

STATE OF ACACEMIC AFFAIRS ADDRESS TO THE SENATE

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When I began my teaching career as an assistant professor, an Academic or faculty senate was as nebulous to me as string theory in physics. At the time, I had the zeal of a missionary that the language of Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Proust and Simone de Beauvoir would flow musically from every student's tongue like water over pebbles in a New England brook. Here I am many years later, still waxing poetic about a young professor's dreams, perhaps a bit more realistic, hopefully not jaded, and still an idealistic believer in the transforming power of classroom teaching. Now having crossed the idyllic shores of the professoriate into what some may consider the tedium of academic administration, I appreciate the essential role the senate plays in developing the intellectual life of the institution. Unlike some of my colleagues in this room, I am less adept in explaining string theory in the nucleus of an atom or the limitations of identity politics in the Middle East but, hopefully, more conversant in the major issues facing higher education today. As for my passion to convert every American student into a devotee of French language and culture, *(pause)* I still occasionally dream, recalling successes and failures. Perhaps many of you can recount similar tales about your professional aspirations.

John Henry Newman in his seminal work details his ideal university and the purpose of higher education: "...the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a University is not Learning or Acquirement, but rather is Thought or Reason exercised upon Knowledge..." As the chief academic officer, I resonate with Newman and confess that I spend considerable time reflecting on the values of higher education and about how we, as a community of scholars, can best deliver the promises of enthusiastic teaching that make education meaningful to students. Lest I become too heady in my thinking about the noble purposes of education, let me not forget the quirky joys of administrative life, the endless pedestrian tasks bereft of any intellectual stimulation. The daily bombardment of e-mails, many of them idle chatter from unknown sources, intrudes upon my morning tranquility. Squeezed between incessant meetings and planning for the university's academic future comes the stark realization that in the performance of my duties, I must do all things equally well – hold the deans accountable, hire the faculty, advance the intellectual life of the campus, advance the university's academic integrity, provide opportunities for faculty development, enhance the university's technological savvy, encourage and model scholarship, reward outstanding faculty, promote research, and be an articulate and convincing spokesperson for academic excellence, and do all of this within budget. Furthermore, to do my job well, I must balance my obligation to the faculty and to the chancellor, an oxymoron to some perhaps, and a reality to me. And if that is not enough, the community of scholars demands that I be a change agent, a mediator, a firm decision-maker, a visionary, a creative thinker, a realist, and a dreamer. What a wonderful life!!!

Between all of these sentiments are embedded my dreams and my passion for higher education. Last spring, on graduation day, under the auspices of our *American Democracy Project*, I was privileged to make a commentary on our local public radio station about the role of public higher education. I spoke then about the university as a catalyst for economic development for the region, the engagement that we have with our community through the arts and other cultural and intellectual activities. But I cautioned that a public university must do more if our graduates are to participate fully in the democracy that we cherish. Because in our time people often mistake personal freedom for active democracy, educating young people for civic engagement is now a moral imperative. The university must help students develop pluralistic approaches to their thinking so that they arrive at independent thought. It must revise curriculum and create programs to produce graduates who will exercise their freedom not just in their careers but also through informed moral and civic judgments that influence local and national policy. Even a strong public university like ours must deepen its commitment to excellence if it is to nurture these values in our graduates.

One of the ways we have pledged to do this is through general education. Implemented this fall, our general education curriculum is our pledge that our graduates will be world citizens, civically engaged with their society. It is an ambitious goal that aims to stimulate a spirit of life-long learning and discovery. I read recently an interesting article given to me by Dean Lynn Williams about the importance of liberal education and how critical it is for us within the academy to persistently cultivate within our students an intellectual rigor that will guide them toward a lifetime of ethical judgment and engaged citizenship. As the author suggests, liberal education must be planted *terra firma* on the public's consciousness.

And how well are we doing at IU South Bend in promoting intellectual rigor among our students? I am a firm believer that students who enter the portals of IU South Bend in pursuit of higher learning should undergo a radical transformation from the time they enter until their departure on graduation day. They should experience the world with a more expansive, yet discriminatory view. I believe that there are many signs that this is happening. I am encouraged by the numerous marks of excellence in every college and school. I will name just a few. I am proud of our nursing faculty and students who spent just over a week in Louisiana attending to the health care needs of their fellow citizens bereft in body and soul by Hurricane Katrina. Our B&E students continue to excel in their national standards of excellence. In Spring 2005, 34 undergraduates and 23 graduate students scored in the top 10 percent in the ETS business field test. The Toradze Piano Studio continues to dazzle the world with its artistry and perform to rave reviews. Students in our Honors Program commit themselves to a rigorous process of examination and research that culminates in the presentation of their papers at the annual Honors Colloquium. Last academic year twenty-four students received SMART grants for collaborative research with their faculty mentors. Many of these students presented

the results of their research at regional and national conferences. A senior physics major, as a participant in the NSF-funded Research Experiences for undergraduates, presented the results of his research on MoNA, the Modular Neutron Array, at the second Joint Meeting of the Nuclear Physicists of the American and Japanese Physical Societies in Kapalua, Hawaii.

