

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT TERESA ABI-NADER DAHLBERG

Continuous Excellence, Excitement

In any organization, a change in leadership is significant and consequential. That's certainly true for any college or university, where a leader's vision and commitment are critically important to both the internal academic community and the greater community to which the university belongs. I'd like to thank the Board of Trustees members for their time and effort in undertaking the presidential search last year and for placing their trust in me to lead this magnificent University. I'd also like to thank the search committee, as well as the entire University community — including alumni — for their efforts in the process. The passion and engagement that I saw firsthand are what drew me here. And now that I am in office, I am pleased to be part of the excitement.

I also thank President Ron Vaughn for transforming the University of Tampa into what it is today. UTampa's turnaround story is renowned within higher education, and President Vaughn deserves much of the credit.

The next few pages describe some of the accomplishments made in the 2023-2024 academic year, before I arrived at the University. I look forward to continuing the excellence and improvement that have become synonymous with the University of Tampa and helping the University reach even greater heights.





ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Academics are at the core of the University. Offering programs that students want — and that fill the needs of businesses and organizations — is a priority.

We successfully launched Spartan Studies as the general education program for all entering students, first-time in college and transfer. But as focused as we are on entering students, we're also focused on our graduation rate. As recently as 2019, our graduation rate was 58%. This year we report a rate of 63.1%, and we are on track for a higher rate still in 2025. Though the federal metric is graduation within six years, our goal is for students to graduate in four years. In 2019, 52.2% of students graduated within four years. Interventions with students have yielded results: This year, that percentage was up to 60.8%, and we are on track for it to be even higher in 2024-2025.

A related metric, retention, also remains top of mind. Just over 80% of students who began in Fall 2022 continued in Fall 2023. Though this was slightly lower than the year before, it represented three consecutive years at 80% or above. Efforts in 2023-2024 are proving to achieve even higher levels of success. The fall-to-spring retention rate was 94.8%, the highest in UTampa's history, and to date, 86.2% of Fall 2023 students have registered for Fall 2024. To help continue this trajectory, we have added student success coordinator positions for each of the four colleges; we created a university-wide retention committee; and we have new technology tools to communicate with and engage students.

This year, we announced a new doctoral program (Doctor of Medical Science) and a new master's program (Human Resource Management); moved a pre-existing master's program to online delivery (curriculum

and instruction); and created a new undergraduate major (health sciences) and a new minor (military science). We also added a master of science 4+1 in cybersecurity and added an MBA concentration in business valuation.

Faculty continue to be very active, publishing 269 books, monographs, peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, encyclopedia entries and reviews. In addition, visual and performing artists presented 101 performances and exhibitions in local, national and international venues.

The availability of research opportunities for undergraduates continues to set the University apart from its peers. The Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry grants and programs continue to serve a large number of students and their faculty mentors:

- The 2023 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellows cohort was the largest ever, with 21 students representing all four colleges.

94.8%

2023-2024 fall-to-spring retention rate, the highest in UTampa's history

21

students in the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program

- Thirty-three students and 18 faculty members worked on research projects supported by yearlong Undergraduate Research and Inquiry grants.
- Twenty-one students representing disciplines ranging from printmaking to marine biology who participated in the SURF Symposium presented their work as part of the 2023 Week of Welcome.

Finally, accreditations and certifications remain a key focus, validating the quality of our curricula and academic programs. We again had an active and successful year in this regard with accreditations and reaccreditations in biochemistry, cybersecurity, management information science, nursing, physician assistant medicine and sociology. Plus, the Sykes College of Business maintained its five-year business accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). A number of accreditations, in dance, accounting, computer science and others will be undertaken this academic year.

ENROLLMENT

The University's exceptional growth, as well as the expansion of the campus and enhanced student selectivity in a competitive higher education market, have positioned UTampa as one of the most sought-after private metropolitan universities. We have remained an attractive destination for students seeking a distinctive, high-quality education.

Continued demand by students for a University of Tampa education pushed applications to a record number — 35,351 applications for last fall's new entering class of 2,898 full-time undergraduate students.

But we do not take our success for granted, and we foresee challenges in recruiting future students. As such, we have continued to focus on overall strategy as we strengthen our market position. We're on track to meet the goal of 2,925 enrolled new students this fall, and we're currently projected to matriculate the best academic profile class in UTampa's history.

