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TSU Reconnects with alumni, ex-students, friends

More than 250 alumni, ex-students and friends joined Texas Southern president Dr. John M. Rudley at the Champion Pavilion, Minute Maid Park, on Saturday to hear a status report on TSU. Themed "Calling On You...Counting On You", the Office of Alumni Relations organized the event to give Dr. Rudley a chance to discuss his vision for the future of Texas Southern, accept questions and invite alumni to re-engage and support the university.

Standing on the premise of "let's go out to the community," Dr. Rudley began to lay out his vision for the University by saying, "I want TSU to be the best 12,000 student university in the state, the region and the nation. We are an urban serving institution. We want motivated students who are prepared to do college work."

TSU's chief of only 15 months, has hired a talented staff to bring Texas Southern to the forefront of academia and to help further the vision he has for TSU. As a point of emphasis, Dr. Rudley announced that Texas Southern has for the first time in recent history received a clean audit. With this announcement the University is now able to better lobby the State Legislature for additional resources for the University.

Dr. Rudley explained the needed changes made to TSU's admission standards, "TSU now requires all incoming freshmen to have at least a 2.0 grade point average and be in the 25 percentile of their graduating class. If some students do not quite make the minimum standard there are two options that some students may consider; they can either participate in the summer academy program that TSU offers, or they can attend Houston Community College (HCC) and transfer their credits back to Texas Southern."

Addressing the immediate needs of the university, Dr. Rudley stated, "Not only is there a need for better housing on campus, our library is in major need of repair. We are asking for \$46 million dollars to make our library state of the art to better serve the students we have now and attract the students we want in the future. As part of the new attraction, Texas Southern is adding the Academic Village. This concept will offer incoming freshmen 24-hour access to academic support they will need to succeed in the college environment."

TSU alumnus and U.S. Congressman Al Green rallied the audience when he stated, "What a difference a year makes. We have gone from making headlines to making headway. It takes a dynamic leader to make a difference and with his dynamic leadership he has made a dynamic difference. This is a man in the arena - let's support him."

According to Sylvia Brooks, Office of Alumni Relations, "This event was a success. For the first time in a long time the alumni felt as if they were a part of the TSU community. They were so excited, so excited in fact that some of the alumni present pledged scholarship money to the President's Scholarship Fund. I believe we are now on the way to a bigger and better relationship between our alumni and our university."

Wendy Adair, TSU's Vice President of University Advancement has set a goal to reach 500 alumni this year. She has heard from 150 since December 2008. "We need our alumni to support the university's push to bring missing alumni into the fold and to increase their support."