

**2019 STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY—As delivered
Shalala Student Center
Thursday, September 12, 2019**

Good evening.

Last year, we started a tradition of gathering as a university community to reflect on our progress and to look toward our future. Today, I am delighted to welcome you to the second annual State of the University Town Hall Meeting.

I will share with you some examples of the important steps we have taken to meet our ambitious goals — big ideas in action that are moving the needle on our progress.

The Roadmap to Our New Century, our strategic plan, has a single guiding purpose — to make the University of Miami a beacon of understanding, prosperity, and wellbeing that illuminates and inspires this community and the world.

Most recently, we have seen this sense of purpose in response to Hurricane Dorian, embodied in the hundreds of people who helped secure our campuses and ensure the safety and comfort

of our students and patients. Moreover, we have seen it in the outpouring of support for victims of the storm in the Bahamas and other areas. I want to take a minute to thank everyone for their help and support.

As we sit here this evening, members of the U.M. community — students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni — have already committed to help in the post-hurricane response and recovery. Our medical teams have been in contact with the Bahamian Ministry of Health; they have visited hospitals in Freeport to assess how the University can best work with them during this difficult time; and hundreds of people from our medical and nursing schools stand ready to assist.

Once again, I am proud to report that the State of the University remains strong, thriving, and focused on what really matters.

Today's town hall will give you a sense of excitement about the amazing and transformational work that is taking place right here, right now.

I have invited three members of the University community to share a glimpse of the work happening across our campuses.

Stephen Nimer, director of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the Miller School of Medicine.

Andrew Baker, from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science.

And **Sade Prithwie**, a senior, with a dual-major in human and social development and in Spanish.

I look forward to sharing more about our progress later in the program, but now, please welcome Dr. Stephen Nimer, professor of medicine, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, and physician scientist.

Thank you so much Stephen, Andrew, and Sade.

You have shared inspiring stories of how we are uniquely tackling complex challenges and charting the path to success in the

classroom, in the lab, in pursuit of a cure, and in protecting our most precious natural resources.

There are many, many more of these stories that have emerged from our collective vision.

Each of you is helping to tell these stories, and your work contributes to our ability to fulfill this vision. Thank you, everyone.

As I stated last year, our guiding principle can be summed up in this way: comprehensive excellence, selective preeminence. This principle guides our strategic priorities, transformative initiatives, and action projects.

I'd like to share with you some of our successes and the progress we have made over the past four years to move our University, our community, and our world forward.

MAGNET FOR TALENT

We are a magnet for talent — from students to faculty to staff.

We attract individuals who are inventive and nimble; and we are confident in the ability of our people to adapt to and thrive in our ever-changing world.

At their core, universities are enduring institutions tasked with the creation, transmission, translation, and preservation of knowledge. But this is not a static enterprise, weighed down by conformity or inertia.

The University of Miami excels because we embrace change, and that change is driven by people who refresh and renew our purpose and dedication with each new generation.

This year's incoming class is one of the most competitive, selective, and diverse in our history.

While universities across the country and around the world are struggling with both applications and filling seats, all the trends at the U are positive.

Applications are up 16 percent over the past four years to nearly 40 thousand.

Our yield is also up by 31 percent during the same period—meaning those we are admitting are choosing the U at a higher rate.

These trends have allowed us to become more selective, attracting a diverse and talented group of students from across the country and around the world.

As we continue to attract high-achieving students, our obligation is not simply to admit them but rather to ensure that they succeed academically and graduate on time.

To that purpose, the Provost has been leading a taskforce focused on student success.

Our commitment to excellence extends to the recruitment of deans and faculty who are at the top of their fields. Over the past three months we have welcomed three new deans: Anthony Varona at the School of Law, Karin Wilkins at the School of Communication, and Daniel Berg at the College of Engineering who will serve as interim dean while we conduct a national search.

Over the last three years job applicants have increased by 68 percent, and reflect a diverse pool, while our staff retention has been steady.

We have invested in stronger onboarding procedures as well as leadership and professional development to make sure our employees feel like they are valued and can add value.

LEADING HEALTH-CARE TRANSFORMATION

Earlier you heard from Dr. Nimer about the tremendous impact the National Cancer Institute designation will have on the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and our ability to provide our patients with the best of the best treatments.

With our preeminent academic health system, we are leading the transformation of health care in the twenty-first century.

What does this mean?

It means that we are home to destination programs, like Sylvester, which bring people from all over the world to receive

cutting-edge treatment based on the latest research through compassionate and personalized care.

Medicine of the twenty-first century is perfectly illustrated by The Lennar Foundation Medical Center, which represents a whole new strategy for offering high specialty care in an ambulatory setting.

