Here, at the University of Houston, we are proud to celebrate our collective achievements. Faculty, staff, and leadership have worked very hard this year and made great strides to promote our university to a national audience.

Let’s take a look at some examples of those collective successes.
This year, our faculty continue to build our international prominence. These are Fulbright Scholars and Specialists awarded in 2018-2019.

These awards are taking faculty to many parts of the world- Ghana, France, Philippines, China, Australia, Indonesia, India, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand.
Faculty are successfully pursuing support for their important work from many national and regional resources.

In 2018, faculty have received funding from agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF), and were recognized by national groups including Science Magazine, the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses, and as top-cited researchers.
Two of our most recent grants are game changers for the researchers and the university.

The Texas Center for Learning Disabilities (TCLD) just received a $10 million anonymous grant. Dr. Jack Fletcher serves as the PI for TCLD, which is one of only three (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) NICHD-funded national learning disability centers in the country. This level of funding ensures sustainability of the very critical research that is occurring in the TCLD.
Our second most recent grant also supports critical work. Graduate College of Social Work’s McClain Sampson recently won a $4.9 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provide community-based and family-centered services and health education to residents in the 10 Houston-area ZIP codes with the highest rates of death and complications surrounding birth.

The program aims to reach 600 mothers and 100 fathers each year for the next five years.

Her work aims to connect mothers and children to integrated health centers, so that they can see multiple doctors in a single location.
Four of our faculty members this year have received NSF CAREER Awards. That brings the University’s total number of CAREER awards to 60 since 1986.
A major focus of the university is increasing the diversity of our incoming faculty on campus.

In 2013, just 12% of incoming tenure and tenure-track faculty were under-represented minorities. The ADVANCE Center formed in that year.

By 2018, that number has jumped to 29%. UH is also above the national average for the representation of Hispanic faculty members across campus, especially in social and behavioral sciences.
We are seeing movement towards our goals. The number of African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic faculty across all levels (ranked and unranked) has increased in the past ten years.
Provost Short formally established and provided support for the Underrepresented Women of Color Coalition. The Coalition is critical in our efforts to retain women of color (WOC) faculty and to facilitate their career advancement and engagement through leadership positions. The Coalition has focused its work on strategic steps to accomplish these goals.

Recently, they: established a listserv to communicate among members, and developed a Stimulus Research Grant (SRG) program, which supports, stimulates, or re-engages UWOCC faculty in research activities and increases their success in pursuing and developing robust externally funded research or creative works programs. Individual PIs can request grants up to $5,000, and collaborative PIs can request grants up to $10,000. They also have plans to form a Research IDEAS Lab for WOC faculty.
In 2018, the number of faculty who received awards over $1 million was 28. And total research expenditures saw a 79% increase from 2009-2018. This past year, faculty earned over $43 million in royalty earnings and filed over 32 U.S. patents and 70 invention disclosures throughout the year.

Research and scholarship is critical to our university’s mission as we discover new solutions to health, energy, economic, sociological, educational, environmental, and technological issues. It is important to our contribution to the arts, design, literature, and all creative expression.
How do others see us? One of the most important indicators of our success to a national audience is our rankings by U.S. News and World Report.

These rankings shape the prominence and reputation of our university, and attract future generations of leaders, thinkers, artists, and entrepreneurs.

UH has eleven graduate programs in the top 50 for U.S. News and World report this year. That’s compared to seven in the Top 50 last year.

Social work has advanced 16 spots in the national rankings in 2 years. And the University moved up 21 points in the ranking for national universities.
We selectively add new degree programs to expand UH’s ability to meet the demands of an ever-changing environment and demands.

The University has six new degree programs to add to its list of 300+ majors and minors for students.

We are also expecting approval of a new Ph.D. in Communication Sciences and Disorders next week by the THECB.
The Pre-Law Pipeline Program was honored by the American Bar Association’s Council for Diversity in the Education Pipeline for its efforts on behalf of diversity in the legal profession. The program received the Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Award for Excellence in Pipeline Diversity.

The program will welcome its fifth class this summer. Many of the participants have been accepted into JD programs at UH and other law schools.

The program has also been recognized in the past by INSIGHT Into Diversity Magazine with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award from 2016-2018. It also received the UHS Board of Regents’ Academic Excellence Award in 2016. Congratulations to Dean Baynes and his faculty and staff for establishing such an important program.
We launched the Quality Enhancement Plan in 2018 named CITE, which stands for the Cougar Initiative to Engage.

The initiative provides opportunities for student learning, discovery, and engagement in a real-world setting – all relevant to their lives and future careers.

CITE funds co-curricular projects such as internships, research projects, learning abroad activities, and service learning projects. You see examples here.

These programs are funded through our latest Quality Enhancement Plan, which is part of our ten-year accreditation with SACS.
Our faculty continue to be leaders both on- and off-campus. The number of faculty-led learning abroad programs has increased to 29. This is a 61% increase in just the last three years!

