

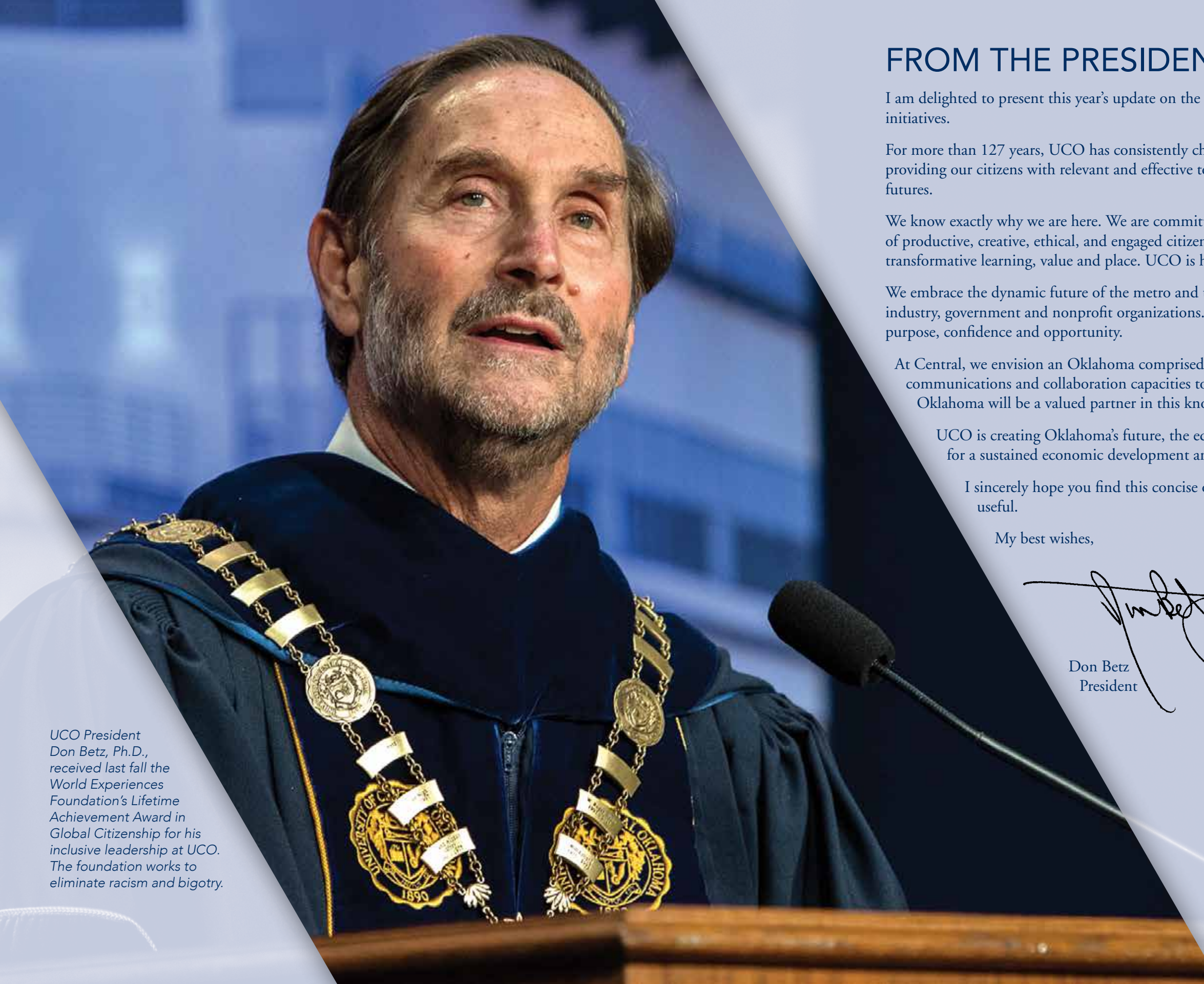


Report  
to the  
Community  
2017



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA





*UCO President Don Betz, Ph.D., received last fall the World Experiences Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award in Global Citizenship for his inclusive leadership at UCO. The foundation works to eliminate racism and bigotry.*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am delighted to present this year's update on the University of Central Oklahoma and some of our current initiatives.

