

STATE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ADDRESS TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

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As an adolescent, were you ever accused of idling, wasting time reading books? In deep reverie, traveling to destinations far and beyond, foreign, yet magical? If you were that dreamer like me, reading whetted an appetite for which there was little satiation. The adventures of Marco Polo and Davy Crockett, the irascible Tom Sawyer, the elusive power of Moby Dick, the ghoulish prose of Edgar Allen Poe or the mournful laments of Longfellow's Evangeline, all transplanted me to another time and place. Such reverie was like traveling through a labyrinth of countless rooms each in its singular decorative style offering a world of splendor and mystery. My reverie, unfettered by limitations of physical space, set me free to explore beyond the horizon; I was like Alice in Wonderland, "curiouser and curiouser" about the world and all its possibilities.

My work as an academic administrator parallels that dream-like quality of youthful reverie. I've come to this conclusion after many years reflecting on the role of chief academic officer. Like Alice, the more curious I become about how universities position themselves in the marketplace with a distinctive character and identity, the more curious I become about the untapped potential of a university as it dreams and imagines a world beyond the horizon. My invitation for us today is to dream about shaping our character and identity in the next five years.

A couple of years ago, we were given the opportunity to define a vision for our university. Mission Differentiation catapulted us into self-definition as a regional, public and comprehensive university with unique strengths in the arts, business, health professions, liberal learning and diversity. Along those lines, within the last five years, this campus has made extraordinary advances. If the accomplishments were put to music, it would be a Gregorian chant, stirring our souls in a monophonic recitation that includes the restructuring of administration, stabilizing the budget, and improving our enrollment management. Administration, faculty and staff collaborate more now on major decisions. Through marketing and partnerships, we've made the university more visible in the region. We've increased fundraising and created a more purposeful strategic plan. We've built the Elkhart Center and the bridge over the St. Joseph River. Student housing is under construction; we've secured funding for the renovation of the Education/Arts building; and we anticipate the renovation of the administration building. New academic programs have been approved. It makes an excellent progress report.

In the next five years, new opportunities loom; new challenges emerge. What will we accomplish? Will we clarify our identity? our university's character? Will we dare to become great? You may wonder if I'm only dreaming when I say that, but I am not.

Princeton is probably great at its job; perhaps Bloomington as well; no doubt some of the famous liberal arts colleges are great at what they do. Each has a different mission from ours, and I wish each all the best. What I'd like, however, is for us to know our mission, deeply, passionately, intelligently, and to accomplish it more profoundly in the next five years. I'd like us to be a great public regional university serving the people of this region

powerfully and skillfully and with character and purpose. In all seriousness, I'd like IU South Bend to dare to be great. Indisputably, there is no single answer. If we are to move from being a good university to being a great one, we need to find something very much like a common purpose, something that takes us in a single direction. Today we are like Robert Frost's traveler who happened upon two roads diverging in a yellow wood; not knowing which to take, he chose the road less traveled by, and for him that made all the difference. To make that world of difference is our challenge within the next five years. It will require bold thinking, alternative paths, new directions and a willingness to take risks. It will require a conscious act of self-definition for our campus.

From my earlier illusions, you may have concluded that I am in a perpetual catatonic state of reverie or that I've lost it. No, I'm not delusional. Honestly; I confess that the university seems permanently etched in my thoughts. I dream that our university is a place of character and accomplishment. I dream of ways that you and I can work together to make my reverie real. We have the fortunes of the last five years upon which to build as we re-imagine our university from good to great. Our self-study lays the groundwork for the future, for what we want to become. Our consultant/evaluators will come in November prepared to engage us in dialogue. We can learn from them, but more importantly we have learned invaluable lessons about ourselves. For the last two years, faculty and staff have gathered at my home in informal gatherings with the chancellor and me to discuss topical issues concerning the university. These discussions have broadened to campus discussions. You may already have received an invitation from the chancellor to exchange ideas as we prepare our university for the next five years. In my

conversations with the chancellor, I know that she is eager to hear our thoughts and is excited to work with us in advancing our university.