Much of the success in Admissions can be attributed to new and existing initiatives, including:

- We implemented the first admitted-student receptions on campus. Students were invited based on the college that holds their major, which provided students a "deep dive" into course offerings, research and faculty interest.
- We developed an estimator tool for families to attain an estimated idea of costs based on their family income. This tool allowed families to better assess UTampa's value and affordability for their student.
- We added the binding early-decision application process for the first time in the University's history and successfully admitted over 320 early-decision students. This allowed the enrollment team to be more strategic about shaping the class academic profile and the overall tuition discount rate.



2,898 full-time undergraduate students in the class of 2027



\$162,000+

raised for The Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay by the fraternity and sorority community this year — a **76%** increase

CAMPUS LIFE AND CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING

Back in 1931, the University of Tampa was founded to provide higher education to local students who didn't have the means to attend college elsewhere. Ninety-three years later, we continue to carry out our original mission by implementing an exciting new program — the Spartan Alliance Scholarship program. This program offers high-achieving, first-generation students in the Tampa Bay area a scholarship that covers the full cost of tuition for all four years. This program is unique in that it starts with intentional engagement in the recruitment phase; prioritizes the academic experience; folds in structures for career and professional development; and incorporates mentorship.

Once students are here, they will find a campus rich with engagement opportunities. This year, 237 student organizations were available, including more than three dozen new organizations like the European Asian Student Association; Polish and Slavic Student Association; Tampa Skate Club; Student Veterans Alliance; ROTC Jiu Jitsu Club; EDM Club; Spartans Stand With Ukraine; Sustainable Cyclers; Spartan Surf; Rock Music Club; Middle Eastern Student Association; Women in Medicine; and the Data Science Club.

The fraternity and sorority community now boasts 27 Greek letter organizations. As part of our retention research, we learned that

students in fraternities and sororities have a higher retention rate than students who don't participate. This year, we brought more fraternities and sororities to campus, including reinstating Zeta Tau Alpha, which was this University's first sorority. Lastly, a highlight in the fraternity and sorority community this year was raising more than \$162,000 for The Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay — a 76% increase over last year.

We also learned that 59% of students utilized the Riseman Fitness and Recreation Center this year, bolstering their physical well-being.

In May, the University was recognized by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for having a

strong action plan to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement by promoting civic learning, political engagement and college student voter participation. We were one of 124 colleges and universities nationwide to receive the Highly Established Action Plan (HEAP) seal.

While the Office of Residence Life continued to support an on-campus residential community of 4,200 residents, plus 300 students at The Barrymore Hotel, we are excited about the opening of the Grand Center, which houses another 700 students.

Lastly, we received the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant. This grant awards the University \$102,000 every year for three years. The program supports a comprehensive public health and evidence-based

approach that enhances mental health services for all college students; prevents and reduces suicide and substance use disorders; promotes help-seeking behavior; and improves the identification and treatment of at-risk college students. The funding is being used to enhance and expand wellness services through the hiring of an assistant director for wellness who is responsible for coordinating campus-wide educational programming with specific attention to emotional well-being.

On a related note, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for our 10-year Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation is focused on students' emotional well-being. That ties in well with the SAMHSA grant and will greatly benefit students.

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ADMINISTRATION

The Grand Center, which opened this fall, was our most visible project this year and one that will impact students positively for years. It houses more than 600 students and features multiple parking decks, classrooms and offices, as well as a unique “sky park” (pictured at the front of this report). More than 70 vendors worked on the center, and it was the impetus of an overall north campus utility infrastructure reconfiguration.

The Grand Center was a part of the \$200 million of capital projects that were undertaken. Other projects of note include:

- A second chiller plant, on the north side of campus, to provide for energy-efficient cooling and heating of campus buildings
- Re-roofing the Plant Hall Music Room
- Einstein Bagel refresh in the Vaughn Center
- Aussie Grill launch in Morsani Hall

We have contracted with a local firm with a great reputation for historic preservation to help us create a plan to preserve and maintain Plant Hall, our landmark building and an important part of our and Tampa Bay’s history

and culture. This process will continue in 2024.

The University also continues to grow its faculty and staff. We currently have 500 full-time staff and 465 full-time faculty, and this year we hired 45 full-time faculty and 85 full-time staff. We also hired numerous suppliers to do such projects ranging from construction to graphic design. We have focused on increasing the number of diverse suppliers. This year, we increased the number of diverse suppliers by 42%, and we increased diverse supplier spending by \$2.2 million, up 31% from last year.

