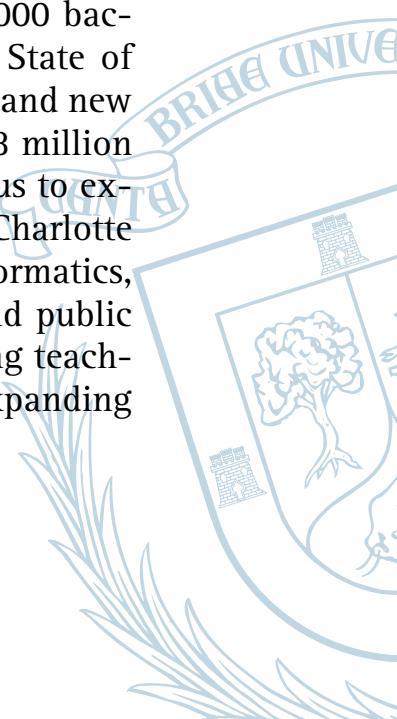


SPEECH GIVEN BY JOAN LORDEN

On behalf of UNC Charlotte, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for this wonderful recognition. Campus internationalization and exchange partnerships contribute significantly to our mission and to be recognized in this way from one of our oldest exchange partners is a special honor.

UNC Charlotte has enjoyed a relationship with the Universidad de Cantabria (UniCan) for over 25 years. While there have been many activities that our institutions have shared, the primary activity has been the Semester in Spain program. This annual program administered by UNC Charlotte has reached across the state of North Carolina enabling students at five other institutions in the UNC system to also enjoy the benefits of a semester here in Santander. Over the life of our agreement, over 500 students have been able to spend time on this beautiful campus, to learn from your faculty, and to explore the rich cultural heritage of Spain. Our faculty have also enjoyed the benefits of collaboration. Resident directors from our UNC campuses have had the opportunity to spend an academic year at here at UniCan. We appreciate the hospitality and good will that have made this long relationship so fruitful for our students and faculty.

Twenty-five years ago when our collaboration with UniCan began, UNC Charlotte enrolled about 13,000 students and awarded about 1,700 baccalaureate and 500 master's degrees each year. Today, we enroll over 26,500 students and last year awarded over 4,000 baccalaureate, 1,200 masters, and 133 doctoral degrees. The State of North Carolina has supported that growth with new faculty and new facilities. We have over 1,000 full time faculty and nearly 8 million sq ft of research and instructional space. This has enabled us to expand our research programs across the institution. UNC Charlotte has major initiatives in the fields of computing and informatics, energy and the environment, advanced manufacturing, and public health. We have been leaders in North Carolina in producing teachers for science and mathematics and we are committed to expanding the cultural opportunities of our region.



One of the consequences of being in an urban environment like Charlotte is that we experience globalization and its impact very directly. Charlotte is a banking center, but those banks are global enterprises. We are an energy center, but energy production is a global issue and so are many of the energy companies in Charlotte. Whether we talk about health, food, climate or any other major issue for our city and state, there is an international dimension. The major companies in our region are engaged in a global search for talent. So, when we consider how we serve our state, internationalization of our programs has been a recurring theme. Today more than ever, we are committed to producing globally competent students.

Every field of study has an international dimension. So, we know that regardless of their field of study, our graduates will encounter colleagues from different cultures. They will need to be adaptable and able to negotiate cultural differences. Today, the variety of programs that universities are engaging in globally is expanding, with more institutions than ever seeking to enroll international students or establishing campuses in other parts of the world. But whatever the strategy, the interaction between students and faculty with others from around the globe remains fundamental. Whether on our UNC Charlotte campus or through study abroad, the opportunity to form a personal connection with someone from another culture is one of the most important ways that we can help our students understand their own biases and assumptions and move beyond looking at life through a single cultural lens.

As North Carolina's urban research university, we are committed to growing our research enterprise, but recognize that our competitors and collaborators alike are not just those institutions in the State of North Carolina. There is no great university that lives solely within its own walls. Our challenge as institutions is to find the right partnerships and the right format for those partnerships to create mutually beneficial programs. It seems that we have done just that with our relationship with UniCan. We welcome the opportunity afforded by this visit to reinforce our existing partnership and to explore new opportunities.

