It’s difficult to envision what The University of Tampa was like 80 years ago. You’d recognize Plant Hall and the Hillsborough River, but likely little else of campus. You’d feel the lush, tropical breezes and sun-drenched winters that characterize our location. But most of all, you’d likely recognize UT’s quest – to provide access for young people to obtain a top-notch education and prepare them to be outstanding citizens.

Throughout the 80 years of UT’s history, faces have changed, policies have been written and rewritten, enrollments have varied, yet we have been able to move forward to where we are now – a stable, financially sound, highly-desirable, model university that responds to students’ needs in the 21st century. Each year we take steps toward our mission of improving students’ ability to learn and succeed in the future, rethinking and updating protocols, welcoming the most deserving students, making campus more comfortable for current students and attractive to future students, streamlining processes and investing in our future. This year was no different.

It’s uncanny that in 1931 the U.S. was mired in the Great Depression, and today, we are struggling to recover from the Great Recession. No doubt just like UT’s leaders in 1931, we are forced to be more aggressive, nimble and strategic in order to thrive in the difficult economic conditions. Fortunately, we have been successful in finding ways to break enrollment records and continue to transform the campus, all while staying true to our mission of transforming students.
“No doubt just like UT’s leaders in 1931, we are forced to be more aggressive, nimble and strategic in order to thrive in the difficult economic conditions.”

—President Ronald L. Vaughn
Student Affairs

Being a UT student in 1931 was a very different thing than it is today. While UT’s first students were all from Tampa, today our students are considerably more diverse — they come from all 50 states and 114 countries, and they represent nearly every conceivable ethnic, racial, religious and economic background. Early UT students lived at home until the upper floors of Plant Hall became a de facto dormitory. Today 65 percent of full-time students live in 10 residence halls on campus. Once UT built its earliest dormitories, visiting rules were strict. Today’s residence halls are considerably more social, yet still very secure.

Eighty years ago, the first clubs included “La Tertulia,” a Spanish-language group, the Sanitary Engineers (a club formed by the student janitorial force), the Dramatic Club, the Debating Club and the Science Club. Today UT has more than 160 clubs, from the Constitutional Law Club to Quidditch. Fraternities and sororities were created within two years of UT’s founding, and today there are 19 chapters.

We know that students who are more comfortable in their living arrangements and extracurricular activities do better academically. This year we created the Office of Student Success to help students assimilate into college and learn to be successful students and graduates, and thus increase UT’s retention rate. We also built a new online housing selection system, and students selected their room using that software.

The opening of the Dickey Health and Wellness Center will be an asset to students’ well being. Total visits to the new health center last spring semester increased 28 percent, and the center also houses all programming related to student wellness, such as stress reduction and alcohol awareness. We also held the first Wellness Symposium and Expo, which addressed various dimensions of wellness — mental, physical, spiritual, social, occupational and environ-
mental. Also, in an effort to promote outdoor physical activity and sustainable transportation options, we implemented a free bicycle rental program.

The Office of Student Leadership and Engagement (OSLE) took the lead in facilitating programming for the new Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values. During the spring semester 160 events took place there – programming that previously did not exist. We initiated a partnership with the Interfaith Youth Core that will support programming this academic year, and which puts us at the forefront of a presidential initiative to incorporate interfaith education on college campuses. Ten student religious groups and 30 community religious organizations now also assist with our character, values and spiritual development programs. OSLE also continued to coordinate leadership opportunities, increasing attendance this year.

We continue to focus on giving students an extra edge when they enter the workforce after graduation. Sixty percent of the total student population participated in career preparation programs. Each year, UT further secures its place as a model institution that provides an excellent education. Eighty years ago, there were 12 faculty members who taught 32 classes – covering English, French, German, Latin, Spanish, education, history, art, chemistry, mathematics, biblical studies and mathematics. Today there are over 500 faculty who teach more than 3,500 classes each year and are experts in almost every field imaginable. In 1931 the University began preparing for its first accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. UT now owns that, and 10 other accreditations. In the spring of 1935, after its fourth year of existence, UT graduated 14 students. Last year, more than 1,600 students graduated with a UT diploma.