At the Lennar Center your overall wellbeing is taken into account with a comprehensive approach to health and in a beautiful setting with soothing music and comfortable spaces that make you think about getting better and not about being sick.

Lennar is the face of the future of health care, and we are planning to cut the ribbon on two more similar facilities in the years ahead, expanding our reach in South Florida.

Also preeminent is Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, which has been ranked number-one in the nation a record 18 times.

We have many programs that are ranked highly, all of which draw patients. Salient among them is the Ear, Nose, and Throat program, ranked number nine in the country.

The light of preeminence also shines in our Department of Dermatology, which received a transformative naming gift this year from prominent dermatologist and University benefactor, Dr. Phillip Frost.

HEMISPHERIC LEADERSHIP

The University of Miami and the city of Miami are inextricably linked, evolving together for nearly a century.

Our location in this gateway metropolis provides a hemispheric advantage that we can leverage to attract students and faculty, to engage with institutions across the region, and to bring people together to build a more interconnected and resilient future.

We plan to have five hubs, covering different regions in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first of which we opened in Mexico City this May.

Our Hemispheric University Consortium has grown to 14 of the top universities from Canada to Argentina. We are holding our

second annual meeting next month hosted by the University of the West Indies in Jamaica.

MISSION-DRIVEN RESEARCH

We have taken big steps toward breaking down disciplinary and organizational barriers to address consequential problems.

The complexity of these problems demands an interdisciplinary perspective that fosters holistic thinking and integrative approaches.

I'll share just a small sample of the exciting projects that are up and running right now.

U-LINK is both acronym — it stands for the Laboratory for Integrative Knowledge — **and** accomplishment, representing the strong links that are already being forged across disciplines and campuses.

Now in its third round, seed funding supports teams of scholars from multiple disciplines in collaborative, problem-based inquiry.

Projects mix natural and social sciences with arts and humanities.

There are more than a dozen examples, but I'd like to highlight one that is particularly relevant.

Project Hurakan brings together the fields of meteorology, environmental anthropology, decision science, and community engagement to improve interpretations of hurricane forecast products, particularly among vulnerable populations in South Florida.

A recent interactive opinion piece in *The New York Times* by Hurakan team member and School of Communication associate professor Alberto Cairo showed that people often misinterpret National Hurricane Center graphics, with serious consequences on critical decisions like when and how to prepare for a potential strike.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

We are literally ground zero for the most significant threat not only to our city but to the entire planet — climate change.

The University of Miami is equipped to confront this complex issue in ways that few other institutions can. Our wealth of interdisciplinary expertise brings together world-class scientists with engineers, urban planners, health professionals, architects, artists, and communicators to search for creative and innovative solutions.

We will be convening the Miami Climate Symposium 2020 this January, which will showcase our institutional commitment to reduce risks of weather and climate-related disasters from local to international scales.

FROST INSTITUTES

We continue to make progress on the first of a series of interdisciplinary STEM-based institutes. The new building for the Frost Institute of Chemistry and Molecular Science is well into the design process. A symposium with world-renowned speakers is in the works for the Spring of 2020.

Institute of Mathematical Sciences of the Americas

The Institute of Mathematical Sciences of the Americas launched with an inaugural three-day conference last week, which brought together some of the top names in the field.

With a generous grant from the Simons Foundation, the institute is building a cohesive mathematical community for the hemisphere at the University of Miami, which is attracting eminent scholars to collaborate and thereby make substantive contributions.

There are many more projects and exciting collaborations taking place on all our campuses, and we will continue to share their work throughout the year.

LEADING THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION

Education is undergoing a revolution in the ways we exchange information, teach, and learn. This requires us to innovate and to adopt a flexible, open, and holistic approach that we call Education for Life.

This means that a student's relationship with our university does not end with the awarding of a degree — there is continuity and

an opportunity for a lifelong engagement as members of the workforce return to the classroom — on campus and online — throughout the arc of their careers.

We see Education for Life **not** as a one-way transaction. At last year's State of the University, a student who is a military veteran shared how students' own life experiences enrich the overall learning environment, and we take those comments to heart.

Impactful learning is not passive or linear. It requires immersive experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom. The Educational Revolution encompasses exciting modes of learning like simulation, hands-on research, and multi-sensory experiences.

This is because our brains are spatially wired, and we process information better in the context of how it will be applied. Spatial learning provides students with an immersive experience which can be elaborated through team problem-solving and structured discussion in the classroom.

Magic Leap Platform

Closely connected to this approach is the concept of spatial computing — an exciting cognitive and technological frontier, which is the basis of the highly innovative Magic Leap platform.