With occasional bumps in the road, we, you the faculty and those of us in Academic Affairs, have made an evolutionary journey over the last few years, traveling great distances in developing the academic excellence of the university and in solidifying IU South Bend's prominence as *the* public, comprehensive university of the region. Our strategic plan sets specific directions for our future enhancement; the Academic Master plan charts our growth in academic programs; Mission Differentiation expands our vision of service to our community; the Higher Learning Commission Self-Study allows us to review our university's strengths and shortcomings and to develop corrective strategies by connecting planning, assessment and budgeting. We've forged new paths in academic excellence that set our university apart. We have a named School of the Arts; we've expanded degree opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate level with new undergraduate degrees in informatics, actuarial science, and management information systems. We've expanded graduate education by adding master's degrees in English, applied mathematics and computer science, and management information systems. For the third consecutive year, we have a unifying campus theme that links our campus across disciplines. The thematic year has been a catalyst for creating cross-disciplinary dialogue around a common theme linking diverse disciplinary perspectives and interpretations. Our *One, Book, One Campus* creates community dialogue about critical societal issues. The *American Democracy Project*, for which the university receives national acclaim, has become a prime example of how differing voices thrive in a democracy. These voices, expressed and heard through the ADP weblog and the public radio commentary series, exercise the freedoms of our Constitution and authenticate in fundamental ways what it means to be American. And because dialogue is critical to understanding disparate views, I applaud those faculty and administrators who worked diligently on the Ford *Difficult Dialogues* grant, and wish for all a successful outcome. We've broadened the scope of our curriculum through the development of the European Union Seminar and the London-Paris Seminar. Our Study Abroad programs in Mexico, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and the Social Action Project in South Africa engage our students in an international experience. Faculty/student exchanges with universities in Northern Ireland, southern France, and Germany broaden global citizenship through mutual understanding of world cultures. If you have not done so, I encourage you to read on the ADP weblog Scott Sernau's journalistic entries of his adventures at sea. He is traveling with his family during his sabbatical, exploring the natural and cultural wonders of the globe. His essays can help us think further about the challenges of global education in our time.

The future holds still greater promise for IU South Bend. To reap the rewards, we must capitalize on our opportunities. Though there are challenges ahead, we cannot afford to be paralyzed by lack of will or be intimidated by budget limitations. We

must forge ahead and chart our future, using as our guide the strategic plans and initiatives we've developed together over the last couple of years. These plans position the university as the region's economic driver and its intellectual, cultural catalyst. To accomplish this vision we must do the following:

- 1) Expand our undergraduate and graduate degrees. In response to community need, we will be developing new degrees in the health professions, a masters in nursing and baccalaureate degrees in dental hygiene and radiography. Other new degrees on the horizon include undergraduate degrees in biochemistry and social work.
- 2) The soon to be built Elkhart Center provides untapped potential for enrollment growth. With the recent appointment of Jackie Nueman as director of Extended Learning Services, we will see an expansion of continuing education in South Bend and Elkhart and a programmed expansion of course offerings that facilitate degree attainment. Students have responded appreciably toward the increase in Friday classes. We can expect to see more of them.
- 3) In spite of the discontinuance of inter-campus funds for research, research among faculty and students remains an important part of our identity as a public, comprehensive university. At a recent meeting of the Academic Leadership Council, I expressed my concern that these funds were taken away without consultation with the regional campuses. It is now my understanding that the Vice President for Research and his staff are considering alternative ways to support research on regional campuses. Whatever the result, IU South Bend will fund undergraduate research. Increased externally sponsored research remains as well a high priority. We need more external dollars to support the cutting-edge research that is currently being done among our faculty, such as Ilan Levine's work on mysterious dark matter or Henry Scott's work on gases deep within the earth.
- 4) Our Mission Differentiation Project cites diversity as one of our hallmarks of excellence. Student enrollment among under-represented groups now stands at 11.6%. Of the twenty-nine members of this year's faculty recruiting class twelve were women and twelve were members of under-represented or international faculty. As a continuance of our efforts to diversify our faculty, Dean Shillingsburg, Professor Johnnie Griffin and I are spending a day at the end of this month at Howard University's Graduate School meeting with prospective applicants for our advertised positions. Furthermore, Chancellor Reck and I have been engaged in conversation with the City of South Bend and the South Bend Heritage Foundation about the latter's development of the downtown Natatorium, the last remaining building of the city's segregated past, as an educational site for the Civil Rights Heritage Center.
- 5) Technology remains at the core of our instructional effort. I will continue to work collaboratively with Vice Chancellor Ames to assure that IU South Bend remains at the cutting-edge and that our classrooms are equipped with the advanced technology that facilitates teaching and learning. And in support of instructional effort, IMS, Instructional Media Services, has been further