The next five years are critical in moving from a good university to a great university. I am buoyed by what already is excellent in our university. Consider for a moment the high percentage of our students who pass assessment and licensure exams in business, the health professions and education. Consider the high quality of faculty research, publications and creative activity; the Toradze Studio and Institute; the resident Euclid String Quartet; the student literary publications (New Views on Gender, Analecta, the Undergraduate Research Journal); the Wolfson Press; Michiana Chronicles, the One Book, One Campus; the thematic year; the general education curriculum with its emphasis on internationalism and global thinking; the endowed professorships in piano and nursing; the named School of the Arts; the emphasis on undergraduate research; the Civil Rights Heritage Center; the American Democracy Project; the Honors Program; Conversations on Race; the connections throughout the university that we have with our community partners and our region. Arguably, these markers of distinction set us apart from other regional universities and shape our character. But are they sufficient to define us and to move us from a good regional university to a great one? No. As good as those things are, vital as they are, they are not enough.

In moving from good to great, we must have confidence, flexibility and adaptability: confidence in the excellence of our academic programs; flexibility in using our resources to create and seize new opportunities and adaptability to altering course as opportunity

affords or environmental factors demand. In last year's address to this august body, I spoke about the four elements that are central to all that we do: teaching, learning, research and creative activity. Good universities do these quite well. But if we were to probe more deeply beyond platitudes and to think more profoundly about the values that define our university, what would be our judgment? What is at the core of our existence as a university? Beyond public and comprehensive, are there other attributes that form our identity? Our character? Do we have an identity with distinctive values? Do those values translate into our curriculum, our responsiveness to community needs? Is our university's character easily identifiable? Do the people of Michiana see it? Can the people who live on your block name the character of our university? As good as we are we are not there yet. The people of our region can't quite yet name our character and our excellence.

Certainly, great universities that have distinctive character are identified by an intrinsic core value permeating the university's culture. A West coast university whose graduating students take an environmental pledge, and who sends record numbers of students to the Peace Corps, has environmental and social responsibility in every aspect of the university's academic and administrative functions. A Southern university that, in spite of its size, sends more African Americans to medical and dental schools than other universities in the country defines its value as high standards with sympathy, meaning that the campus culture sets in motion a string of related support activities in academic and student affairs that practically guarantee student success. A Midwestern liberal arts college has as its central core the values of the Quaker tradition that permeate with

transparency throughout the campus culture, from its curriculum to the behavioral attitudes of its faculty and students. What are our values? What will we be known for? These are simple questions to which there are no facile answers. The path to greatness, and by that I mean, the path to character, requires an answer. Like Robert Frost's walker in the woods, we must choose something. And we need to choose well.

The challenge for us within the next five years is to think more globally about who we are and what we will become. Our thinking should not be limited to what is doable with the current resources. If we aspire to be a university with a distinctive character, we must be ambitious. For the moment, our reach should perhaps exceed our grasp.

Since its beginnings in 1916, IU South Bend has provided educational opportunity to ordinary citizens: the working class, the commuter, the part-time student, the adult, the first generation college student, those for whom access to higher education might have seemed unattainable. These are the students we educate even today, and ours is a moral imperative to assure that each one of them has the optimal chances for success. It is a responsibility that we take seriously. It requires institutional commitment to academic and administrative policies and procedures that facilitate student learning and commitment to faculty diligence, working with missionary zeal even, toward student success and retention. Under the tutelage of Professor Randy Isaacson, faculty and staff are re-thinking U100 with the expectations of increased retention from first to second year. How well we educate these students and how effectively we prepare them for real world success and challenges ultimately determines our character. Let me say this again

because it is so important. These are the students of our region; how we serve them is the mark of our character. We could become known as one of a small handful of American universities whose greatness lies in its ability to work with the students of their region. Instead of wishing we had Princeton's students or Bloomington's, instead of wishing the Midwest had a different culture, we aim our resources at the needs of this place and this time. That is where our hope for greatness is; that is how we will be properly judged. This is the first mark of our character, our excellence.

Here are some practical things we must attend to in order to achieve this goal. Moving from good to great requires greater attention to reducing our dependence on associate faculty. The expectations of Commitment to Excellence to increase tenure track faculty remains unfulfilled. Within the next five years, attention must be re-directed to increasing tenure track faculty, particularly in the School of Education where there is a huge reliance on associate faculty at the graduate level. To change course will require firm resolve to think creatively about how resources are allocated. Short of new revenue streams, tough choices will have to be made. Without more full-time faculty whose careers are engaged with the mission and character of this campus, we will fall short of our dreams.