U.M. is the first educational institution to partner with Magic Leap, which was founded by College of Engineering double alumnus Roni Abovitz. Magic Leap is a mixed reality platform, which is transforming spatial computing with applications that will take it out of the lab and into the classroom, businesses, and medical centers.

The U-Experience campus tour, which is currently available for view at the Richter Library, bends the arc of what it means to “be there.”

Our very own U-Experience project team created the first fully digital version of the entire Coral Gables campus using Magic Leap technology. Every single tree is georeferenced—and that is truly amazing.

Just this week the Provost issued a call for proposals from faculty and staff interested in creating new scholarly, research, artistic,

and educational applications using mixed reality for Magic Leap devices and the Magicverse.

More than 30 Magic Leap-enabled projects are in development fueled by collaboration across schools and colleges and involving faculty and students.

The educational revolution also takes a deeper dive into the dynamics of cognition — how we acquire and process knowledge. Students not only need to learn how to learn, but we, the teachers, must learn how to teach them within these new frameworks.

PETAL

PETAL, the Platform for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, is providing faculty with innovative resources, research, and support.

The first PETAL project is the **U.M. Academy for Teaching Excellence**, which is designed to support newly hired faculty to cultivate the skills necessary to design and implement student-centered learning experiences.

Twenty-five tenure-track faculty with teaching responsibilities are participating in the academy this fall.

After many years in education, I have learned that lectures aren't bad. Bad lectures are bad. Everyone knows what I'm talking about. It is my personal goal to eradicate them from this campus. Doing so will elevate both our students and our teachers.

NextGenMD Curriculum

What's happening at the Miller School of Medicine is very exciting and at the cutting edge of medical education. NextGenMD is a multi-year initiative that is reimagining the medical school curriculum to empower and inspire students to transform lives and to serve our global community. NextGenMD integrates laboratory, clinical, and health-system sciences, emphasizing patient-centered learning in teams and focusing on population health.

Additionally, this new curriculum will be complemented by a new Medical Education facility generously funded by the Miller family.

And in 2020 we will host a conference convening educational innovators from around the world, which will offer an opportunity to showcase our new medical curriculum and continue to position U.M. as a global leader in this crucial field.

Education for Life

Education for life reaches beyond the formal classroom.

Construction crews are hard at work on Lakeside Village, which will open in 2020. This is the first phase of a large multi-year project that will ultimately renovate and expand our entire inventory of residential facilities, thereby creating an integrated ecosystem for learning, living, design, and sustainability.

This new generation of student housing will model the premiere educational experience — where you live and where you learn will be blended throughout the student experience.

STRONG FOUNDATION

And finally, great universities create a sense of continuity and perpetuity.

For the U to move forward, we must continue to invest in the operational and financial systems that will ensure we not only survive but thrive.

Behind the cutting-edge research, athletic wins, and milestones for students are teams of U.M. staff working hard to create the administrative excellence that provides the platform for success.

This starts with a strong financial performance. With our trustees, we made the strategic decision to improve our financial footing because, unlike the advances in virtual reality, none of these great ideas will work without real dollars and real financial security to fund the needs of the present and build for the future.

We strive to be financially, organizationally, environmentally, and culturally sustainable so that we can fulfil our founders' aspiration to exist in perpetuity.

Today we are more efficient, more innovative, and more secure than just a year ago. This is true for both our academic and our medical enterprises.

Over the past two years, UHealth has had the best financial performance in its history.

In June we concluded one of our most successful fundraising years ever. We exceeded our targets for the year with nearly \$322 million in new gifts and commitments. Stay tuned for a big announcement in the coming weeks.

LOOKING AHEAD

As you can see, we have made great strides in becoming the institution we hope to be not only by our centennial, but for our 200th and 300th anniversaries.

I am the sixth president of the University of Miami. If the first, President Ashe, could see his beloved U today, he would be astonished to see many of his dreams realized.

It is my hope that a century from now, future Hurricanes will look back with pride to what we will accomplish during the years to come.

We have done and will continue to do this together. We are one U — faculty, students, staff, trustees, alumni, and friends. Our energy, insight, determination, and expertise propel us forward, striving to be ever better and reaching ever higher.

Our spirit makes this place a beacon for our local and global communities. We have the privilege of using our resources to help illuminate the path for human progress through knowledge, understanding, and the strength of character to do so with integrity and inclusivity.

Our adopted mascot, the ibis, is a symbol of strength, inspiration, and hope.

The State of the University is indeed strong and enduring.

Let us resolve to bring our very best to the year ahead, individually and collectively.

Let us be exemplary. Let us be the light of inspiration, and the wings of hope.