

Remarks by:

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Wichita State University

Opening Faculty Meeting

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Thank you President Beggs. I appreciate your kind introduction.

I would like to thank the Faculty Senate for their willingness to host this annual event to give the president and me a chance to provide a bit of our perspective on where we have been and where we hope to go.

When I addressed you last fall, I had only the perspective on an outsider who had been afforded the opportunity to examine the university rather superficially.

I have now had an opportunity to examine the university in much more detail. And, I am more excited than ever about the great potential of the Urban Serving Research Mission of Wichita State University, which I believe was strongly affirmed by the HLC process.

In the few minutes that I have with you today, I would like to continue to explore this mission and what I believe it means to us in the current higher education environment and in terms of global dynamics.

But, first I want to take note of a few changes in the Academic Affairs Administration.

- This summer we welcomed Dr. Keith Pickus to our office. Keith is Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Services. In that role he has responsibility for all undergraduate programs, satellite programs, special programs (honors, general education) and all other activities related to the planning and execution of learning programs at WSU. Please join me in welcoming Keith Pickus and thanking him for his willingness to serve in this capacity.
- This item is in the category of old news but I want to repeat it here since this is the first general faculty meeting we've had since this change actually took effect. Dr. Sharon Iorio, Professor of Communication, has assumed the position of Dean of the College of Education. Please join me in thanking Sharon for her willingness to serve WSU in this important role.
- We have also had a leadership change in the Barton School of Business. Dr. Bart Hildreth, Regents Distinguished Professor of Public Finance, has assumed the position of Interim Dean of the Business School and we are extremely excited to have him work with us as we transition into new decanal leadership in that school.

- I also want to mention an important change in roles in my office. This summer, Dr. Marty Shawver assumed the position of Senior Associate Provost. In this role, Marty's portfolio will mirror mine and she will organize activities that transcend one responsibility area or that are external (e.g., accreditation, performance agreements, etc.) Marty has served this university with great distinction for many years and we are very excited to have her in this new role.

Please join me in a round of applause to acknowledge these colleagues for their service to the University.

[pause for applause]

I want to acknowledge one person for extraordinary service to Wichita State University last year. This is a person whose work, much of it behind the scenes, was instrumental to me in working through some of the difficult issues that came our way. I would like to ask the just past President of the Faculty Senate Brigitte Roussel to stand and be recognized.

[pause for applause]

It is important to recognize the importance of the contribution of the Wichita State University Foundation in support of Academic Affairs. Elizabeth King, President and CEO of the Foundation is with us today and I would ask that you join me in thanking her for her work.

[pause for applause]

Mr. Ted Ayres, Vice President and University Council is here. Ted's work on behalf of the university is essential to our operation and very much appreciated. Please join me in thanking him.

[pause for applause]

Since arriving at WSU, I have emphasized that, because urban institutions will deliver most of the higher education in America in the coming decades and because we expect that most employment will be in urban centers in the future, universities like Wichita State will grapple with most of the important challenges facing American society.

Among these are the challenges of:

- Developing human capital for the rapidly changing economy.
- Revitalizing education at all levels now with an emerging emphasis on pre-K education as well as K-12 and beyond.
- Renewing and sustaining communities including the leveraging of music and the arts toward a broader understanding of the human condition.
- Sustaining public health.

- Understanding and reacting to global connections and changes particularly with respect to economics and global climate change.
- Nurturing diversity and leveraging the great potential that diversity implies.
- Understanding the fundamental importance of learning for personal enrichment as well as the relationship of learning to work.
- Understanding the nature of information and knowledge in the technological age.

I continue to be convinced that these challenges should guide our academic programs and that, in every academic endeavor, our goal should be not only to affect local solutions but to also build transportable models that can be used elsewhere in the American Academy.

One of the great privileges that the President and I enjoy from our vantage point is that we get to see all of the great work that goes on in this university every day. And we see and talk about the programs that you have developed, the models you are building, and the opportunities that you are creating for our students and for this community.