Moving from good to great places undergraduate research at the heart of the undergraduate experience. This is one of the most promising and yet unrealized elements of our campus mission document, and I marvel at it when I see it there, for it is a challenge and a note of wisdom I don't think we all fully realized when we crafted the

mission statement. If we engage students deeply in undergraduate research, our retention will improve dramatically. Everyone in this room knows that students who are deeply connected with faculty members – and other aspects of campus life – stay and succeed. They go to graduate school or get good jobs. How do we then accomplish this goal of undergraduate research? There are good models. We can learn from best practices at peer institutions. Upon the recommendation of the former associate vice chancellor for graduate programs and sponsored research, I have convened an ad hoc committee on undergraduate research, chaired by Johnny McIntosh, whose purpose will be to formulate policy, emulate best practices and coordinate undergraduate research across the schools/college with an expressed outcome of making undergraduate research one of the hallmarks of undergraduate education that will distinguish IU South Bend among regional universities nationally. This is a second mark of our character and our excellence.

Moving from good to great means finding ways to infuse campus themes like sustainability seamlessly into campus culture: in the curriculum, in research and learning opportunities for our faculty and students, in the daily functions of the maintenance and grounds crew, in the business practices between the university and its vendors and contractors; and in the ways we use and dispose of natural products. I thank Deb Marr and her sustainability committee for the breadth of activities this semester related to the campus theme. I am also encouraged by a proposal being developed by Mike Keen for a community-oriented research Center for a Sustainable Future. His proposal, if adopted by the faculty and approved centrally by the Academic Officers Committee, will model

for us another way to deepen our relationships with the people of our region. Programs like this will make collaboration and service a distinguishing trait of IU South Bend. This is the third mark of our character and our excellence.

Moving from good to great means establishing academic priorities and practices that reward excellence in academic programming and unit achievements. If we continue as we are, content to maintain the status quo, we risk imperiling some programs by a laissez-faire attitude that pushes them toward mediocrity. It is critical then that we apply with disciplined rigor the principles of strategic planning, assessment and budgeting so that resources can be directed toward program enhancements and desired outcomes. I will make my own decisions this way, and when the chancellor asks for my advice I will advocate for these values every step of the way.

Within the next five years, the addition of student housing affords our campus an extraordinary opportunity to forge alliances between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs unparalleled in our own history that can serve as a model for the undergraduate learning experience. The conversations have already begun in the collaborative work of faculty and Student Affairs staff in the retention of students, in the review and assessment of advising, in the teaching of U100. These conversations must now be expanded to include housing as a holistic learning experience, integrating the classroom and residential life. I encourage you to participate on November 5th in the dialogue with our guests, Karen Whitney, the vice chancellor for student life at IUPUI and her director of housing, Hayward Guenard, who will share their successes and their failures with student

housing. If we end up spending our fiscal and human resources on an undistinguished residential housing program, greatness will elude us. If we use the challenges of residential life to discuss and define our character, we'll hardly recognize this place a few years from now. A great change is coming next fall; let's shape it consciously, intentionally. Let's choose the kind of residential campus we'd be proud to say is a fourth mark of our character and our excellence.

Moving from good to great requires re-focusing on the relationship of the library to student learning and student and faculty research. Historically, when university budgets are squeezed, library funding diminishes. Unfortunately, our library has suffered. We purchased in our collection 11,694 monograph titles published in 2000; 815 titles published in 2006, and for 2007, that number diminished to 122. During the same period, the library cut \$60,000 worth of journal titles and is anticipating cutting even more this year. To be a great library, we need to provide students and faculty both the access to information, ideas and works of imagination in whatever the appropriate format might be (print, electronic, visual), as well as access to current and emerging technologies to support users as they create and share information and knowledge. Augmenting the library's budget within existing resources is problematic; alternative sources of revenue will have to be identified. Thanks to the resourceful and innovative thinking of Michele Russo, who had a vision of the 21st century library, we now have the Hammes Information Commons that adds a new dimension to teaching and learning. The vision is there, but we must fund it more deeply.

