Colleagues, after thirteen years of reviewing the state of academic affairs each October for this outstanding body of scholars and teachers, I do so today for the last time. In anticipation of this day, I anguished about what to say and how to begin. Frankly, it has not been easy. How do I capture in twenty minutes the thirteen years of our time together? As you can imagine, words pale. Emotions falter. But what I can truly say is that my heart is full of gratitude for having served as your chief academic officer during periods of tremendous growth and advancement for our beloved university. Together we’ve prospered; our campus has witnessed unprecedented growth during this time. Buildings have sprung from hallowed ground; eyesores have been transformed into aesthetically pleasing spaces for work and learning; campus grounds are meticulously pruned and landscaped, and on-campus parking is now abundantly available. These are the visible signs of progress; but our maturation as a regional campus goes much deeper. The general education curriculum, the cornerstone of who we are as an institution of higher learning now provides students with a more purposeful understanding of their role as world citizens; centers of excellence have been developed with engagement as the foci of their activities, new programs were added and existing ones expanded to adapt to the region’s evolving workforce needs. Technology changed how we teach and learn, and student life became an integral component of the undergraduate experience. There is renewed energy for student success and attainment; there is wide appreciation among faculty and staff of our role as a public university in service to our region to educate and graduate our students within a timely period. This story of IU South Bend’s transformation within the last decade is a classic case study of a university’s connectivity to its region. We are fulfilling our public mission; we clearly are the people’s university.

In preparation for today, I revisited my addresses of the last five years. There are threads that bind them. In 2006, I spoke of the stewardship of a public university like ours to provide students with a transformative educational experience that engages them intellectually and prepares them for an active citizenship in a global community. In 2007, I asked you to take a risk and think boldly about new directions, to think deeply about what it means to move from a good university to a great one, to think more decisively about our distinctive characteristics and our intrinsic core values. In 2008, I took the liberty in defining five pragmatic measures that make a good university, one of grand distinction: student success, undergraduate research, community engagement, diversity, and global education. In 2009, my ten-year retrospective, I reflected on our accomplishments within the metaphor of engagement; the engagement of a community of scholars dedicated to the advancement of knowledge in pursuit of academic excellence and the engagement of our university with the region in fulfilling its public mission of service. I spoke, too, of my engagement with all of you. I felt then, as I truly feel now, the beauty of leadership is not in the doing alone, but in the doing together. And just last year, in 2010, I reminded us all that if we truly as-
pired to be great, that there were deficiencies that had to be corrected, retention, graduation rate, and declining graduate enrollment. I exhorted all of us to think of the Blueprint for Student Attainment as our call to action, and asked what will each of us do in response. Today the basic questions I posed in those earlier addresses still remain with us. How do we advance from a respectable regional public university to one of singular strengths, known for its excellence in academic and student services?

Like Yoda to the Jedi warrior, my advice to you is to think boldly and courageously about the future. Today's university is not the university of 1999 when I arrived, nor is it yet the university of the future. Great universities are nimble, innovative and adapt to the changing landscapes of the marketplace. They anticipate the future interests of the public and private sector. They drive change rather than wait for it. A great faculty does the same. We must mimic these characteristics if we are to be considered a great university. Our time to do so is now.

The next two years are critical as the campus anticipates new leadership at my position, and soon, thereafter, at the chancellor's level. At the appropriate time you will celebrate the achievements of the current leadership team, but you also know that a former chancellor's or vice chancellor's interests and priorities become history once a new team of leadership is in place. A new chancellor and executive vice chancellor will bring new priorities. The things that you praise this leadership team for will differ from what you admire in the next leadership team. New issues will arise; new challenges will be addressed. And now in the interim, you, the faculty, can play a major role in shaping how new leadership will guide the university. The time to do so is now. This is a time for you to be daring in shaping your vision for the campus.

There is an urgency in my plea. As you await new leadership, new system-wide policies and procedures and state legislated mandates are already shaping the future. The Blueprint for Student Attainment is slowly and assuredly re-aligning regional campuses in efforts to gain efficiencies. The state legislature has reformatted its funding formula to force desired results in retention and graduation rates; the Indiana Commission for Higher Education is increasingly raising the hard questions about whether new degree programs adequately respond to regional economic development. Only thirty-six percent of adults in Indiana have an associate or baccalaureate degree, a low productivity index for a state eager to advance economic development and be competitive in the health sciences, health care delivery, nano-technology and business enterprise systems. To correct this deficiency, the state is demanding that Indiana public colleges and universities expedite baccalaureate degree attainment through offering more dual high school/college credits and Early College Programs.