For more than 127 years, UCO has consistently championed educational creativity and change in Oklahoma, providing our citizens with relevant and effective tools and learning opportunities to build meaningful, successful futures.

We know exactly why we are here. We are committed to helping students learn and to encouraging the development of productive, creative, ethical, and engaged citizens and leaders. Our values are grounded in student success, transformative learning, value and place. UCO is here to serve.

We embrace the dynamic future of the metro and the state of Oklahoma as we actively partner with education, industry, government and nonprofit organizations. We understand the power of connection — connection to purpose, confidence and opportunity.

At Central, we envision an Oklahoma comprised of an abundance of citizens with enhanced critical thinking, communications and collaboration capacities to imagine, create, innovate and solve problems. In this way, Oklahoma will be a valued partner in this knowledge-driven, global era.

UCO is creating Oklahoma's future, the educated workforce and the responsible, engaged citizens required for a sustained economic development and a vibrant, equitable society.

I sincerely hope you find this concise overview of UCO's intentions and initiatives informative and useful.

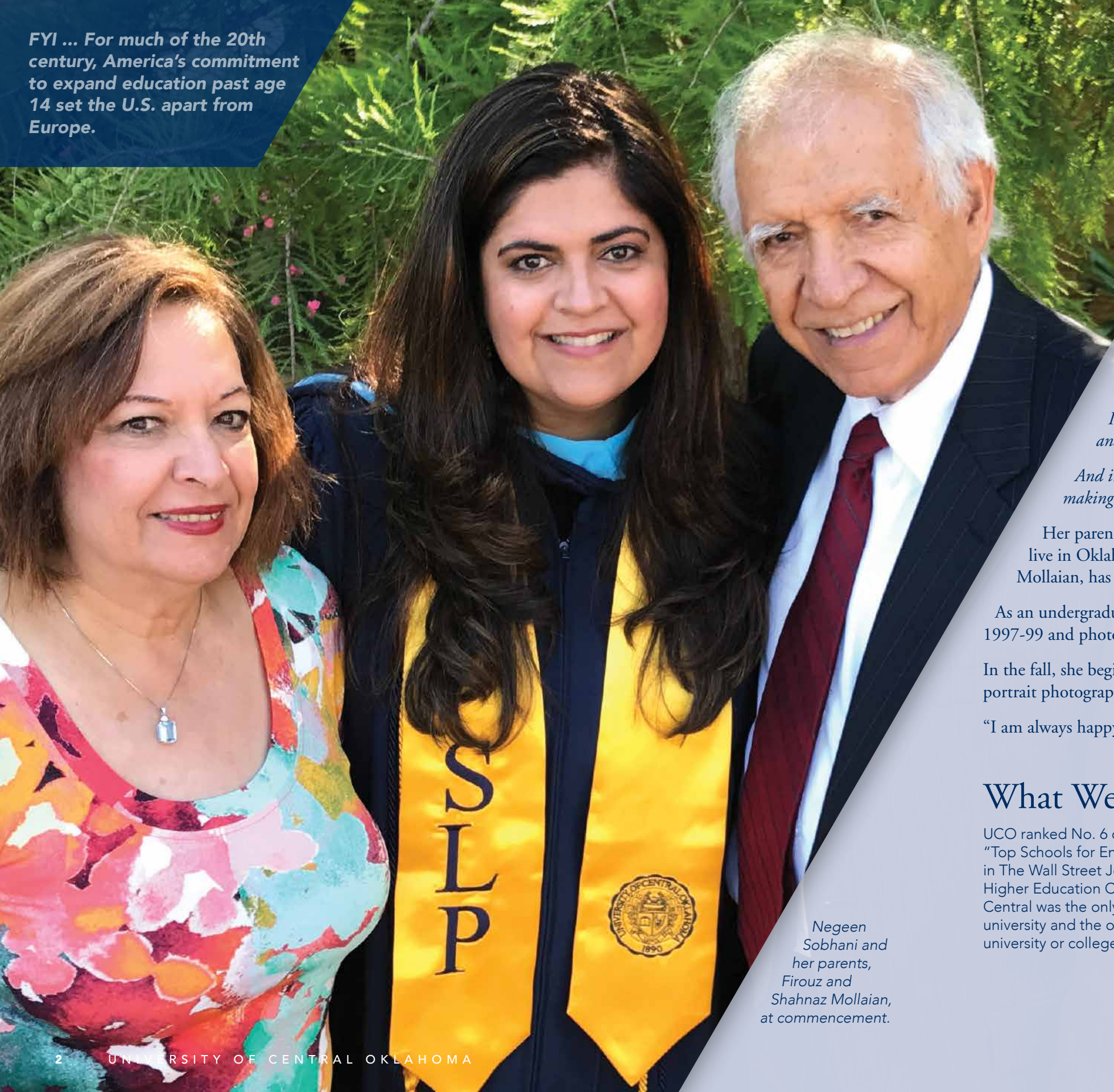
My best wishes,



Don Betz  
President



FYI ... For much of the 20th century, America's commitment to expand education past age 14 set the U.S. apart from Europe.



Neegen Sobhani and her parents, Firouz and Shahnaz Mollaian, at commencement.

## PLANTING DEEP ROOTS

A recent online post by Neegen Sobhani was an incredible reminder of how Central touches the lives of so many students and their families, for generations to come.

She wrote:

*This university was where my family's American roots were planted in 1957 when my dad stepped off a bus a few blocks away and started a new life as a 19-year-old immigrant, alone.*

*It's where my mom took off her shoes and walked home in her socks to avoid falling on the ice after a long night of studying at the library.*

*It's where my dad would take my brother, a toddler, from their apartment facing the library to the 7-11 across the street for candy (both buildings still standing).*

*It's where as a newlywed I earned my bachelor's degrees in English education and in photojournalism and became certified in teaching English as a second language.*

*And in May, it's where I earned my Master's of Science in speech language pathology. Sixty years in the making.*

