

President Renu Khator Unveils Bold New Initiatives For UH During Investiture

Khator Officially Takes Helm as University's Leader in Moving Ceremony Attended by Host of Dignitaries

HOUSTON, Nov. 7 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A new era of leadership was ushered in today (Nov. 7) in an inspiring ceremony at Cullen Performance Hall that formally endowed University of Houston President Renu Khator with the powers and responsibilities of the office.

The event, attended by an estimated 1,500 members of the university community and a host of international, federal, state and local dignitaries, marked her entrance onto the academic stage of national and global leadership as the UH System's eighth chancellor and UH's 13th president.

"I'm impressed by her intellect, contagious enthusiasm, creativity and, yes, by her dogged determination to take this university and make it a Tier-One university," Texas Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said. He added that as the state's population doubles over the next 20 years, "We will need a third Tier-One university. As a Houstonian, I think this (university) would be a great choice."

Also attending the ceremony was Houston Mayor Bill White, who said, "The University of Houston is the most important singular institution in the city. I commit to you to help you (Khator) lift the university even higher. The 2.2 million people in the Houston stand behind you and the University of Houston."

Khator, who began her tenure in January, outlined a bold new vision for the University of Houston, declaring its first priority to be student success.

"We pledge that, as a system of higher education, we will provide access to students from all backgrounds, living in any part of the region and the state, and having any level of educational aspirations," she said. "We pledge that their educational experience will be top-tier, and their training will be globally competitive."

Khator dedicated the investiture "to our students and their dreams, and (we) pledge to raise \$100 million toward the goal of student success." Illustrating the university's resolve on this issue, as well as the generosity of its donors, alumni and friends, Khator announced that \$1 million toward this goal already has been raised through a single scholarship event -- unprecedented in the history of the university.

She also announced four strategic initiatives aimed at the pursuit of excellence and the attainment of top-tier status for the university:

- The UH Energy Initiative will bring together 70 of the university's top faculty from eight colleges, 14 centers and institutes, and multiple disciplines to pursue the highest and the broadest level of energy research, including fossil fuels, biofuels, wind and solar. Khator also announced the establishment of the Presidential Energy Advisory Board.