This emphasis on quick degree attainment changes the landscape for public institutions of higher learning. Interest has shifted from being educated to being credentialed. How well we respond to these external pressures, determines in no small measure, the kind of institution we're likely to be five or ten years from now. Rather than viewing these external intrusions as irritants
and rejecting them as unsound educational practices, you need first to understand the genesis of their making and seek practical ways of integrating them into the institutional culture of academic excellence. To do this effectively, dialogue with our K-12 educators, the business and civic community is essential. The time for these conversations to begin is now. If IU South Bend is going to retain its strong liberal arts traditions in an age of credentialing, you, the faculty, will have to work for it, maybe even fight for it.

If you are to be shapers of your own destiny, now is the time to think how individually and collectively you can advance the university. A few weeks ago, we brought together campus leaders from among the faculty and administration in an exercise of envisioning our strengths, the alpha point of imagining our campus in the post Reck/Guillaume period. The afternoon of Appreciative Inquiry was also an opportunity to build consensus on a campus project for the next re-accreditation in 2017 by the Higher Learning Commission. Although I was energized by the small group conversations, I sensed that some among you were not as enthused as I. That is easily understandable. You may feel it premature to do such planning before the departure of the current administration. Perhaps others have a more fatalistic view, preferring to remain on the sideline, thinking it futile to take personal responsibility for change against the wave of external entities that are holding the institution more accountable for its stewardship of public funds. Though this may be so, I believe that you, as a faculty, must be determined to decide for yourselves the kind of institution you are and aspire to be. I’d like to believe that you can emulate the independence and resilience of a scholar like Derrick Bell, who resigned his position as a tenured Harvard law school professor in protest to the university's denial of tenure to a woman of color. Not many in academe are as courageous as he in making that kind of deeply professional and personal sacrifice in support of fairness and justice. Rather than succumb to apathy after his departure from Harvard, Bell’s scholarship flourished; he reinvented himself through storytelling to champion the causes of social justice and diversity within the academy.

Like Derrick Bell, you have your own stories, and they will become the foundation for determining future campus directions. What a powerful gift these stories can be for the new leadership. It’s in the campus’ interest as well as your self-interest that you continue the storytelling. So as not to lose the momentum of the Appreciative Inquiry of the last causerie, I will convene, with assistance from the deans, teams of faculty within each of the schools/colleges and give them the charge of conducting a series of Appreciative Inquiries with faculty, staff and students. The stories gathered will serve, hopefully, as the genesis of a campus project for re-accreditation. And if these stories are to be of value to the next generation of campus leaders, it will require frankness and courage. Frankness to be unapologetic about your strengths, courage to lay out your dreams, and willfulness to take the necessary steps to make those dreams come alive.

In my view, and from what I have observed during my thirteen years, the definitive characteristic that sets this campus apart is engagement. Engagement with our community is arguably the most fundamental way we fulfill our public mission. Look around the room and you’ll see the faces of
those intimately involved in shaping the civic, cultural and economic development of our region. The April Lidinskys, Mike Keens, Elizabeth Bennions, Kevin Jameses, Marvin Curtises, Jerry Hinnefelds, Randy Isaacsens, Sara Sages, Dé Bryants, Rob Ducoffes, Ken Smiths, bring value to and make a difference in our community. They, and countless others among you, bring alive in meaningful and purposeful ways our mission of teaching, scholarship and service. Through engagement with our community, whether that involvement includes service learning, anthropological digs, volunteering, internships, class projects, voter registration, tax consultation, or community organizing, students achieve a richer and fuller understanding of the world. The published research on local history by the Wolfson Press, research on native habitats, and the efforts of the Center for a Sustainable Future in bringing together disparate groups to discuss the food industry (farmers, food distributors, and consumers) to understand their connectivity to a green economy, are just a few more examples of how this university brings value to our community. That interconnectivity with our region is a learning laboratory for our students. If I had to place a defining label on this integration of town/gown, it would be the scholarship of engagement. Clearly, this is one way for this university to achieve singularity among regional campuses. And I would strongly endorse engagement as a defining characteristic of IU South Bend. But you, the faculty, should be the ones to determine what characteristic best defines IU South Bend. And I recommend the Appreciative Inquiry method as a way to dream up that definition.