Her parents, Firouz and Shahnaz Mollaian, born in Iran, now live in Warr Acres. Sobhani and her husband live in Oklahoma City after having lived in Italy for four years and in Israel for seven. Her brother, Omeed Mollaian, has lived not only in Oklahoma, but in Hungary, Israel, Zambia, England and now, Macau.

As an undergraduate at Central, Sobhani worked on UCO's student newspaper, The Vista, as a photographer from 1997-99 and photography editor from 1998-99.

In the fall, she begins work as a speech language pathologist at Hearts for Hearing while planning to continue her portrait photography studio, Neegen Sobhani Photography.

"I am always happy to support UCO initiatives," she said.

## What We Do Matters ...

UCO ranked No. 6 on the list of "Top Schools for Engagement" in The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings. Central was the only regional public university and the only Oklahoma university or college to make the list.

UCO once again ranked as the top public regional university in the state on the 2017 Best Colleges list from U.S. News & World Report. Central ranked No. 32 as a Tier One institution in the "Top Public Schools: Regional Universities-West" category and No. 88 in the overall list of regional universities in the west.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded UCO a five-year, \$1.18 million Federal TRIO Program Educational Opportunity Centers grant. The funds target first-generation, low-income adult learners, specifically those with English as a second language, military families and veterans, and other marginalized and underrepresented populations.



# SOME JOURNEYS, HARDER THAN OTHERS

June was a pivotal month for recent UCO graduate Olivia Cavazos-Hudson. She began dental school at the University of Oklahoma, AND her mother learned that her breast cancer finally was in remission.

While at UCO, Cavazos became one of the university's best advocates at the legislature, a student whose commitment and positive attitude reflected little of what might have been a monumental struggle for others.

A first generation, low-income college student from a single-parent home, Cavazos arrived at UCO with the dream of becoming a dentist. As an Oklahoma City freshman at Putnam City West, a soccer accident fractured her cheekbone, broke her nose and required a dental implant. The dentistry experience led the goalie to a new career plan. A TRIO counselor helped her imagine success and find a financial path.

"I toured college campuses with TRIO. After the UCO tour, I knew that's where I wanted to be," she said.

