

Texas Tech should take research to higher level

BY DAVID J. SCHMIDLY

Sometime in the next academic year, Texas Tech will approve a strategic plan to guide the University into the next century.

Nothing is more important in developing this historic blueprint than to enhance the University's status as a major research facility and center for graduate education.

In academic jargon, this means achieving the status of a

and graduate education will boost the institution's undergraduate programs to achieve their desired goals.

Undergraduate students are attracted to Research I institutions because of their reputation for academic excellence.

Currently, Texas Tech holds a Research II classification, a category for institutions that award 50 or more doctoral degrees and receive between \$15.5 and \$40

I institutions, and in 1994 received more than \$11 billion in federal research and development funds compared to \$3.6 billion for Texas.

Clearly, the South Plains will benefit by Texas Tech achieving this status.

Texas Tech obviously has the capacity to achieve Research I status. The Texas Tech campus exists side-by-side with a law school and a medical school.

The University also is the only doctoral-granting institution for a geographic area that stretches more than 200,000 square miles from Fort Worth to Albuquerque, N.M., and from Denver, Colo., to Mexico.

Texas Tech can respond to this challenge by focusing on research and more cooperation between the University and the Health Sciences Center's programs and projects.

As our research programs expand and grow, we must establish and maintain active partnerships with industrial, commercial and government research units as well as with city, county and local governments to foster research, spin-off products, businesses and jobs for Lubbock and the High Plains.

These, in turn, will secure additional research grants.

Indeed, the steady flow of new ideas from university-affiliated research attracts industries and stimulates competition in world markets, adds to the growth of per capita income and attracts other private research consortiums, which in turn generate new economic activity on their own.

Chancellor John Montford, Deputy Chancellor Jim Crowson, and Presidents Donald Haragan and David Smith have embraced the concept of achieving Research I status and have made it a priority initiative for private fund-raising in the upcoming capital campaign.

Much progress has been made this year alone.

For example, we already have established a \$5 million endowment for graduate fellowships and a presence in Washington, D.C., designed to increase federal funding opportunities for our top research programs.

We are involving our faculty in strategic planning to set higher goals for graduate education. However, good plans are essential but meaningless without commitment, follow-through and

decisive action.

Already, we have a significant success story — the establishment of The Institute of Environmental and Human Health at the newly formed Reese Center. As far as I know, this is not only the largest research unit ever established at Texas Tech, but also it is the most comprehensive attempt to combine the resources of the University and the Health Sciences Center in a

Process could lead Lubbock, region into a new era of economic growth

research activity.

The institute will create 68 new high-paying jobs in Lubbock and should generate more than \$30 million in research activity over the first five years of operation.

The state comptroller has calculated that every dollar spent on research generates an additional \$3.73 in economic activity of which 80 percent is spent in the local community.

We have been able to recruit a scientific star, Ron Kendall, and most of his faculty, to come to Lubbock and lead the development of the environmental institute. This was accomplished in less than nine months through the cooperation of a partnership involving university leaders and faculty, elected officials in Austin and Washington, D.C., city officials, Market Lubbock Inc. and the Lubbock Reese Redevelopment Authority.

Mr. Kendall has stated publicly that he was attracted to the position because of the commitment of the University to establish a world-class research institute.

By establishing higher goals, we can achieve success.

Now we need to identify similar opportunities that will both strengthen research at Texas Tech and create economic development in Lubbock. And we need to do so until Texas Tech achieves the reputation of a national research university.

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Research I University status will enhance TTU programs

Research I university as defined by the Carnegie Foundation.

Research I institutions are the leading institutions in sponsored research expenditures and industrially supported research in the country.

Tech should meet the challenge of becoming a Research I institution within five years. But in the process of achieving this goal, it is important to preserve a balance of pursuits within the institution as a whole.

A strong thrust in research

million in federal support annually.

To achieve the status of a Research I institution, we must award more than 50 doctorates annually and receive more than \$40 million in federal support, which is about double our current amount.

Right now, Texas has only two Research I universities — The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University in College Station.

California has nine Research