Now, before offering my final remarks, I’d like to tell you what I’ve most enjoyed during my time here at IU South Bend. For me, the conversations with you, individually or in group settings gave me immense satisfaction and pleasure. They sustained me inestimably. From these exchanges, sometimes intense, other times, idle chatter, a cornucopia of innovative and creative ideas was germinated. They gave birth to our general education curriculum, Michiana Chronicles, the Civil Rights Heritage Center, the Natatorium, the One Book, One Campus, the themed year, direct admits, faculty advising, the American Democracy Project, the Center for a Sustainable Future, the Wolfson Press, the causeries (the conversations at my home with the chancellor and me over wine and Creole dishes), the Toulon/IU South Bend faculty exchange, and several new summer study international programs. Through collaborative interactions we were able to expand programming and community outreach in the arts, develop new academic programs in each of the colleges/schools, initiate budget transparency in Academic Affairs, introduce on-line education, expand the U100 freshman seminars, introduce Reacting as a new pedagogy, start the First-Year Experience. I’ve treasured these very real and personal engagements, the one-to one conversations, over breakfast or lunch, in the hallways, on the mall or in individual meetings. To me, those are the most precious moments of my tenure as executive vice chancellor. But if I had to pinpoint one sterling accomplishment of my tenure, I have only to look into the audience, at you the faculty. I have been privileged to continue the storied institutional history of hiring the finest faculty of any regional public university. Most of you present today were hired during my tenure. Among the current full-time faculty, only seventy-seven were here when I arrived in the summer of 1999. To me that is a transformational shift that augurs well for the future of IU South Bend as a premier regional campus of IU. That future is yours. You are a powerfully educated, committed faculty and
you can direct the development of this campus, brilliantly and creatively. Rather than react to mandated changes, you can choose your own legacy.

Speaking of legacy, I’m often asked about my own. Frankly, I hadn’t given it much thought. Legacies are decided by others and shaped over time, as it was for Chancellor Emeritus Lester Wolfson, whose legacy still lingers over this campus. If you have not had the chance, I invite you to admire the new bronze bust of Chancellor Emeritus Wolfson, given as a gift to this campus by the sculptor, and Professor Emeritus, Tuck Langland and other benefactors. The bust is located near the east lounge of the campus auditorium. Within the last two years, the university has trumpeted and feted Chancellor Wolfson's legacy, last year with the publication of A Campus Becoming, a history of our campus and a compendium of his major addresses to the faculty. Few in academic leadership have shaped an institution as he, singular in its placement of the arts and sciences at the core of what it means to be an institution invested in higher learning. In his first address to the faculty on September 19, 1964, Chancellor Emeritus Wolfson confidently states, as if to assure his audience of the importance of their work, "...the mark of an able faculty is its unremitting devotion to the honorable task of accumulating, refining, and transmitting all the knowledge of mind, sense, and heart accessible to human comprehension." As if to warn the faculty against discipline insularity, he continues, "...we should all be concerned that our students have as complete a grasp as possible of the methods, presuppositions, limitations, prospects, and leading achievements in all the disciplines that lend themselves to intellectual and imaginative understanding." So, he urged his young faculty to remain faithful to their disciplines but to treasure the multi-faceted nature of the liberal arts tradition.

Though I could not have said it as succinctly and eloquently as did he, I share those values of what our role as educators ought to be. What has shaped me in my role as chief academic officer, and I have repeatedly said it, is that I believe firmly that the greatest value of an IU South Bend education is transformative learning. Students upon graduation ought to have had transformative experiences that give them broader knowledge of self, of their world, and their place in it. They should view themselves, not only as participants in a democracy, but shapers of it; they should not only be active contributors in their communities, but they should exercise their responsibilities as world citizens. Those are the indelible characteristics I cherish and want for all of our students. Their university diploma should not, and does not, represent just credentials but the full range of human knowledge.

I began my address to you this morning, using the pulpit of a seasoned academic officer, offering advice about the future, exhorting you to take an active role in determining the singular purpose of IU South Bend. Who are we? What will IU South Bend become? The answer lies, as it was for Emily Dickinson, in dwelling in possibility (from the poem, I dwell in Possibility). If you don't dare to do it, no one else will.
I would be remiss if I close without expressing deep gratitude to the deans and members of the Academic Cabinet. What an extraordinary leadership team! I've benefitted immeasurably from their counsel but, more importantly, I value their friendship as I would a precious gem. I am particularly indebted to Nancy Plennert who stood unfailingly with me in managing all the complexities of academic affairs administration. To my colleagues on the chancellor’s cabinet, I value too our time together and the support you have given me in advancing our university's core mission of teaching, research and service. And to Chancellor Reck, whose leadership has shepherded the campus' expansive growth, I give special thanks for allowing me the privilege to serve on her executive team. She’s been stalwart in supporting the values of my stewardship of academic affairs. And to you the faculty, thank you for the frank and honest conversations; thank you for your energy and for your innovation and creativity. You nourished my soul and made the burdens of my work so much lighter. To the staff, thank you for your tireless devotion to tasks. Most of all, thanks to all you, faculty, staff, and administrative colleagues, for allowing me to simply be me. As I said in my remarks at the All-Campus Meeting in August, IU South Bend is a joyful place to work. These thirteen years have been the happiest and most fulfilling of my academic life.

May prosperity continue to grace this campus. Thank you.