Within the next five years, we must address the critical shortage of science laboratory for research and teaching as well as the much needed updating of scientific equipment. This campus is blessed with extraordinary scientists who value the connections of student learning and research. To continue the established traditions of attracting outstanding science faculty and to advance undergraduate research, laboratory space needs to be expanded and outfitted with the appropriate technology and equipment.

Looking ahead, we must envision a future in close alignment and partnership with our community. Our Schools of Business and Economics, Nursing and Health Professions, and the Raclin School of the Arts do this quite well. Our new MSN in nursing will expand the quality of health care in the region by providing advanced nurse practitioner training in our hospitals while at the same time increasing the number of nurses capable of being preceptors and teachers. The B&E CTS Center for Experiential Education will provide experiential education for students while fostering economic development in our region in partnership with local businesses. Our new string quartet has already made its mark as a community partner bringing chamber music to the schools in our area's school corporations. The Euclid Quartet's stellar performance this past Sunday to a full house resounding with thunderous applause is compelling proof that IU South Bend adds significantly to the quality of life in the region. We must make these kinds of excellence more visible to the people of our region and we must invite more of them to participate.

Connecting the university to its community is the genesis of the Natatorium project. Here the university will reach out to its community in tangible ways, using its resources

as a teaching and learning center, promoting a dialogue of mutual understanding and hope gleaned from the lessons of the Civil Rights Movement. I am working with Ilene Sheffer and her development staff to raise funds for a Peace Garden, for the interior design and furnishings, and for an endowment to sustain staffing and educational programming. The Natatorium is another model of the university turning toward the people of this region, living fully in this historical moment and this unique and interesting place – instead of wishing we were in New Haven or Bloomington.

The Natatorium is as potent a vision as we have seen on this campus in recent years, for the modern university cannot sustain itself in ivory tower isolation. World events that are being re-shaped daily require universities to be engaged in the cultural, political, economic and social transformations of our day. The foundation for IU South Bend to take a leadership role in globalization and internationalization is already embedded in our general education curriculum and in our mission statement. Within the next five years, we need to think critically about the expansion of world language acquisition, study abroad opportunities, heightened recruitment of international students and faculty and the integration of internationalization in the curriculum. It is no longer sufficient for us to graduate students competent in their disciplines; their undergraduate education should be so transformative that they are equally comfortable in their role as world-citizens.

My time is coming to an end, so I must close although in my dreams I have an inexhaustible list of things for us to do within the next five years. But I'll get another chance to speak about them as the chancellor engages us in dialogue. The to-do list

includes increased faculty salaries, named schools for Business and Economics and Education, a College of Health and Human Services, distance education, to name a few. It was suggested to me earlier this week, as I gave a preview of my dreams to the Academic Cabinet, that the deans and I develop a short list to complete within the next five years. I agree, and when we do, I'll bring it back to this body for discussion. But whatever decisions we make will require each of us to engage in artful planning, assessment and budgeting. We are a good university, and I believe sincerely that we can make great progress within the next five years toward being a great university deeply aware of its mission, its moment in history, its region, its role.

As a young journalist in the 1950s, the late Ryszard Kapuscinski recounts in his recently published book, *Travels with Herodotus*, his journeys across the globe as a foreign correspondent for Poland. (1) Motivated to learn more about the world around him, he sought assignments in India, Asia and Africa. With him as a constant companion was a book by the ancient Greek historian, Herodotus, *The Histories*, which he read daily. Ultimately, as did Herodotus, the most important lesson Kapuscinski learned, was that there are many worlds, each different, each important. We, too, can be like Herodotus, and Kapuscinski, by moving away from our comfort zones, by divorcing ourselves from prescribed ways of thinking, and by freeing ourselves to experience a new path of academic excellence.

In our teaching and relationships with students, we must model the thirst for knowledge of Herodotus and Kapuscinski's curiosity about the world and its peoples. If we can lead

students to explore, to learn more about themselves, to question, to seek answers, to avail themselves of every opportunity to make a difference, to make the world a better place, then we are truly a great university.

I thank each of you for the individual and collective roles you in play in the education of our students.

(1) Kapuscinski, Ryszard, *Travels with Herodotus*, Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2007.