

**EVENT:** Fall 2024 MavsMeet Convocation

**DATE:** Monday, Aug. 19, 2024

**PRESIDENT'S ROLE:** Remarks

Hi, y'all. Hi, Mavericks.

Thank you, Nailah and Jacob, for the introduction and kind words. And a big thanks to Florencio and Jennifer, our Mr. and Mrs. UTA.

I'd like to offer a warm Maverick welcome to all of our new students, and a warm welcome BACK to all of our returning students. All of us are so glad you're here. I'M so glad you're here.

Being up here brings back so many memories for me. I've been through a lot of these, y'all. I stand up here as a university president, but I spent a lot of time in your seats as well.

And when I think back to when I was starting my first semester of college—I had so many big dreams, but y'all, I had no idea of all that college had to offer.

I had no idea when I walked onto campus for that first semester that I would one day be standing on this stage before you. I changed majors. I changed career plans.

Now that won't be everyone's experience. Some of you know exactly what you want to be, and how to go about becoming your best selves. And this University will support you and your dreams and do everything in our power to help you get there. I always tell students to "Dream big."

Some of you will discover your path while you are at UTA. We're going to do everything in our power to help you, too.

So whether you know what your path forward is or not – I and the rest of our UTA team are here to support you.

This is the start of my third year as UTA president, so I know a thing or two about being a Maverick. Here's what you should know so you can get the most out of your time at UTA:

- **Number one:** This is super important, y'all. We have our own hand sign. Now I know y'all got a chance to learn this at orientation, but it is always good to practice. When someone says, "Mav Up," you need to know what to do so you don't look like a rookie.

Hold up your pinky and extend your thumb. Fold down your other three fingers – like this. Now this is important: Your palm should face OUT, like you're waving to someone. If your palm faces IN, then you're telling people to "hang ten." That's cool, but nobody is surfing around here. So palms out.

Now me, I wanted to make sure I have the perfect MavUp – I have my nails in blue, orange and white so I can show my Maverick pride when I "Mav Up."

If you're looking for a perfect place to show your Maverick pride, you should come back here to the CPC for our athletic events. Volleyball season starts soon, so I hope I'll see you cheering on the Mavericks.

- **Number two:** Look at the people on either side of you. Now look who's in front and back of you. Some of you are about to become lifelong friends. These are your future study partners, your workout buddies, or maybe the people you eat your meals with. They may be your work colleagues down the road or your future spouse or part of your wedding party.

College is where you establish relationships that will last the rest of your lives. This is true: I know a Maverick who met his spouse and his best friend within the first three hours of arriving on campus for move-in day. So push yourself out of your comfort zone, and say hello to the people sitting around you here today and when you are in classes.

- **Number three:** Pursue internships and part-time jobs that will advance your career prospects. This is SO important, and the process starts sooner than you think. Our Career Center is here to help you – and it's not too early to be thinking about how you can spend next summer growing professionally.

Want to be a nurse? Look into internship programs at area hospitals and health systems. Want to be an engineer? Most of the big firms in DFW have summer internships available. Students who work in career-relevant summer internships—or ones that run concurrently with the school year—are more likely to get hired in their fields upon graduation. On average, they make higher first-year salaries than their peers.

Our Career Development Center is located in the UC and can help you with this. Don't wait!

- **Number four:** Get to know your professors. They're brilliant, for one. But you're also going to have better classroom experiences if you engage in discussions, visit faculty during office hours, and ask for their help and advice when you need it.

You're going to need their help down the road—maybe with a reference for a job or a recommendation letter for a grad program. One of my college professors changed my life when he said I should consider earning a doctorate degree. I'd never thought about it, and I'd never be standing here today if he hadn't planted that seed in my mind.

- **Number five:** Embrace the adventure. Starting college is thrilling—but probably also a little nerve-racking. Believe me: I get it. You are stepping into the unknown. Embrace this journey with an open heart.

The great fictional philosopher and soccer coach Ted Lasso says to “Be curious, not judgmental.” Meet new people. Join student-led activities. Explore all that UTA has to offer. Remember that everyone here has been in your shoes at some point, and we are eager to welcome you into our Maverick family.

Our student activity fair will be on the University Center Mall on Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>. It's a great opportunity to meet your fellow students, who are leading a wide range of organizations, from our Campus Cat Coalition that takes care of our favorite cat Microwave and all his friends to the UTA Pickleball Club or the Maverick Chess Club. There are literally hundreds of groups that you could join.

- **Number six:** Speaking of Maverick families, we've got a big one, and you're part of it now. One of the best reasons to come to UTA is our incredible alumni network, which includes more than 270,000 graduates. UTA grads can be found in just about every company, non-profit and government agency in Fort Worth. The top employers of UTA alumni are big companies like American Airlines, BNSF Railway, and Texas Health Resources. We're Bell Textron's largest supplier of talent nationwide. We're Arlington ISD's largest supplier of teachers. We're the largest producer of baccalaureate-educated nurses in Texas.

Once you graduate, you are going to work for, alongside, and supervise fellow Mavericks—because we are everywhere. That's another reason to smile and make friends with the person next to you.

Now I get to introduce one of my friends. Our next speaker will be our wonderful Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Tamara Brown. But first, please give a warm Maverick welcome to our fabulous UTA Dance Team!

Thank you all. And go Mavs!