We are already meeting these challenges and building models in the progress in all of the colleges and the library and graduate school at WSU.

I congratulate you on this work, which taken together, is what makes WSU such a special place. It is indeed a great privilege to be a part of it.

Background to the challenges of the urban mission are some important forces of change in American higher education that affect what we are doing and what we will do at WSU in the coming years.

Most of you are aware that American public higher education is currently under close scrutiny. This most recent critique turns on whether we are able to demonstrate that we deliver what we promise to deliver in an affordable way and in a way that ensures broad access. The question is: Are we accountable to the public and to ourselves particularly when it comes to student learning.

There is a consensus in the public sector, in state legislatures, and in the federal government, on both sides of the isle, that, in fact, higher education has not been held accountable and that steps must be taken to ensure that it is. This is particularly true with respect to our claims about student learning.

It is important for all of us to understand that the accountability movement in higher education has reached the Kansas Board of Regents and will continue to be a focus of that group especially when it comes to student learning and to what, precisely; institutions of higher education give to society.

We are ahead of the game at Wichita State University. President Beggs' vision is built on the concept of accountability and our urban serving mission and our close ties with the city of Wichita guide our work in pursuit of that vision.

This summer, we came to understand the significance of both the Board's interest in higher education accountability and our advantages in responding to that interest when the President was given just over a week to respond to three very direct questions from the board of regents.

The board ask if we had additional funding, how would we use it to produce measureable outcomes in: (1) student participation, persistence and learning; (2) addressing critical workforce needs; and (3) in research in support of economic development and extramural funding.

While we did not have the luxury of a broad campus discourse on these questions, we were able to produce a concept paper that draws on our current strengths and that squarely supports the urban serving mission and our commitment to accountability.

The President's presentation of our concept of ourselves at the board retreat this summer was widely acknowledged as among the best in the regents system.

We will have to discuss the issues surrounding this in the coming years since this will affect the way we teach and conduct research.

The landscape, then, is dynamic and challenging to traditional ways of thinking and acting in higher education. Our success will depend on our ability to focus on our mission and to leverage our connection with Wichita.

Let me turn now to the future.

In particular, I want to give you a preview of some of the important issues that I believe we must address together in the coming year.

1. Enrollment – The president has already mentioned the importance of enrollment. I want to reiterate two important facts about enrollment:
 - Any flexibility that we might have with respect to resources will, in some way, depend on enrollment: maintaining and possibly growing.
 - Enrollment is a shared responsibility. It is not just the responsibility of the admissions office. It is also the responsibility of academic affairs.

This summer, Dr. Ron Kopita and I, at the direction of the President, initiated what will be a continuous, constructive and cross-division analysis of enrollment. At our recent retreat, the deans and I spend one half of our time on this issue. Our goal is to move quickly to a full enrollment management approach that will include an integrated strategy for recruitment, admissions, financial aid, retention and graduation of students.

In order to bring enrollment to the front of every major conversation at our level, Dr. Kopita and I have appointed a small enrollment working group whose job it will be to meet each week to talk about the current enrollment situation and to help us plan for future enrollment. This group will have complete access to us and they have been charged to push us to deploy

innovations throughout the enrollment management stream that will remove uncertainty from our enrollment picture.

2. Research – WSU is a research university. The research part of our urban serving mission is critical to our success. We must continue to look for new ways to fund faculty research. I would be less than honest with you if I did not emphasize that we have a long way to go on this and the path is not clear. But is and will remain a high priority.

We must first clarify our research mission. Under the leadership of David McDonald, we have initiated a strategic planning process to build a consensus about our research goals and how those goals relate to graduate education. The Graduate Council and the Research Council will be very much involved in this important activity this year.

We also have some important opportunities in research. In the coming months we will submit to the Kansas Bioscience Authority a proposal to begin planning for a Center of Innovation in Biomaterials at Wichita State University in collaboration with partners in the area. It was a goal of ours a year ago to put ourselves in a position to join KU and KSU in developing these centers throughout the state and we have made the first very important step.