Pictured are some students and faculty on a faculty-led program to the Galapagos Islands. This program is one of the winners of the 2019 Faculty Excellence Group Awards.
The faculty café continues to act as a central hub for faculty on campus, encouraging growth in teaching proficiency, effectiveness, research productivity, and service to UH and its community. Additionally, the faculty café hosts workshops aimed to help faculty meet the goals of the 50-in-5 initiative.

Over 100 events were offered in the café since fall 2018, centered around 5 areas: New faculty onboarding, professional development, skill development, career planning, and networking.
Our students continue to gain national and international recognition for their scholarships and fellowships. Particularly impressive is the number of Fulbright U.S. Students for this year. In the past year, UH produced more Fulbright Scholars than such universities as BYU, Caltech, Cornell, Georgia Tech, Rice, Texas A&M, TCU, and Texas Tech.
Student success is our number one priority. One of the greatest indicators of whether students will successfully graduate on time is the number of hours they complete in their first year.

By completing more than 30 hours in their first year, students set a solid foundation for graduating within four years. In 2012, 41% of FTICs completed more than 30 hours in their first year. By 2017, that number has increased to 54%.

Additionally, in the 2017 FTIC cohort, 75% of African American students participated in UHin4 compared to 69% of Hispanic and white students.
The 4-year graduation rate has increased 21 percentage points in the past ten years, while the 6-year graduation rate has increased 17 percentage points. By summer 2019, we will be at 61% for our six-year graduation rate. These are extremely hard increases to impact but I am setting a new goal of 65% by 2021 and 70% by 2025.
Our Cub Camp program also influences the culture of success at the University by connecting students with the tools and resources they need to make their first year on campus a productive one. 96 percent of Cub Campers return to UH after their first semester.

Each year, the Cub Camp Counselors vote and select namesakes, faculty and staff who lead a team of campers. I was selected as a namesake in 2015, and this year as in past years, we have four namesakes for our upcoming program. They are: Dr. Andrew Hamilton, associate dean for student success in NSM, Dr. Raven Jones, director of the Urban Experience Program, Mr. Floyd Robinson, assistant vice president for student affairs for health and wellness, and Dr. Richard Walker, vice president for student affairs and enrollment services.
As Provost, I am committed to developing and encouraging new leadership. With the newly-created Accomplished Leaders Forum, I am encouraging our campus community to hear and engage with key leaders in all walks of life, and learn from their leadership journey and accomplishments.

And through our Provost Summer Read Program, students will listen and take part in a meaningful dialogue with this year’s author, Diane Guerrero. Diane will be on campus next week to participate in a conversation with one of our own faculty members, Dr. Ruth Lopez.
With all of our accomplishments over the past two semesters, we must stay focused on the future – we must look ahead in pursuit of excellence.
As we look ahead to establish the new College of Medicine under the leadership of Dean Stephen Spann, I want to point out the people who have been working with Dean Spann and involved in both the planning for the medical school and in the LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) accreditation process.

In addition, over 30 faculty and external stakeholders were involved in the LCME self-study accreditation process. We would not be moving forward without their support.
Our journey to pursue a University of Houston College of Medicine has come a long way.
President Khator recently launched the 50-in-5 initiative, with the purpose to increase research and scholarly output by 50% in five years. This is a collaborative effort on the part of the Division of Research and the Office of the Provost.

Dr. Elnashai and I realize that the number seems daunting. But, if we can work together to increase our research by just over 8% each year, we will be well on our way to meeting the goals of 50-in-5.

Here you see a few of the metrics that are included as measures of our success towards the 50-in-5 goal. You can see a full list of all the metrics on the 50-in-5 website, as well as the success metrics determined by each college.
To continue our support with the 50-in-5 initiative, we will be hosting a workshop on May 7, 2019, titled "Lessons Learned: Making Your Center Grant Applications a Success."

We have supported faculty through town halls, past workshops, and available funding. The university will provide $3 million in internal awards programs, and over $33 million in planned institutional support.
As we continue to look towards what the future academic year will bring, I would like to note our newest leaders on campus.

Michael Twa will begin as the new Dean of the College of Optometry on June 1. He is currently the associate dean for research and graduate studies in the School of Optometry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Paul Pavlou will begin as the new Dean of the C.T. Bauer of Business on July 1. He is currently the senior associate dean for faculty research, doctoral programs, and strategic initiatives for the Fox School of Business at Temple University. And Stephen Spann continues his great work with the College of Medicine to prepare the college for its first students in fall 2020.
So take a moment to reflect and appreciate how far you have come, and then remember, we have much to accomplish yet.

Again, I thank faculty, staff, students, and on-campus leaders for the huge accomplishments over the past year. Cougars know that the best view comes after the hardest climb.