

## ***After six months on the job, he is inaugurated as UM president***

By Childs Walker

The University of Maryland, College Park must retain more of the state's top students, recruit more aggressively in other countries and turn more of its research into business if it is to maintain its upward trajectory, President Wallace D. Loh said Thursday at his inauguration ceremony.

Loh has been on the job six months and used his formal inauguration to unveil his chief priorities, developed through listening sessions with students, faculty members and community leaders.

"If there is one promise I want to make to you today," he said, "it is this: We will stay the course in our rise to excellence."

Loh said that over the next 10 years, the university will add 4,000 students between its College Park and Shady Grove campuses and will increase by one-third the graduates it produces in science, technology, engineering and math.

He praised a recent Board of Regents decision to support a Purple Line Metro station in College Park and promised that the whole community would benefit from a new town center on east campus.

He announced the creation of a new center for innovation and entrepreneurship, which he described as a "one-stop concierge service" for faculty who want to capitalize on their research. He said the university, led by his predecessor, C.D. "Dan" Mote, will raise \$60 million for the center, and he set a goal of creating 100 new companies in the next 10 years.

On the international front, Loh, who was born in China and raised in Peru, said College Park lags behind its peer universities in attracting the best students from other countries. He said the

university must market its proximity to Washington to such students. He also called on Maryland athletic teams to serve as ambassadors by playing in other countries.

"How cool is that?" he said. "Think of all the Chinese fans who could learn to fear the turtle."

Loh spoke of how his immigrant experience — he arrived for college in Iowa with \$300 in his pocket and little command of English — taught him the power of education.

"My personal story is of no consequence other than as a broader story of this nation's promise," he said. "It's a story for every young person who can grow up thinking, 'If he can make it, so can I.' It's the story of our nation's evolution toward a more inclusive society."

Colleagues and dignitaries said Loh's background makes him the perfect person to expand the university's scope.

"Think of the courage that took, to come to Iowa for school," said Rep. Steny H. Hoyer, a College Park alumnus. "What we celebrate today is another step toward even more greatness, even more service."

Despite his optimistic plans, Loh has encountered bumps and surprises during his first school year in College Park. He presided over the controversial decision to push football coach Ralph Friedgen out after Friedgen was named conference coach of the year. Last month, he learned that powerful state Sen. Thomas V. Mike Miller wanted the state's regents to study a merger between College Park and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Loh addressed the merger at his inauguration, saying he would do anything he could to aid with the study, which is expected to produce a report at the end of the year. "Whatever the regents might ultimately conclude about a merger," he said, "this is an opportunity for all of us to rise to the occasion and think anew about the vision and purpose of research universities in the 21st century."

Those who have worked with Loh said his openness to outside ideas is no idle talk.

"He not only wants to hear the opinion of student leaders," said student government president Steve Glickman, "but by continuing the tradition of having lunch with any student who asks, he has shown that he cares about the opinions of all students on campus."