice Returns to UTD

The golf practice facility to the northeast of Northside has been revived, improved and is back in business under a new name: The Golf Ranch. Bordered by Waterview Parkway, West Renner Road and Synergy Park Boulevard, this all-turf range is available seven days a week for practice and instruction. UT Dallas faculty, staff and students are being treated to a 40% discount on their services.

TheGolfRanch.net
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Seen counter-clockwise from upper right: The smart homes of Northside; Inside the new Starbucks; Crews working on Northside’s next phase; An architect’s rendering of the next pool to be added to Northside; A rendering of the new UTD DART station.

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**COVID-19 Comes to Texas: One Year Later**

A year after the arrival of a novel Coronavirus in Texas caused the University to make unprecedented changes in its operations, we asked some of our staff, "What has it been like to work at UT Dallas during the COVID-19 outbreak?" Here’s how they responded:

**Working at UTD during the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging. The first thing that comes to mind is adaptation. Everyone has had to adapt, almost on a daily basis. This has been a fluid situation and we’ve learned the quicker you can adapt to changing dynamics, the more effective you’ll be at maintaining the needs of the campus community.**

**Our goal has been to keep disruption at an absolute minimum. The employees at UTD have been fantastic at this. Everyone works together for the single goal of keeping things as normal as possible.**

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**Community News**

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SPECIAL EVENTS

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Tracy Crockett, director of Campus Landscape Improvement Project

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