

Excerpt: Remarks to the Tarleton Alumni Association Board Members – October 17, 2008 Meeting

I am enormously proud to say to you: Welcome Home.

In a short time – just about 3 months – my wife, Lisette, and I have been made to feel very much at home. On our campuses and in our communities, I have found a common theme of great pride in Tarleton.

The wonderful traditions of Tarleton build memories for a lifetime and pride in alma mater. I am learning what you already know. This week I've seen my first Silver Bugle Hunt, first Yell Contest, first Snake Dance, and I have beaten the drum. Now, THAT is an initiation as a Texan! Tonight is my first bonfire. And then tomorrow, I'll ride a horse in the Parade. Is this a great job, or what!

It is, certainly, a great time for Tarleton. This is a remarkable institution with a very bright future.

After carefully reviewing the Strategic Plan at the start of the academic year, I refined it into four initiatives. Briefly, they are:

1. *We will Excel in Scholarship, Teaching, and Learning.* We want to get better at our core activities and nurture programs of national prominence.
2. *We will Expand Our Horizons.* We will ensure access. And we will help our students prepare for the global economy by expanding their cultural competence.
3. *We will Encourage Leadership, Service, and Student Success.* Focusing on student life beyond the classroom, our students should be ready, as alumni, to be leaders in their families, communities, and careers -- as you are.
4. Finally, we will *Extend Our Reach.* In these difficult times, higher education is more important than ever. Tarleton is an economic generator. We need to let the people of this state know how valuable we are to the region and well beyond.

These are ambitious goals, but we are moving forward with momentum and spirit.

I am asking for your help as we pursue these strategic goals. Your advice and counsel are important to me. We need you to be our storyteller carrying the message of Tarleton's excellence to your communities and colleagues. Help us advance the reputation of the university. Help us recruit and retain outstanding students and distinguished faculty. Help me serve your alma mater well. I welcome your ideas and input. And I thank you for your service.

While many of the familiar traditions of this weekend are new to me, the spirit they represent is quite familiar. I have seen it in the faces of the entering first-year class. I have observed it in the faces of our Summer Graduates. I have heard it in the stands at the football games and in the relentless banging of the drum. I have felt it in the many kindnesses offered to us.

Thank you for the opportunity to become part of the Tarleton family.