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Centennial Newsletter

UTEP 2014 Commission

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Centennial Plaza - Symbol of UTEP's Historic Transformations

As construction workers busily prepare the center of campus for the new Centennial Plaza, it is useful to look back over UTEP's historic transformations—both to see the changes of the past few decades and to understand how the new plaza symbolically connects them all.

UTEP began as a mining school in 1914 and quickly expanded to offer a comprehensive program in the sciences and humanities. Over the past quarter of a century, the institution has aspired to become a Tier One national public research university dedicated to providing access to excellent educational opportunities for the Paso del Norte region. Part of the transformation has involved a change in attitude in which Miners embraced the border as both a geographical location and a source of pride and identity.



Student enrollment expanded rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, making it impossible for all students to live in campus housing (as was required in the earliest years). In the process, student demographics also shifted such that Hispanics became the majority in 1986 and the current population reflects the demographics of the El Paso region. The institution awarded its 100,000th degree in 2011 and UTEP alumni are now leaders in many fields as thousands of lives have been elevated by higher education.

Increasing faculty research productivity drives the transformations. During the last 15 years of the 20th century, new doctoral programs and research centers sprouted up across campus and a new office of research and sponsored projects worked to more effectively encourage, support, and reward research. The Carnegie Foundation designated UTEP as a doctoral/research-intensive institution in 2000 and the Texas Legislature put UTEP on its list of emerging Tier One universities nine years later. In 2012, *Washington Monthly* magazine ranked UTEP as the #12 overall research university in the nation and #1 for fostering student social mobility.

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New aspirations, more students, and more productive faculty have been supported by transformations in the campus facilities. New state-of-the-art teaching facilities have been built, such as the Undergraduate

Completion Dates



August 2013
Schuster Ave.

July 2014
Sun Bowl Drive

August 2014
Centennial Plaza

Learning Center (1997) and the Center for Simulation in the Health Sciences and Nursing Building (2011). The University Library (1984), Bioscience Research Building (2009) and the Chemistry and Computer Science Building (2012) provide dedicated space for faculty research. Student services have found new homes in the Mike Loya Academic Services Building, Bookstore (2009), and Student Recreation Center (2011). Several Campus Transformation projects are now turning the outdoor public spaces on campus into a pedestrian friendly and aesthetically pleasing student-centered campus.

The Centennial Plaza captures the essence of UTEP's transformations by serving students—ahead of cars. *(continued)*

Centennial Plaza (continued)

Under the earth, new utility infrastructure will support the 21st century technology, electrical, gas, and water needs of the entire campus. Our Bhutanese connection is highlighted by the *lhakhang*, and 100 years of history will be carved onto the center oval. The recaptured arroyo and native vegetation make this new space the literal and figurative center of campus life. The Plaza will be the largest and most enduring keepsake of the Centennial Celebration and it will serve as the stage for the largest Centennial events, from Minerpalooza 2014 to Opera Bhutan to the anniversary celebration on Sept. 23.

2nd Annual Alumni PICK-NIC

Last year, the Miner Nation witnessed the birth of a new tradition as alumni gathered on the same day in 20 cities around the world to celebrate UTEP. This year, the tradition continues as 24 cities plan the Alumni PICK-NIC for July 13. Get specific details and RSVP today at <http://alumni.utep.edu/picnic>.



Faculty Stories

Over the past 100 years, thousands of people have passed through the doors of the school now known as UTEP. Many of the memories shared by students, alumni, and friends involve their professors who taught them to work hard, write, think, and reach for their dreams. One alumna reports that C. L. Sonnichsen taught her never to write in “cobblestone English.” Another recalled the “hands-on education” imparted by the faculty.



As part of the Centennial Stories project, the Institute of Oral History has also been interviewing faculty who talk about their passion for their work, their respect for their students, and the quality of life at UTEP and in El Paso—voices that capture the excitement of education at the pass of the north. Which faculty member said: “I believe that what I’m doing actually makes the world a better place and it’s really wonderful to see people grow. It’s easy to be passionate when you like what you do”? Which one observed: “There is a healthy respect toward education [in El Paso] . . . and a healthy respect for knowledge among the students”? Who declared: “We are a very dedicated faculty and we’re proud of that”? Find out at <http://centennial.utep.edu/stories.html>.

Contact the Centennial Office

Administration Building, Room # 403 | 915-747-5362 | 2014@utep.edu | www.UTEP100years.com

Centennial Calendar



Jul. 13, 2013

2nd Annual Alumni PICK-NIC

Aug. 24, 2013

Preview of Opera Bhutan (in El Paso)

Aug. 25, 2013

New Miner Convocation

Sept. 23, 2013

99th Anniversary of First Day of Class
Begin 100-day Countdown to 2014

Sept. 29-Oct. 5, 2013

Homecoming Week

Oct. 12, 2013

World Premiere of Opera Bhutan



The University of Texas at El Paso