The small class sizes, the personal relationships with faculty and staff, the large number of different student organizations — yes, she was a member of the once-popular Harry Potter Club — all are at the top of her list of why she came and stayed.

She obtained her degree with financial help from the Oklahoma Promise program, the President's Leadership Council scholarship and campus work-study.

"My mother almost died my freshman year — her breast cancer had come back," she recently recalled.

She lived on campus her first year, thanks to scholarship funds, but moved back home after that to help care for her mother. "The vast majority of the time, I worked 25-30 hours a week to help support myself and her.

"UCO and the support I had there made it easier," she said. "It felt like home."

**FYI ... At the beginning of the 20th century, there were fewer than 1,000 colleges with 160,000 students in the U.S.**



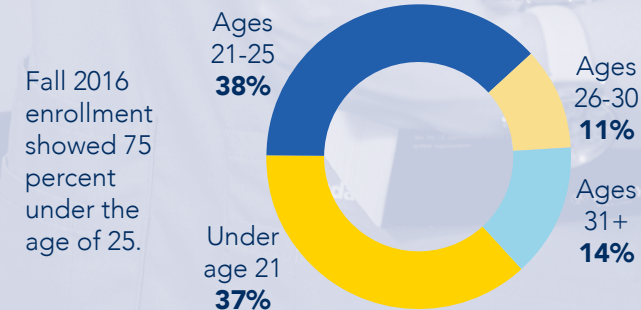
## Who are our students?

- TOP 5 Undergraduate Majors**
- Nursing • Psychology • Biology • Accounting
  - General Studies
- Graduate Majors**
- Educational Leadership • Public Administration
  - Special Education-Mild/Moderate Disabilities
  - Business Administration • Secondary Education

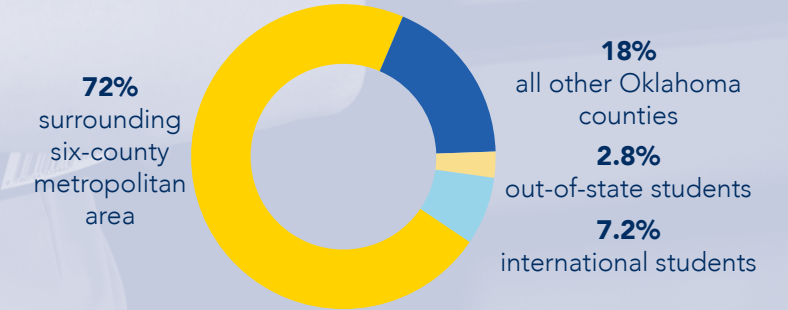
About half of UCO students will graduate with an average of about **\$26,000** in debt.

The Volunteer Service and Learning Center reports that UCO students donated about **148,000** hours to community causes in 2016-17.

## How old are they?



## Where are they from?





# UCO, SERVING OUR METRO COMMUNITY

At UCO, we believe education enriches and extends lives, while liberating people from the demons of ignorance, poverty, prejudice, despair and ill health.

Education also is workforce development, economic development, civic engagement and civic responsibility.

While our No. 1 mission is to serve, educate and graduate our students, we see that mission as being vitally connected to serving our community.

A study by the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce indicates a trained workforce is the area's major impediment to economic growth.

Currently, only 40 percent of Oklahomans ages 25-64 have a postsecondary degree, certificate or credential. Oklahoma has a goal of increasing that number to 70 percent by 2025 to meet labor demands. UCO is committed to doing our part to meet that goal.

We also are part of a plan to develop the metro's five industry clusters that contribute 41 percent of the state's gross domestic product.

By connecting our students, faculty and staff to our metro area — and vice versa — all lives are improved. And, in so doing, our role is expanded:

- To enhance economic development;
- To assist in the stewardship of resources for future generations;
- To address sociological areas in family life and schools; and,
- To enhance the quality of life through the arts.

As the state's only metropolitan university, we will continue to look for partnerships that meet our students' and our state and metropolitan area needs.

We will continue to take care of each other, both on campus and in the larger community.

## Other Metro Efforts

UCO has been a leading producer of graduates in Oklahoma with 15,680 certificates, bachelor's or master's degrees from 2011-16.