- integrated into the Library and UCET to form a comprehensive and holistic one-stop service center for technology assisted instruction.
- 6) As a public university, we advance in tandem with our community. Hence, it is imperative for each of our schools and colleges, particularly our professional schools, to engage our community neighbors for the advancement of technology transfer, economic enhancement, growth in the quality of health care, and in the promotion of the cultural and intellectual life of the region. There is ample evidence that this is happening, but there are burgeoning opportunities for increased engagement. Recently, Chancellor Reck and I were visited by the director of the proposed research park at Notre Dame to discuss collaborative efforts. We must also extend collaboration with IU's Medical School in South Bend. I've already invited several faculty to meet with me to discuss how we wish to interact with the medical school prior to an anticipated visit by the dean.
 - 7) Stability is paramount in maintaining the privileged position of responsibility we hold as the comprehensive public university in the region. Hence, we must be vigilant in obtaining modest annual growth in enrollment and student credit hours. We must continue to partner with Vice Chancellor Caul and her staff in Student Services to recruit and retain students. Faculty and professional advising are critically important and I encourage you to participate in student orientation and advising. The Professional Advisors Committee (PAC), has now expanded to include staff in Academic and Student Affairs. I am encouraged by their regularly scheduled meetings to exchange information with the specific objective to improve advising services to students.
 - 8) As we enter into the second year of preparing for our re-accreditation in 2007 by the Higher Learning Commission, our campus moves into its own difficult dialogues process. We will be called upon to make difficult decisions in light of the advancement of the community college system, decreasing state revenues, limitations and restrictions that may be imposed upon us from state agencies, and calls for greater accountability. To respond effectively to these challenges, we must be strategic. We must link in our thinking budget, assessment, and planning.
 - 9) Last but not least, all progress is undermined without adequate full-time faculty. Due to trustee initiatives, we have made gains in converting part-time positions into lecturerships. However, recent budget cuts have minimized these gains and eroded the number of full-time tenured faculty. We must reduce the abundance of credit hours taught by associate faculty, particularly in the School of Education. Associate faculty do outstanding work. However, we risk the academic integrity of degree programs when their credit hours are taught primarily by associate faculty. I have been working with the deans toward creative solutions in increasing full-time positions. I've also been in conversation with Vice Chancellor O'Donnell about strategies to re-position the Academic Affairs budget for greater flexibility.

These aspirations are full of challenges. With your support, I am confident that this fine university will continue to excel in all areas by which universities are measured: teaching, research and service. What makes this university great, and a joy in which to work, is that there is a tremendously visible enthusiasm and pride about what we do collectively to foster academic excellence. A tenacity to prevail, to move forward unfettered by systems or conventions, and an unbridled passion for teaching and learning define this university. This strong will of self-determination became evident in a recent meeting attended by Chancellor Reck, Vice Chancellor Sheffer, Ken Baierl and me on IU's integrated image initiative. In a review of the concentric characteristics that defined IU South Bend, the word that glared in the center of the circle was "empowerment." More than any other word, *empowerment* encapsulates in definitive ways our future destiny. I interpret empowerment to mean that we take well-deserved pride in the maturation of our campus where teaching excellence, research achievement and commitment to service define who we are and that the aspirations for our campus are those we determine.

Francis Wayland, the president of Brown University in the nineteenth century when emerging universities were seeking a distinctive identity, wrote that the college should be "the grand centre of intelligence to all classes and conditions of men (and women), diffusing among all the light of every kind of knowledge." Although he was describing what was to become an elite private university, his graceful sentence paints IU South Bend's role as Michiana's public university. At its November meeting, the Board of Trustees will approve our Mission Differentiation mission statement. And in doing so, the board will set us on a path of self-determined expansion and prosperity.

Finally, I thank each of you for your dedication to students and for your loyalty and commitment to IU South Bend. Please extend as well a personal and heartfelt thank you to your neighbor.