This year’s accomplishments continued the trend of academic excellence as UT joined the nation’s oldest, largest and most selective all-discipline honor society, Phi Kappa Phi. This brings national recognition to our academic programs. As you read on page 8, we continue to be a model for experiential education. In one of many examples, UT continues to provide a global education to our students, and we report that 35 percent more students studied abroad this year. This is likely a record number.

We continue to respond to student needs for majors and subject areas. This year we created the innovative, low-residency MFA program in creative writing, a minor in Latin American studies, an allied health major, a major in journalism and courses in Portuguese and Arabic. Twenty-five new faculty and staff members were hired this year to help provide expert instruction and improve support for various elements of the educational experience.

Percentage of student population that participated in career preparation programs last year.

60%  
Percentage of student population that participated in career preparation programs last year.

Since we determined that many students have difficulty choosing their major, we started a “majors fair” to better serve undecided students. Twenty-four percent of those attending changed or declared their major.

Accomplishments in faculty research and artistic achievement were plenty.

- College of Business — 104 publications and 72 conference presentations.
- College of Arts and Letters — Four books, 28 publications of articles, chapters and recordings, 67 juried exhibitions or conference presentations, 60 concerts, recitals and stage productions.
- College of Natural and Health Sciences — 68 publications and 45 conference presentations.
- College of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Education — Two books, 36 articles, 13 chapters, 69 conference presentations.

Pass rate UT nursing graduates achieved on their licensure exam, thus putting UT among the very top programs in the country.

100%  
Percentage of new teachers with UT education degrees who saw at least half of their students improve on the FCAT. The ranking topped all other public and independent institutions in Florida.
**enrollment**

On Oct. 1, 1931, UT held its first admissions event – registration at Hillsborough High School. More than 50 enrolled that night. UT’s first enrollment report showed that 67 students eventually registered for the University’s first fall semester in 1931. Nine dropped out, but 15 new students registered for the second semester.

Certainly the admissions and enrollment process at UT has become a thousand times more complex through the years, as recruiting has become hyper-competitive, worldwide and has evolved with technological advances. This year we implemented more than 60 new initiatives to remain successful in the admissions market. For instance, the admissions counselors and support staff planned more events for prospective students, parents and college counselors. These include admitted student receptions, counselor fly-in events, open houses and a myriad of other special events.

Technologically we advance in ways previously unimaginable. In one example, we conceived and implemented an admitted student portal, The Verandah, which allows for a safe, secure social media site only for admitted UT students. The site has more than 1,200 student users, and it’s clear that those who participate are much more likely to become future Spartans.

While UT continues to set enrollment records, the interest and selectivity of UT students increases along with it. More than 80,000 student inquiries were received this year from prospective freshmen. This year about 50 percent of freshmen applicants were admitted, as opposed to 58 percent in 2010. This compares to much higher applicant admission percentages, in the 70s and 80s, many years ago. Today UT’s high quality, much improved educational experience and soaring reputation are magnets for attracting large numbers of interested students.

80,000
High-schoolers inquired about becoming a UT freshman.

8,700
Number of students on campus this fall—a new record.

Operations

The first impression many people get of UT is Plant Hall, with its memorable and iconic minarets. When UT started as Tampa Junior College in 1931 its home was Hillsborough High School. Two years later UT found its home in the vacated Tampa Bay Hotel — along with the mold, vandalism and ceiling leaks that pervaded it. Today the beautifully-restored Plant Hall remains the focal point of campus, one that is surrounded by 49 other modern and historic campus buildings. Just as the renovation of Plant Hall never ends (see the story about the Chislers’ latest project, page 31), nor does our work in building new facilities and renovating older ones.

Of course, you can’t talk about UT’s history without at least touching on the financial difficulties that plagued the University from day one. Fortunately, today UT’s finances are stable, and every budget for the past 16 years has been balanced. UT’s annual budget in 1931 — $20,000 — would last about one hour in today’s annual budget of $170 million.

It’s worth noting here that for the second year in a row Charity Navigator has awarded UT with a 4-star rating — the highest a charity can receive — for its ability to efficiently manage and grow its finances.