UCO is a leader in setting the direction of the Central Oklahoma STEM Alliance, which serves 150,000 K-12 students in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

UCO continues to support the creation of a downtown Innovation District, having served as the catalyst in 2015, connecting the Brookings Institution and the OKC Chamber.

Graduates with  
STEM degrees:  
“I can't hire them  
fast enough to  
meet the software  
sustainment needs  
of the future.”

— Lt. Gen. Lee K. Levy II

Commander, Air Force Sustainment Center,  
Tinker Air Force Base

**FYI ... The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 and its expansion in 1890 brought explosive growth in the number of colleges through the land-grant program. While established in 1890, UCO is not a land-grant college.**



# MAKING ENDS MEET

Much of the last year has been focused on two major issues that affect our budget — enrollment and state funding.

Like institutions statewide — and across the nation — we have experienced a decline in students, now below 17,000 since our peak in 2011 at 17,239. Because of declines in state funding, almost three-fourths of our budget now comes from student tuition and fees.

As for state funding, using the 6.1 percent budget reduction we received in the final week of the legislative session, we are now working with a 34 percent decrease in state funding over the last three years. For the 2017-18 fiscal year, state allocations will cover only 22 percent of our expenses, down from 50 percent just 10 years ago.

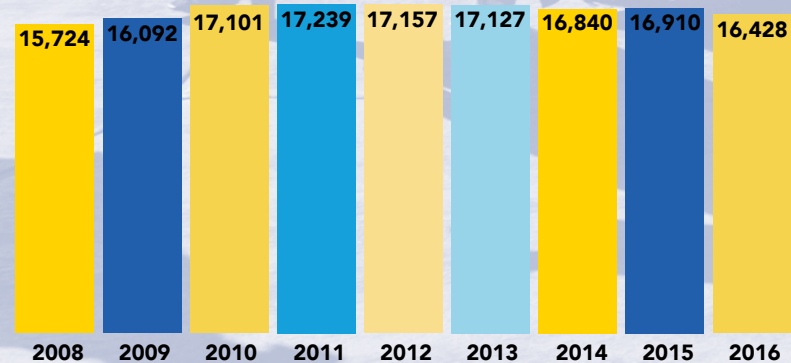
Add to all of that the uncertainty of current court challenges to the last minute legislative budget actions. The budget we are using to start the fall semester may be much different in the spring.

In the spring of 2017, we implemented a hiring freeze, lifted at the start of this fiscal year 2018. We will continue to look for cost-savings, while also maintaining and creating programs that attract students. We will continue to work with legislators, to encourage them to find long-term sources of revenue to responsibly build budgets that are sustainable.

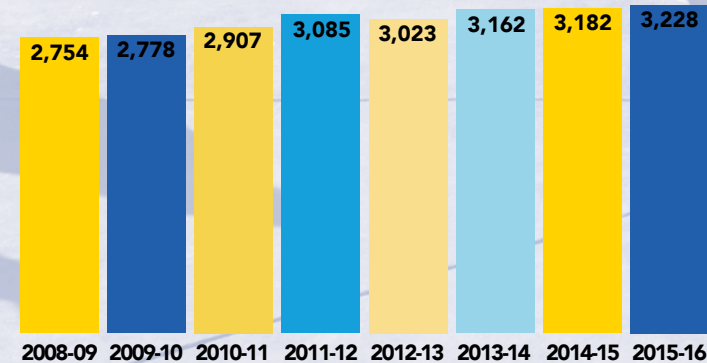
At the end of the day, we know why we come to work every day — to help students graduate and fulfill their dreams. And we know the economic future of the metropolitan area we serve depends on meeting the needs of a state that faces a shortage in college-educated workers.