UTampa’s foundation rests solidly on the gifts of many donors who believe in the University’s mission, are eager for students to reach their dreams, and who hope to see the University thrive for generations to come. Efforts from the Office of Development and University Relations resulted in:

- Scholarships to over 450 students from private funds
- \$21 million in new fundraising gifts from approximately 1,700 donors
- Exceeding the \$1 million Give Day goal with a total of \$1,158,740.

Held annually, Give Day seeks to rally the extended community around the University. Activities this year included the Minaret Market and Minarets at Sunset, as well as the inaugural UT Give Day 5K.

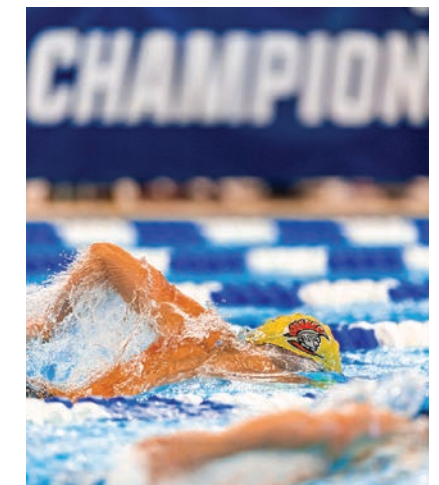
- A 25% increase in alumni social media engagement on Instagram
- Finally, the University is a trail-blazer across higher education in the area of information technology and security. Based on internal research, no other university is ISO 27001:2013 (Information Security Management System) or ISO 22301:2019 (Business Continuity Management System) certified — a testament to the ITS team’s commitment to excellence. Obtaining these certifications requires meeting stringent requirements and continuous improvement within each system.

\$21M
in new fundraising gifts
from approximately
1,700 donors



4

national championships
from women’s lacrosse,
men’s swimming, beach
volleyball and baseball



ATHLETICS

It was a successful year in athletics, especially this past spring when we brought home four national championships: women’s lacrosse, men’s swimming, beach volleyball and baseball.

While beach volleyball and baseball have won national championships before, it was a first for women’s lacrosse and men’s swimming.

Jimi Kiner '01, men’s swimming coach, was named NCAA Div. II national coach of the year, as was baseball Coach Joe Urso '92 and women’s lacrosse Coach Kelly Gallagher. Urso, who reached his 1,000th career win

on May 18, made it 1,007 wins when the Spartans won the national championship. With nine baseball national championships, UTampa is now tied with Florida Southern for the most national championships in NCAA Div. II. The Spartans have now won six baseball national titles in the 2000s, more than any other school at any NCAA level. It was good to see coverage of our NCAA national championship teams’ visit to the White House last July to be honored by the Vice President.

UTampa finished fifth overall in the annual Learfield Directors’ Cup for

all Division II schools and topped the Sunshine State Conference. This marks the best finish since 2007-2008.

Finally, we were accepted this year into the national college athlete honor society, Chi Alpha Sigma, which recognizes student-athlete excellence in both the classroom and competition. Among various criteria, student members must have achieved a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.40 (on a 4.0 scale). Athletics has always stressed success in the classroom, along with on the field, so this membership is fitting.

RANKINGS ROUNDUP

This year, the University remained competitive in various college rankings. The following are some of the most notable:

- The part-time MBA and M.S. in nursing were named among the best programs in the country in the 2024 “Best Graduate Schools” by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- The University was named by *G.I. Jobs* magazine as a 2024-2025 Military Friendly® School.
- In a ranking of MBA programs by *CEO Magazine* that stressed “fact-based criteria,” the Sykes College of Business was placed in “Tier One” of global business schools. Additionally, our Executive MBA (EMBA) program was ranked 32nd out of 139 schools in the global EMBA rankings.

- The Princeton Review ranked the entrepreneurship program as the 15th best program nationally for undergraduate programs and the 16th best program for graduate programs. UTampa also clinched the first and second spots in the South for its undergraduate and graduate programs, respectively. This is the highest rank the entrepreneurship program has received from The Princeton Review.
- We were ranked as the 203rd best university in the nation, out of 857, by personal finance company WalletHub.
- The Sykes College of Business was recognized in the *Bloomberg Businessweek* Best B-School listing as the No. 29 school in the world for diversity.