

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY
State-of-the-University Address
President Randy J. Dunn
October 10, 2012 – Wrather Museum Auditorium

Good afternoon everyone – I appreciate you all coming out to spend a few minutes together for the State-of-the-University (SOU) Address. As you know, this is the second year we have moved the SOU Address away from the Faculty and Professional Staff Luncheon at the start of the year to hold it later in the fall in a separate venue so really is the true believers who come out on a beautiful fall day and sit through something like this – I really do appreciate it and thank you.

As you can imagine, today is somewhat awkward given what has transpired recently. When I told folks at Missouri State I was coming back – literally about three hours ago – and would be giving my State-of-the-University Address they just kind of shook their heads and did not ask much more. Given the fact the SOU Address had already been scheduled, obviously I wanted to keep that commitment. In one sense I suppose I could go on automatic pilot (which I have been doing for the past two days) but I will try to vary my remarks a bit from what the company line has been since the middle of Sunday afternoon. Ronda and I also speculated there would be a somewhat larger crowd that might show up for the SOU Address given recent goings on – if nothing else but for the novelty effect to figure out what I might say in such a situation. If that

was the driver for your attendance, I am still glad you are here and we will see how that gets approached later in the speech.

One thing about being on another campus is that it does make you appreciate and value the things you have on your own campus, and certainly this is true of the people and programs, but also as I look at the two institutions as I have been talking about the past two days between the two MSU's and trying to do comparisons, we could really look across so many things:

Universities within the same sector, public regional universities, but with Murray State's ability to perform in a number of areas, in my view, in much more compelling ways – whether considering our recruitment efforts, discussing social media, or thinking about facilities management even. We have so much to be proud of here at Murray State because we have elevated ourselves in comparison. I know it was just one institution, but it is also one with certainly more significant resources and of a larger size, and given that, in so many areas we have much in which to be proud.

When it became clear the two events were going to start to coalesce – my interviewing over in Missouri, as well as delivering the State-of-the-University Address here – I tried to think of an approach to my talk that would be somewhat more generic and applicable. Again, in saying this let me pause and absolutely let you know I do not know how all this will turn out. I have no

indication of what may happen at Missouri State and how things may proceed over the coming days and weeks – I say this without any knowledge of what may unfold. But, knowing the events were coalescing I did want to try to have an approach today that would be applicable while speaking to the future of Murray State University in a way I thought rang true no matter who the President would be. If I am fortunate to be here and continue in that role, I think what I'll talk about today is certainly going to be what you see in the future during my time as President but if somebody else should come at some future point I think these are similar issues that a new President would also have to deal with as you look over the arc of the next three to five or even ten years for Murray State University.

Many of you know that my perspective of the State-of-the-University Address – whether it was done during the luncheon or as a stand-alone event – has always been forward thinking. I never tried to do some valedictory of things we have accomplished. I've asked Josh to put some slides together, and if you noticed them on the way in, we have played through a few of those just to give some indication of the work that has been going on around the University this past year.

With the help of University Communications we were able to produce and distribute the *Annual Report* this spring somewhat earlier than what had been the case in the past. And I hope all of you have also seen the wonderful publication that has come from Provost Higginson's office recently. Jay Morgan served as point person for the *Research Innovation and Scholarly Activity*

Report – a fall supplement – focusing on research and creative effort that goes on at the University to separate it from the annual report published in the spring. If you have not had a chance to see this publication, please make sure you do because it represents a compelling and poignant description of a great deal of work taking place at Murray State University. This work is part of our calling – the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge – and there are some wonderful stories within the publication you will want to make sure you read.

Here is a great little story: I was doing an interview on Monday morning at Missouri State and I was getting ready to meet with their Administrative Council. The way the offices are set up in the presidential suite there means you actually have to walk through the President's Office – or at least they took me through the President's Office – in order to get to the conference room where the interview with the Administrative Council was to take place. So, I am kind of weirdly walking through the President's Office and on the corner of the desk (Jay you will like this) I see a copy of the Murray State University research report and so I used that as a nice opportunity to brag in the interview about what we do here at *this* MSU.

Again, I do not want to offer a valedictory of what we have accomplished – we have means already in place to look at that – but I do want to mention a few things because we should justifiably be proud of what has been accomplished over the past year. If you are going to give a

State-of-the-University Address you probably should at least harken back to some of that which has gone on and involved everybody in this room as well as scores – literally hundreds – of others across all of our campuses. I am going to tick these off very quickly – I won't belabor them – but when you think about what has been invested to get them accomplished it is really quite a major undertaking.