*FYI ... In 1918, every state required students to complete elementary school.*

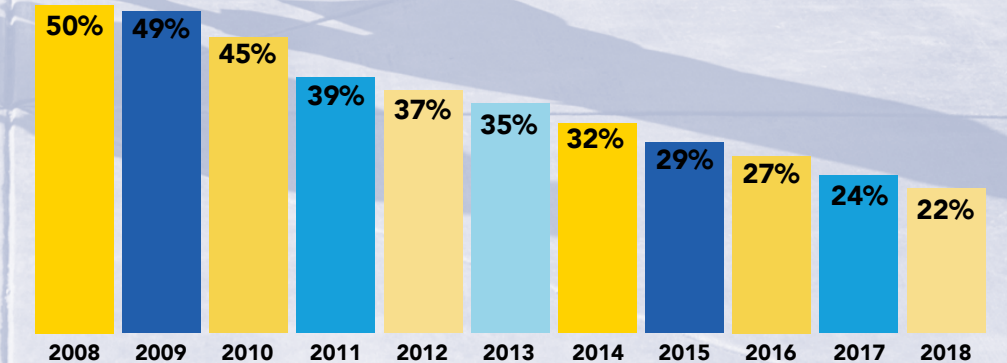
**FALL ENROLLMENTS**



**DEGREES GRANTED**



**STATE FUNDING AS PERCENT OF EXPENSE BUDGET**





**FYI ... By 1940, the number of Americans with a high school diploma had increased to 50 percent. No other nation had attempted such widespread education.**

## STUDENT SUCCESS, FACING THIN LINES

Catherine Webster, Ph.D., just finished her first year as dean of the College of Liberal Arts, a year when many students found themselves struggling to pay increasing tuition and fees, rent, food and transportation costs.

“So many students are stretched, many literally just a flat tire away from dropping out,” she recently said.

In November, she developed a list of students whose professors thought they should return for the spring semester, but it looked as though they were not because of financial problems.

She called it her Goldilocks List — those who didn’t owe too much (over \$1,500) or too little. With a limited amount of money in hand from the UCO Foundation’s annual fund, Webster started calling 33 “just right” students to see if \$300 to \$500 grants could make a difference.

“I couldn’t reach some. One was being deployed, another working on a degree in another program,” she said. Still, she found 13 students who were just right.

She only can wonder how many more might have been helped.

A 2016 article in U.S. News & World Report stated that 95 percent of states have been spending less on higher education than they did before the Great Recession. With three-fourths of the nation’s college students in public institutions, those cuts affect a large number, across the nation as well as Oklahoma — and certainly at UCO.

UCO advisers are routinely working with 2,500-3,000 students each year, trying to find some way for them to stay in school despite bursar account balances.

Students want to get degrees. Oklahoma needs an educated work force.

Finding ways to help students graduate definitely matters.

### What We Do Matters ...

About 175 students a month visited the UCO’s Central Pantry in the 2016-17 academic year. The pantry was set up in November 2012 in partnership with the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank to help students in need continue their education.

Too many students drop out because bursar account balances prevent re-enrolling. Then they have to start paying back student loans, making it even harder to come back, Myron Pope, Ph.D., UCO’s vice president for student affairs, said.

“Many of the things we have to spend money on today would go away if we funded education properly. Education is key to solving every issue we have,” Natalie Shirley, Oklahoma’s secretary of education and workforce development, said.



# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

UCO continues to seek ways to provide needed space and updates — through bond financing that is repaid through services provided or student fees, along with much appreciated donors and partnerships.

To assess future needs, a Campus Master Plan was started in December 2015 with completion expected in August 2017.

The following is an accounting of projects completed over the last year and of work planned for the year to come.

## COMPLETED OR NEARING COMPLETION

- **Old North:** Opened for classes for the spring 2017 semester after a 15-year closure.
- **Murdaugh:** Renovations started in May 2016 and completed over summer 2017.
- **Softball Complex:** Completed in March 2017. Additional site work will be done in September.
- **Mitchell Education Center:** Work started in December 2015 with an August 2017 grand opening now planned.
- **South Central Plant:** Started in July 2016. Work is to finish in early fall 2017.

## CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

- **Dining Facility:** Work started in January 2017 with completion scheduled for summer 2019.
- **STEM Teaching & Research Center:** With a January 2017 groundbreaking, project completion is expected in fall 2018.
- **Sports Performance Center:** Phase 1 began in April 2017 with a fall 2018 completion.