3. Technology – This year, we move from the implementation of Banner into the operational phase. We have succeeded in establishing the foundation for a modern ERP system. As we go forward, we will refine and build on that foundation. We are already seeing the benefits of this great university-wide effort.

Now, it is time to turn our attention to the way in which we use technology in teaching and research. The challenge in this area is great. Technology is expensive and rapidly changing. And, the environment in which we apply technology is also very dynamic. Consider the following:

- > 70% of US 4 year olds have used a computer.
- In 1984 there were approximately 1,000 internet devices worldwide. Today there are over 600 million.
- Last month there were 2.7 billion searches on Google. Where were these questions directed before?
- If MySpace were a country, it would be the 8th largest in the world.
- Today, 3000 books were published. By 2010, the amount of technical information is expected to double every 72 hours

We have to refine our philosophy about technology and understand its place in our learning programs. What is literacy in the 21st century? This is something that will occupy a good deal of our time in the coming years.

4. Workforce and economic development – It is clear that the governor and the board of regents are very much interested in how Kansas higher education interacts with business and the private sector to secure the workforce and enhance the economy. This is a responsibility that

is at the center of our urban serving mission and an area in which we continue to work with great energy.

Our thinking in this area spans the entire university, including the liberal arts and sciences. It is not just about technical training. It is about giving students skills that we cannot predict, for jobs that are not yet invented for work lives that are wholly different than we have experienced:

- Currently, 1 in 4 workers in the US have been with their employer < 1 year.
- 1 in 2 < 5 years.
- Estimated that today's learners will have between 10 and 14 jobs by their 38th birthday.
- The following college majors did not exist 10 years ago: nano-technology, e-business, national security, new media, organic agriculture, and many more.
- What does this say about what learners should study for the future?

We must be about understanding this challenge and arranging our programs to meet it.

5. We have the challenge of becoming more global not only in our curricular perspective but, very importantly, in the way we reach out to the business community and to other partners outside the university. This challenge affects all levels of the university in my view and, as you know, I've asked a group of you to spend the coming year working on this issue.
6. This year we have some special challenges and opportunities:
 - We will begin immediately to affirm the mission of the Barton School of Business and to look for a new dean. This process will involve extensive conversations with faculty and business leaders and a national recruitment effort.
 - We have worked with various deans and faculty in late spring and through the summer to initiate academic, research or outreach programs in several exciting areas. These include new initiatives in: networking, bioengineering, aging, nursing, bio-composites, post-doctoral dentistry, leadership, urban schools and leadership among urban school principals, an initiative to memorialize the life and works of Gordon Parks through programs of outreach and education, an innovative program to join aviation research and technical training to meet critical workforce needs in the community and the country and others. We hope to have updates and announcements on these as the year progresses.
 - Those of you closely involved in the HLC visit will recall that in our self-study we obligated the university to a number of actions in support of our goals and assertions in that study. We have vetted that list of about 20 actions and we are moving quickly to implement all of them as I believe we are ethically and professionally obligated to do.

Now, more than ever, how we proceed in the coming years will depend on how our Urban Serving Research Mission intersects not only with the economic, educational, and social dynamics of Wichita and the greater Wichita area but, also, on how it intersects with the national discussion regarding accountability in higher education and the manifestation of that discussion in our board of regents.

Let me end by commenting briefly on one of my personal goals for the coming year. In the spring, the President asks each vice president to come up with three major goals for the coming year. To be sure, there are many things that I want to accomplish and there are many goals that I have in mind. Indeed, those who work in my office know that I keep lists of the goals and we consult them frequently. But, as per his instructions, I had to settle on three.

Here they are:

Continue to refine and focus the urban serving research mission of Wichita State University.

Complete a study of the global position of the university.

Develop and deploy a process of collaboration with the faculty leadership that provides more transparency and creative exchange with respect to academic priorities and resources.

I want to thank you again for your dedication to this great university and for your commitment to your students, your disciplines and this community. It is indeed a great honor for Georgia and me to be part of this.

I look forward to a great year.