

STATE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ADDRESS TO THE SENATE

October 20, 2006

Alfred J. Guillaume, Jr.

Colleagues, we live during an unprecedented era for IUSB. There are many visible signs proclaiming a new day in the life of our university. The jackhammer sounds of construction fill the air in Elkhart. The red pedestrian bridge gracefully extends across the St. Joseph River, and the old Playland Park will soon be transformed into residential houses and recreational space with attention to landscape design and lifestyle adaptations that respect environmental sustainability. The long anticipated remodeling of the Associates and administration buildings is no longer a dream, but a tangible reality. To borrow an oft-repeated phrase, "we live in interesting times." IUSB is on the cusp of yet to be determined greatness. To achieve that greatness will require each of us to think differently, to be more purposeful in our planning, more deliberate in our actions and to extend beyond our natural habits and comfort zones.

As I meditate on that I have sometimes felt that circumstances have brought us to the edge of a cliff. You and I have just been pushed. Whether we plummet to the bottom or descend gracefully depends on how well we seize the opportunities ahead. Mission Differentiation has spread before us a vast horizon of possibilities. These possibilities demand that we make multiple uses of resources, and that they accomplish more than one purpose. Fiscal responsibility and prudent decision making are hand in glove. There are many platitudes that we can give to IU South Bend but platitudes alone will leave us

without a parachute to land safely. Imagine for a moment that in our fall there is no parachute, what then is the process that we must engage in to assure success? Mission Differentiation provides directional signs that point us toward discerning choices. IUSB's future is ultimately dependent on how well we, the faculty, use our collective creative energies to advance the core mission of the university. As a comprehensive undergraduate and graduate regional campus of Indiana University, IU South Bend's mission is "to create, disseminate, preserve, and apply knowledge." In so doing, "the campus is committed to excellence in teaching, learning, research, and creative activity..." Those four elements define indisputably the central core of this university. They are the bedrock of the 21st century University that we are, and upon which all resource decisions should be made. Absent this recognition, the university as an intellectual centre is imperiled. Public, we are. Comprehensive, we are. Accessible and affordable to the citizens of north central Indiana, we are. But we are much more. Our task together is to determine what that much more is and what it can be; to see the reality, the choices, the particular challenges and possibilities behind the platitudes; to turn theory into practice.

Just the other day, a prominent public figure gave the defining testimony of what constitutes a great university: "A university is only as good as its faculty." From the moment I entered the classroom as a newly minted Ph.D. in the mid-seventies until the present time as a chief academic officer, it is a value that I have espoused and lived. And I am proud to stand here in this auditorium in front of the most gifted faculty I've served in my twenty-six years as an academic administrator.

In our descent from the cliff, let us think more decisively about our purpose as a public university. As faculty of the 21st century, we need to think expansively about the role of a public university like ours. Our region depends on this university to provide an educated and skilled workforce. We know that education sustains economic growth, and as the economy grows, the quality of life advances. We see new technologies and scientific discoveries. We understand ourselves better and appreciate the world around us more through the social sciences and the arts. But there is more. A strong public university is also an engaged civic partner. Through the community involvement of its employees, the research of its faculty and the civic partnerships of its programs, the university enacts an ethic of service to its neighbors. But these elements are not sufficient to explain our existence as a public university. If we are to exercise more faithfully the stewardship entrusted to us by the public, then we need to play an even more expansive, transformative, even visionary role, in our region. As a centre of research where debate and exchange of views are at the heart of a democratic society, the university can form community partnerships that do more than pass along information. The more our work, discipline by discipline and course by course, is defined by concrete links to our students, our community, our place in the world, and the time we are living in, the more we become not just a university but Indiana University South Bend.

A public university is still much more. Education 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 that produce graduates who will exercise their freedom not just in careers but also through informed moral and civic judgments that influence local and national policy. If their education is to be meaningful, then our graduates need to be prepared to take center stage. They must be prepared to embody the virtues of the holistically educated person that is at the root of general education. There is no reason that our students must wait until graduation to begin this work, and in fact, if they do wait, then they will probably not be ready. Frantz Fanon, in his provocative book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, when thinking about the engaged person and his or her connections to the world, reminds us: “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” Fanon’s reflections on engagement are the beginnings of a dialogue about the transformative power of education, the transformative power of our general education curriculum that introduces students to new ways of thinking about their connections to the multiplicity of the world’s cultures. In every discipline, in every course, faculty members should pause and ask themselves how they are carrying out this work. How we invite students to explore knowledge, to examine possibilities, to use information in meaningful ways that enhance and change the global society of which they, and we, are a part is a responsibility we do not take lightly.