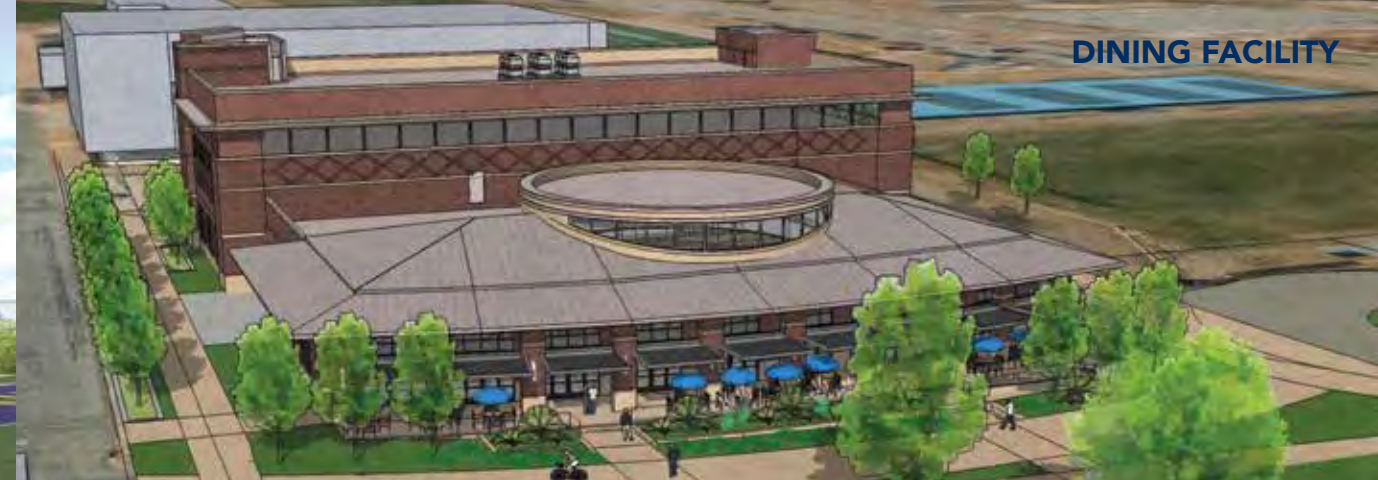
## COMING UP

- **Liberal Arts Addition:** Work will begin in fall 2017 with completion expected in summer 2019.
- **North Hamilton Annex:** Design work is underway with construction expected to start in summer 2018 for a fall 2019 completion.
- **Temporary Wrestling Facility:** Work began summer 2017 with a spring 2018 expected completion.

SPORTS PERFORMANCE CENTER



DINING FACILITY



STEM BUILDING



MITCHELL EDUCATION CENTER



SOUTH CENTRAL PLANT



SOFTBALL COMPLEX



LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING





## 2016-17 WAS WHEN ...

- In the fall, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) awarded UCO a five-year, \$2.5 million grant to support professional development for metro educators teaching English-learning students.
- For the fifth year, UCO made Victory Media's list of "Military Friendly Schools," while The Military Times ranked UCO as No. 21 on its 2017 list of "Best for Vets: Colleges." UCO was the only Oklahoma school to make the list.
- The university maintained its status as a Certified Healthy Campus for the sixth consecutive year, while also ranking as a Certified Healthy Business for the third time.
- UCO's College of Business in the spring earned coveted accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).
- UCO, the third largest preparer of teachers in Oklahoma, received in the spring renewal of its accreditation through 2023 by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).
- UCO and Francis Tuttle Technology Center launched a unique partnership in the spring to help students reach educational goals through the resources offered by both institutions. The overall goal is to reach and educate a greater number of students.

# STLR



• UCO's award-winning STLR program continued to receive national and international attention while having about 100 students graduate with STLR transformative learning transcripts. In addition, the program funded 61 transformative learning student projects for spring and summer.



## THE CHRONICLE 2017 GREAT COLLEGES



- Central's cheer squad in April won its 11th national championship title, with a first-place finish in Intermediate All Girl Division II at the National Cheerleaders Association College Nationals.
- The UCO Hockey team won its second national championship in three years, competing in the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) Men's Division I.
- The UCO Student Association began offering free Uber rides on Thursday-Saturday nights, the first such partnership for the company in Oklahoma.
- The UCO Office of Safety and Transportation Services launched The UCO Rave Guardian smartphone app, a free tool to enhance the personal safety of UCO students, faculty and staff both on and off campus.



