Good Evening. It’s always a pleasure to see our friends in Longview. We’re pretty excited about what has been going on at the Longview University Center. Thanks to plenty of hard work from the staff and our new director, Van Patterson, things here in Longview are going very well.

We are very fortunate to have Dr. Patterson on our staff. Since his arrival, he has:
- Purchased new computers;
- Expanded Student Services and hosted several new events; and,
- Created a thriving media presence, including a very active Facebook page, an updated web presence and a more active presence in local news.

Enrollment here in Longview is up, and is a part of our record enrollment in Fall 2013. Official enrollment at all of our campuses was 7,524 students. That is a 9.7% increase – better than all but one or two Texas institutions.

The growth of the Longview University Center is primarily due to the dedication of our supporters. We have an excellent Development
Council, now under the guidance of Mr. Robert Wilson. Their work, and the work of others, is essential to the success of students in this area. Thank you for your dedication.

I want to tell you a few important things about the University. First, we have a strong ranking by U.S. News & World Report.

- Among public Masters Level I universities in the West, we were ranked 22nd. We were ranked 2nd in Texas and ranked 1st in Texas by our peer institutions.
- Our online graduate nursing programs are tied for 16th in the nation.

Speaking of nursing, our nursing programs here in Longview are essential to the quality of medical care, both here in this city and around East Texas. The passing rates of our Longview students on the nursing licensure exam – the NCLEX – often hit 100 percent. That means that students who go through this program are well-equipped to go into the field.

Because of the excellence of our students and efforts of our faculty, Longview graduates find jobs rather easily. Once our Longview students move into the field, they often take on leadership positions. Many of them move into graduate programs and into administration.

- For example, one of our graduates, U.S. Navy Lt. Anthony Hopson, Sr., is now serving as a commissioned officer at Joint Air Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston. He is the instructor of
new enlisted medical technicians. His daughter, Antonia, is following in her father’s footsteps. She has joined the Longview program and is here tonight.

- Then there is Jennifer Reeves, who has worked at Parkland Hospital and is now the Stroke Coordinator at Good Shepard Medical Center.
- Nick Glaze, another one of our graduates, also works as a nurse practitioner at Good Shepherd’s emergency room.
- The list goes on and on. There truly is a strong record of success from the students here and we are proud of their accomplishments.

Longview University students make a real difference in this community. Our students have taken part in events to support heart and Alzheimer’s research, put on health fairs and participated in studies aimed at making this city better.

The LUC nursing program is the backbone of this campus, but we are also expanding into other areas.

- We are expanding our partnership with Kilgore College to increase student success at the center.
- Our staff is working to expand and promote professional development and continuing education courses offered here. To date they have been able to increase the number of online courses available to CPAs, Engineers, and professional teachers.
- The first criminal justice courses are being offered through the
Longview University Center this spring. If enrollment is strong enough this semester, we are planning to expand those course offerings.

- UT Tyler’s Criminal Justice Program is strong. Criminal Justice faculty require seniors to take the “major field test” available from the College Board. This past spring, graduating seniors scored in the 95th percentile among graduates.

I want to tell you just a bit about our largest current project, which will have a positive impact in Longview and around East Texas. We are working to develop the Fisch College of Pharmacy on our Tyler campus. The college will provide needed career training to students from around the area who want to be pharmacists. Our plan is to enroll the first students in the fall of 2015. We currently have an architectural team working to develop the building schematics.

We look forward to continuing to grow and finding new ways to accomplish our main goal: student success. We don’t just define success by a student’s grades or their participation in activities. We believe that giving students a well-rounded education that teaches students to make decisions and be strong contributors to society is just as important. We strive to help our students succeed at academic pursuits and at life.

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