Most notable this year was the completion of the Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values. This award-winning, magnificent...
The new Stephen H. and Marsha Dickey Health and Wellness Center was dedicated in the fall, and today is the hub of student health and wellness. The Kennedy Building, a multi-purpose academic building, and the Science Annex, were also opened during the fall. The health center and Science Annex are currently in consideration as our first LEED-certified campus buildings.

This summer we began major renovations to the Martinez Sports Center (see page 2). This will allow for much needed space for the popular Health Science and Human Performance program, as well as for athletic purposes.

We made a dramatic renovation of the campus bookstore, and have upped the store’s online presence. Both resulted in an updated, customer friendly environment, and came in tandem with a new logo licensing program. This program will help UT promote and protect its brand and logos, ultimately increasing our visibility and perception as an institution.

When UT moved from Hillsborough High School to Plant Hall in 1933, the institution’s possessions fit into the back of a pickup truck, with a reconditioned typewriter being perhaps the most valued and technologically advanced machine amongst those possessions. Today technology is ubiquitous on campus. This year we redesigned the University’s website, built a mobile website, created an online financial aid calculator for students, installed student international travel tracking software, upgraded all residence halls to full wireless capabilities (in addition to the campus’ 400 wireless zones) and implemented lifelong email accounts for alumni. This is all on top of maintaining the thousands of PCs and Macs on campus, and the 45 separate campus computer labs.

**A Devotion to UT**

First Lady Renée Vaughn is an untiring advocate of UT

In its 80-year existence, UT has had some very strong and passionate first ladies. My wife, Renée, is one of them. She is committed to UT and is actively involved in supporting UT’s mission through campus and community involvement. Plus, she is one of my best advisors and critics. Renée is also active in the Tampa Bay community and on the boards of the H.B. Plant Museum (past president), UT Board of Fellows (past president), Leadership Tampa Bay (past president), Leadership Tampa Alumni (chair elect), Red Cross Angels (vice president) and Rotary Club of Tampa. Renée is also a member of the Tampa General Hospital Women’s Leadership Council, The Chislers and Athena Society. She owns the Williams Consulting Group, a public relations firm. The University and I are indeed lucky to have such a strong advocate and first lady.
Eighty years ago, in an effort to attract favorable community recognition to the fledgling University of Tampa, athletics were established quickly. Basketball, tennis and swimming were the first organized sports, with contests against such institutions as St. Petersburg Junior College, Tampa Business College and Hillsborough High School. The first UT football game was played against Rollins College in 1933, and two people attended – UT’s president and one member of the board of trustees. Today UT is an athletic powerhouse. With 20 men’s and women’s teams, the Spartans have won 12 NCAA II national championships and have secured 59 Sunshine State Conference (SSC) titles in the past two decades.

This year the Spartans fared well on the field, in the classroom and in the community. We won five SSC championships, nearly won a national championship (volleyball ended as second in the country), five coaches were recognized as coaches of the year on the national and conference levels, recorded a 3.12 GPA cumulative grade point average for all athletes and received the NCAA II Best in Conference community engagement award.

Overall, it was a good year for the record books. Men’s basketball started the year off 16-0, a school record for most consecutive wins. Softball had the most strikeouts and hom runs in a season. Softball and volleyball set a school record for wins. Women’s basketball played in the NCAA regional for the seventh straight year, which is the only school in the SSC to do so.

When they weren’t winning games UT athletes logged more than 5,000 hours of community service, and 95 percent of all UT athletes graduate. We added women’s golf and began play this year. Men’s lacrosse was also announced last year, and intercollegiate play begins this year.

UT 2091 Eighty years from now UT leaders will likely look back and wonder how we ever provided an education in such a quaint era of 2011. Advances will be made that will revolutionize learning, new educational policies and programs will respond to issues arising in new eras and students will have opportunities like never before. However, as for now we continue to build UT’s foundation, so that it can stay on course, with its mission always in mind. We achieve that day by day and year to year, with help from committed friends and UT community members. Thank you for joining us on that path.