For 22 consecutive years Murray State has been within what we call the “Top 20” category of *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. The Top 20 cuts two ways so if you look *within the region* we love to be in that Top 20 listing for publics and privates regionally – within the South – and we were able to do that this year. Then you pull out just the public regionals, again we are talking about only our sector – public regional or public comprehensive universities – you want to take just the public regionals *across the nation* by overall score under *U.S. News* (since they don't do direct comparisons across the regions) then what you see is this year, we sure beat that Top 20 on the *national* public listing. I think I am right in saying we ranked 11th this year – by score – across all of the regions that are used within our sector. This is an amazing feat that has been accomplished and one in which this University, this region, and the state can be proud.

I don't guess I am breaking any secret here two days before an official Homecoming announcement, but we will see *Hold Thy Banner High* reach the \$70 million stretch target. You

know that about one year ago we reached the \$60 million goal...but it is always that last few million that can be the toughest to raise. At that time a lot of debate occurred about whether to move forward to meet a new stretch goal, and whether it was possible to accomplish such a goal. We decided to stretch for the \$70 million amount, and we will be there plus a little change. You all will recall that about one-half of this money is going to support scholarships at Murray State University. You will also recall *U.S. News and World Report* in their recent short list – which is essentially where they take the larger data they gather to do their reporting – ranked Murray State University by far and away the number one institution among both public and private institutions in the country in the percentage of undergraduate students receiving non-need-based aid. MSU was also far ahead of the institution in second place. Again, these things that we do make a difference – they create change, and in this case direct transformational change – for students.

This will be the second year of record-breaking enrollment for Murray State University. I see Fred Dietz out there working with his team and many folks on the academic side who support our recruitment efforts, and we are going to be somewhere close to 10,800+ enrolled. I kind of threatened Fred a year ago and said 11,000 students is where I wanted to be, but he also knew we were going to do the best we could with limited resources, and we are indeed coming to a place where I am very happy with the outcome. And of course we will keep getting a few more students in as we approach our lock-in date for enrollment reporting to the CPE.

This is all representative of the great successes you have all contributed to. We also sit here today very close to looking at bids for a new regional campus in Paducah. Who imagined six years ago that would happen? A lot of earth work activity has been going on at the site, and now we are moving to the next phase of that work which will be the construction of the actual structure itself. K12CONNECT is now getting traction and represents the outreach work we are undertaking especially with our feeder schools across the 18 counties – to some degree modeling or paralleling what we have asked Regional Outreach to do over the past five years in trying to extend in a very focused and direct way the very same model to support our regional partner school systems – particularly at the high school level – because we have a vested interest in improving college readiness for those students as they come to our institution.

Of course, we know in doing all this work – while it is important and valuable and we tout each accomplishment – for the University, at its core, the first measure of running this institution is to ensure we do no harm to our standards, to the institutional profile we have created, or do anything that would negatively impact the essential work of teaching at the University. This is what has to be protected and what must be kept whole. If we ever take our eye off the ball from that work nothing else will happen here with full success. For us, this is the first defining component, the foundation, the keystone of MSU. And so while we brag in various and sundry

ways, all the way from the region to the world about these accomplishments and outstanding efforts that we undertake, we can never lose sight that we have to keep our eye on what is at the heart of what we stand for: outstanding teaching, engaged learning, the creation of knowledge, and its application and dissemination.

Each year with this speech I have tied back to the Strategic Imperatives that which we are looking for in a given new year, or some of the things I announce that might be coming up. The Imperatives have served as a framework since I came here which enables us to think as a community about giving a broader focus to the work of the University, and refining and setting out new directions for the region that provide additional avenues for distinction and service. Sometimes we talk about things that would spring directly from the Imperatives and describe what we may be looking at in terms of what is coming over the course of a given year, or sometimes we might talk about the Imperatives as providing a framework. If there is no initiative to announce that is directly related to this on a University-wide basis we may instead focus on something for the purpose of institutional capacity-building which needs to take place to reach the Imperatives.

Enrollment is one example. If you have watched what has been done in working enrollment management over the past four-plus years you know an enrollment goal had never really been set

officially. We talked a lot about it, and it has certainly been referenced during these speeches.

Certain things were being reported annually, but we never did a lot of publishing of targets around enrollment every year. Again, though, enrollment was the means to capacity build.