Ours *is* a sacred mission. It is deeply rooted in the early development of this campus as it matured from an extension campus of Indiana University in 1916 to the four year public comprehensive university it is today. Every chancellor of IU South Bend has

contributed significantly to this campus' maturation and to each we are indebted. But one of them was a pioneer in understanding that the foundation of a great university first rested in the selection of extraordinary scholars and teachers. This campus has never wavered from his vision. The necessity of intellectual thought and academic rigor were surreptitiously interwoven throughout his erudite addresses to this august body. Our task is to maintain that excellence and to strengthen IUSB as a center of teaching, learning, scholarship and service.

Mission Differentiation is also a resourceful travel guide in examining the question of academic excellence. I imagine that there are as many definitions of academic excellence as there are persons in this room. Our mission statement affirms that we have acclaimed programs in the arts and nursing/health professions; that we are defined by our commitment to diversity, civic engagement, and a global perspective; that we support student learning, access and success for a diverse residential and non-residential student body that includes under-represented and international students; and that we foster student-faculty collaboration in research and learning. These acknowledgements are prima facie evidence that academic excellence is the driving force of our university. It underscores each of the standards in the self-study and is the genesis of the Academic Plan being developed by the deans and me. If we wish to measure academic excellence by outcomes, and there is growing national consensus that this should be the case, then we can agree that the evidence points clearly to the prominence of our educational programs among regional Midwest universities. Multiple examples of academic excellence are included in the Academic Affairs Annual Report for 05-06. That report

will soon be posted on the Academic Affairs webpage. Ultimately, what matters to students is the quality of education they receive. (1) Further evidence of the quality of an IUSB education is embedded in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). At IU South Bend, we can take great pride in knowing that our students rate highly their educational experience and feel that they are intellectually challenged. By the time they are seniors they value immeasurably the connections they have made with faculty and recognize this interaction as an important element in their learning.

Vigilance to excellence in our academic mission is critical to the survival of this university. However, in pondering the future of our university, I want us to take bolder steps and to advance beyond survival to thriving. What then will be our vision? This summer the deans and I began a process to answer that question and we are continuing to ponder it as we develop our Academic Plan. I beg their indulgence, and yours, as I offer my own reflections about IUSB's academic vision, mission and values. The vision: Academic Affairs vision is to offer the highest quality of educational experience among regional mid-western universities. The mission: Our mission is to provide academic programs that engage students intellectually and prepare them for active citizenship in the global community. Our values: We value education as an uncompromised tenet of democracy; we value open and free inquiry; we value academic freedom and an unfettered exchange of ideas; we value self-directed learning and independent thought; we value collaborative learning between professor and student; we value pluralism and diversity in all manifestations; we value education that deepens understanding; we value education that leads to appreciation of and participation in the arts; we value life-long

learning; we value civic engagement and global awareness. I'm proud of that list of values, not the least of all because I think we have the faculty who can help and challenge our students to embody and live them. But that list of values is also a list of duties. If they are more than platitudes, they become a to-do list, a set of tasks that we must return to with new energy and focus.

As we consider our future, there are irrefutable beliefs that guide our direction as we work assiduously and with firm resolve to achieve our aspirations. Because every student who wishes to attain a higher level of understanding of the world and his or her place in it, and deserves that chance, we commit ourselves to helping him or her reach that potential; because students come to this university with a range of academic preparation, we commit ourselves to concerted efforts that ensure their success. Much of this is already underway through the enrollment and retention task forces, but more directly through the efforts of the Business and Education faculty who are assessing several entry level courses that have poor success rates and through the efforts of Professor Isaacson who is devoting considerable energy working with faculty in determining why students succeed or fail in the benchmark courses of writing, mathematics, and the sciences.

Because we believe that a strong university continues to excel with growth of full-time and tenure track faculty committed to the advancement of knowledge through research and whose devotion to teaching is a consummate task, we are committed to the increase and retention of tenure track faculty lines, and when budgetary circumstances require reductions we commit to temper losses of tenure track lines through thoughtful re-allocation of resources. Furthermore, because we believe that universities are only as

good as the faculty they hire, we must dedicate ourselves to seek new revenue streams that enhance faculty, such as seeking external funds for endowed professorships.