# UBER

- UCO students raised more than \$68,400 during the inaugural BronchoThon event April 8 benefiting the Children's Miracle Network.
- The Chronicle of Higher Education named UCO to its "2017 Great Colleges to Work For" list, a distinction that Central has celebrated nine of the last 10 years. UCO also made The Chronicle's elite "Honor Roll" list.



**FYI ... Historians and economists point to the G.I. Bill of 1944 as a major force in developing America's human capital and promoting long-term economic growth.**



## NCUR 2018 BRINGS BIG OPPORTUNITIES

About 4,000 visiting students and another thousand faculty are expected to converge on the UCO campus April 4-7 as Central hosts the 32nd Annual National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR).

Currently, UCO has 22 planning committees involving students, faculty and staff, all focused on making the event a success.

None could be happier about being part of the planning process than Alyssa Compton, who attended NCUR 2016 in Asheville, North Carolina, as a UCO junior English major.

"I am a first-generation college student, so no one had ever told me about undergraduate research," she said recently. "Going to NCUR opened all these doors for me. I can't wait for other students to have that eye-opening experience."

Before participating in NCUR, she thought research conferences were something for students in science, not liberal arts, she said. In Asheville, she did an oral presentation on Anne Sexton's poem "Housewife," using it to explore female objectification. "Through NCUR, I learned that research I might do for a class could be expanded to represent genuine scholarship."

The size of an NCUR event could be intimidating to some, but Compton said the experience was exciting for her because of the large number of UCO students who participate and the time professors spend making sure UCO students are prepared.

The effort also helped pave her way to graduate school, which she starts this fall at Central.

NCUR 2018 will bring to campus top undergraduate research from every state and 11 countries for poster and oral presentations, original dance and art performances, and an art exhibit. Regular classes will be redirected, with UCO students who aren't presenting encouraged to attend the NCUR events.

"UCO is special because of the emphasis placed on undergraduate research, another reason I'm glad we're hosting," Compton said.

### What We Do Matters ...

Co-chairs of NCUR 2018 are UCO's Greg Wilson, Ph.D., and Michael Springer, Ph.D. Wilson is assistant vice president of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Springer is director of the Office of High-Impact Practices.

Applications for NCUR 2018 will open to students in October and remain open for about two months. Students who are accepted then have time to expand their research and prepare for the April event.

UCO students published in June the inaugural edition of "1890, A Journal of Undergraduate Research." More than 100 submissions were judged with blind attribution. About 10 percent made the journal, said editor and UCO graduate student Alyssa Compton.



# UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

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For Operations

**Patti Neuhold,**  
Vice President  
For Finance

**Charlie Johnson,**  
Vice President  
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**Mark Kinders, Ed.D.,**  
Vice President  
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and Science



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Dean, College  
Of Fine Arts  
and Design



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Interim Dean,  
College Of  
Business




**James Machell, Ph.D.,**  
Dean, College  
Of Education  
and  
Professional  
Studies



**Catherine Webster, Ph.D.,**  
Dean, College  
Of Liberal Arts





“Only that  
day dawns  
to which we  
are awake.”

*Henry David Thoreau*

## Mission

The University of Central Oklahoma exists to help students learn by providing transformative educational experiences to students so that they may become productive, creative, ethical and engaged citizens and leaders serving our global community. UCO contributes to the intellectual, cultural, economic and social advancement of the communities and individuals it serves.

## Vision

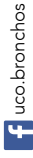
UCO will become a recognized metropolitan university by providing a transformative education as well as development experiences that help learners achieve their highest level of leadership potential.

In compliance with Title VI and Title VII of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of The Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, The Civil Rights Act of 1991, and other Federal Laws and Regulations, the University of Central Oklahoma does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, handicap, disability, status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures; this includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services. Students with disabilities who wish special accommodations should make their requests to the Coordinator of Disability Support Services at 974-2549.  
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