Going back to decisions the University's Board of Regents made three or four years ago to get a revenue overage – to get that dollar premium to keep supporting excellence – we needed to continue to grow enrollment and get about the business quickly. Enrollment was a capacity builder – not necessarily a goal unto itself as we talk about it – but it gave us the means to get some other things done.

To some degree *Hold Thy Banner High* is similar in fashion. And, yes, under the Imperative of Excellence it was an institution-wide undertaking which we talked about as a project under that topic to move the University forward. In many ways that was also, as you well know, not just about providing excellence unto itself, but was also the way we were going to help *pay* for the Excellence that all of our constituencies are expecting of us.

With this particular State-of-the-University Address, I am marking a pivot or shift that does take us in a bit of a different direction. And I don't want to say the speech today is not going to continue to be forward-thinking, because as I share a few comments with you here about what is

coming – what is forward for us and what the future holds – in many, many ways it is a different perspective and a quite changed approach of how I have talked about the future of the University in previous SOU addresses. In trying to describe it or look at a way of thinking about it I come to the term of bringing us “back to the basics” as a University. This pivot isn’t necessarily a bad thing. I think it is something that is coming, and we are going to figure out how to live with it, but it’s not necessarily a bad thing in total. However, if it is used to redefine us in a way that has us looking like every other tired and sleepy state university across the country, that is a danger and we can’t have that happen. But I think there is a way we can respond to this change coming to us – this shift in the winds that is definitely taking place, and in some ways has already taken place – but still ensure we don’t move too far away from those initiatives, projects, events, means of doing outreach, and ways of defining ourselves that have put us in the top tier of institutions like ours throughout the country.

I.

One of the drivers for this change are the fiscal constraints that higher education – particularly public higher education and particularly higher education at the regional state university level – has been hit with, and that we have had to deal with since the Great Recession about four years ago. But it’s not just that...there has also been a kind of reawakening. We have been talking about this fiscal shift for 30 plus years coming out of the tax revolts in the 1970s in California.

So it's not just the Great Recession, but the Great Recession did push forward conversations dealing with questions of policy and politics about what the role of the state should be – what the role of the Commonwealth and the citizenry should be – in supporting higher education. I am not going to belabor this discussion by going into a lot of detail, because you all read *The Chronicle* and the newspapers and you know where that conversation is taking us...particularly at institutions like ours. It is having a constraining effect on ongoing support for what we want to be able to do – not necessarily around degree attainment and keeping our graduation rate high – but around those ancillary services that are more expansive...that are transformative in the way they change a region...and can make a pivot in the individual lives of our students. We will be getting away from some of this work with that more direct focus – not just due to the fiscal constraints coming out of what has happened with the economy over the past four years – but in the sense that public finance has been a catalyst for a larger discussion within society about the role of the state vis-à-vis institutions like ours. So that is one big thing and it moves us toward our first prong of change.

There is an additional driver for us at Murray State. I do think we are seeing at this time a realignment or refocusing that has been pushed more locally in some part from our Board of Regents at the University – as they have looked at these trends mentioned and deliberated about

what all of the things that we see going on mean, not just regionally within Kentucky but around the country.

Listening to many, many voices engaged in these conversations, I have been referring to and thinking about ways to ground the University anew in its more basic mission – what we might call the traditional work of the University. Here I do harken back to our core work of teaching and learning that I think would probably be most symbolized in the Board’s passage this past year of a document they refer to as the *Strategic Directions Statement*. The Board worked on this document very carefully, and there was a great deal of thought put into it and a desire to move forward with it, almost as an umbrella statement to set the stage for all of the endeavors taking place at the University. But I do want you to look at the statement as I want to describe it some to give you a sense of what I am talking about here as we now go back to the basics as we get more grounded in the core work we think of as traditional focus: getting students through degree programs, getting them graduated, and out getting jobs.

One of the clauses in the *Strategic Directions Statement* talks about the University being “the university of choice for high school seniors, community college transfer students and nontraditional students.” I think that is a very laudable goal and there is nothing to argue with, though I do think there will be an institutional move to some degree where the metrics we use

may not be so much about the efficacy or effectiveness of these more expansive projects that go on – things we have taken on *beyond* the traditional teaching and learning core – but rather a move back to those basic notions about what Murray State University is supposed to do in getting students here, educated, graduated, and out getting jobs.