Because we believe that university faculty contribute to the betterment of society through research, we are committed to increasing the application for external funding and the amount of successful grants. As a comprehensive university, we must expand graduate programs that meet the needs of our community without sacrificing the quality of our undergraduate program. Because we believe that a student enters the university primarily for educational opportunities that advance his/her personal growth and the contributions that he or she makes to the community, we commit ourselves to providing value-added education through a general education that offers a global perspective, appreciation for diversity and a thoroughly grounded foundation in communication literacies. We commit ourselves to global education by expanding opportunities for students to travel abroad, by bringing international scholars and students to campus. Because life-long learning is one of the most precious gifts we give our students, we commit ourselves to programs like the One Book-One Campus, the American Democracy Project and the New York Times, to the Thematic Year activities, that nurture independent thought, inquiry and discovery. We also aspire to programmatic distinctiveness that enriches our community and benefits the economy of our region. The School of Business and Economics is seeking distinction in the area of economic theory to complement its singularity in entrepreneurship and decision sciences. The School of Nursing and Health Professions, already intimately associated with our region's health care providers, is strengthening that partnership with growth in the Masters of Science in Nursing and the expansion of the associate degrees in dental hygiene and medical imaging. The School of Education, under the leadership of

its new dean, Michael Horvath, is re-establishing associations with our region's school corporations and is working with the faculty to re-think course delivery and curriculum that enhance enrollment and retention. Our Raclin School of the Arts is a mecca of cultural programming in the visual and performing arts that adds immeasurably to the quality of life in the region. Plans are already underway for the fourth internationally renowned Toradze Piano Institute in the spring. Within the next couple of years, the School will seek accreditation for selected programs. With its strong commitment to student retention, the School will increase credit hours by ten percent over the next three years. SPEA aspires to double the number of students in its recently re-accredited Master of Public Affairs programs. In the fields of health care management, criminal justice and public affairs, SPEA forms critical partnerships with the civic, business and non-profit community that connect classroom learning with life experiences; the same holds true for our School of Social Work. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences remains at the center of the students' learning experience. The college aspires to expand research funding, to extend student research across all disciplines, to place its undergraduate programs among the top ten regional Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It seeks further distinctiveness in the advising of students and the placement of its graduates in graduate and professional schools. The Civil Rights Heritage Center and its liaison with the Natatorium can provide national leadership in demonstrating how a region's embarrassing past can be a model for understanding history as an essential catalyst for dialogue about the human condition. Our Schurz library, a vibrant partner in our quest for educational excellence, is implementing an Information Commons that provides collaborative learning spaces and integrated learning technology. And finally, Extended

Learning Services aspires to form a Professional Development Institute for Continuing Professional Education focusing on business and industry, education, the health professions and the arts. ELS, with UCET, is the nucleus of our distance education development.

These aspirations are not without challenges. There are resource limitations; but the gravest danger to our success is limited thinking. We can not be complacent; we cannot rest on laurels; we cannot accept mediocrity in our academic programs. We must continue to be creative and resourceful in harnessing our energies to achieve greater possibilities. It will require that academic units exercise self-scrutiny in achieving fiscal responsibility. The prudence and deliberateness of which I spoke earlier will need to be accompanied by budget flexibility that empowers us in the choices we make and moves us to concrete action that aids the university in reaching its goals. Whatever resources we have, we need to use them strategically to create opportunities while at the same time strengthening existing programs. To advance the core academic mission of the university requires the collective action of us all.

In concluding my remarks, I would be remiss if I fail to mention the Higher Learning Commission Self-Study. My reflections this morning flow from this dialogue that this campus community has been engaged in for the last couple of years. The self-study is an honest process of self-examination of our strengths and weaknesses. It brings us together, faculty and staff, and helps us to understand more about ourselves, about our common purpose, about how each of us makes unique contributions in advancing the

core mission of IUSB. That certainly has been the central theme of the HLC gatherings at my home with the chancellor. It has been an active listening process that re-affirms that we are one community, dedicated to one purpose, in the pursuit of excellence of one university, the public, comprehensive, urban university of north central Indiana.

When I began this talk, we were all falling off a cliff. As you've descended, your thoughts of academic excellence and the opportunities to achieve distinctiveness, hopefully, have opened your parachute for a safe landing. Let us now seize the opportunities, let us be creative in our solutions; let us be one community with one purpose, the advancement of academic excellence at IU South Bend. We will be judged excellent by the quality of our faculty; we will be judged excellent by the distinctiveness of our academic programs; we will be judged excellent by the attentiveness to our students. But the superior judgment will be in how well we have prepared our students for a life that is personally and professionally meaningful. How will they engage Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Mideast crisis, Korea, world hunger, AIDS, poverty, ethnic hatred, religious persecution, violence against women, hopelessness? And how will they address our needs for sustainable communities – not just ecologically but economically and culturally? Those are the pressing issues we will address in next year's campus theme. For in the end, and I quote once again Frantz Fanon, "What matters is not to know the world but to change it."

(1) Carey, Kevin, "College Rankings Reformed: The Case for a New Order in Higher Education," *Education Sector Reports*, September 2006.