Thus, we may start to see explicit measurements for being the “university of choice for high school students.” For instance, we may start to look much more at the percentage of students coming out of our feeder high schools in the 18 counties that come to Murray State. We can get that data. We can look and find out the percentage of our 18-county high school students who matriculate to higher education by coming here...versus those going to Western...versus those entering into the community and technical college system. I predict this will become a more visible and talked about measure – what is happening to those 18-county high school students.

We have always watched transfer rates and this has frankly been a challenge for MSU over the last three or four years. That challenge is going to get even more fully joined and you are going to see a notable move on transfer rates because it is clearly stated in the Board’s *Strategic Directions Statement*. Transfer rates have been too flat for us and I have not been drastically happy with it. Work has been taking place with Dean Van Horn within the Center for Continuing Education and Academic Outreach to figure out how to move the needle and work

will continue on it; as it gets focused on more and more, a determination will get made on how to make that figure move in a bigger way.

Distinctive academic programming is another clause contained within the *Strategic Directions Statement* and investment will be made into signature program marketing. Discussions have been held administratively to look at what the signature programs are academically that should be marketed nationally to potentially build a more national base of enrollment in key areas and bring in more out-of-state students to potentially improve the tuition mix. You get the idea.

Obviously the middle paragraph of the *Strategic Directions Statement* is something we have been doing but I would share with you there has been a focus in large part on our outreach efforts around educational attainment. Our advisory body for regional outreach has indicated they want to make sure the University is anchored strongly to whatever projects we fund, and that work done out of regional outreach should in some way benefit educational attainment. Obviously, the work underway with K12CONNECT as a special institutional initiative out of my office targets educational attainment, but I do think you are will be seeing outreach efforts now which really can show impact across-the-board in many areas of endeavor. We will talk about that a bit more later.

Reference is also made in the *Strategic Directions Statement* to building public trust for operational efficiency and effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. I think it is true to say for the Board – and, again, they are very thoughtful about this – they are looking to determine the nexus which exists between the highest level of quality for the institution and the most moderate tuition and fee increases we can manage. If we want to have sky-high tuition, we can certainly “buy” quality. If another idea is to suppress tuition as much as possible, or even roll it back, that can be done with a concomitant lowering of quality. The Board does not want either of those extreme outcomes. I think it is fair to say they are trying to figure out the “sweet spot” – that nexus of the best quality we can have, while keeping tuition certainly among the lowest within the Commonwealth and competitive on a regional basis.

So you have now seen the *Directions Statement* and have a sense of what that first prong for the future looks like for MSU. Even if the Board wasn’t going there, as they have wrestled with the *Strategic Directions Statement* document for some number of months, we are seeing a push coming to us anyway given these other factors I have talked about. The challenge going forward with the Board, I think, will be to figure out how to *operationalize* these things: Is being the “university of choice for high school seniors” defined by the metric of having the largest percentage of matriculating seniors from the 18-county high schools come to Murray State the right metric...or do we need to decide whether there is a better one? Do typical transfer rates

best define that measure, or is there something else we should look at? I think over the coming months, and maybe even up to the course of a year, as we are starting these conversations we have to figure out what those metrics look like; as we do, I will predict you will start to see a sort of “dashboard” approach to our effectiveness in these areas. And this is not new: The CPE is already doing it for the public universities. Carl Prestfeldt represents MSU at most of our CPE meetings and workgroups where they are now basically using scorecards with various symbols...and when a metric is met, the University gets a gold star. Literally...on our dashboard. We are going to see the increased use of those types of dashboard measurement approaches – which are very typical. They are common across the country and will be a driver for this first prong of change.

Indeed, this is more fundamental in its perspective and represents a set of more traditional metrics for the institution. It is efficiency...and it is impact...and goes beyond the rankings and ratings while harkening us back the foundational base of our value as a university for the students who come to us – as opposed to looking more at these special directional thrusts or more expansive institutional moves toward broader-based outreach, or some of the deeper partnerships, or transformational regional change, or innovation. This is not to say these things still don’t go on because they do – it is not an either/or proposition for us to come back to the basics, meaning this other work cannot happen – no. Rather, I think the magnitude by which

some of these other expansive undertakings will get done could change – but that “extra” work still defines a great regional state university, nationally.

II.

This then begs the point of what happens with the Strategic Imperatives – what do we do with them? Are they going to disappear, do we quit having the banners out and stop talking about them in speeches and putting up slides? No, this is not going to be the case at all. You are still going to hear the Imperatives being talked about and referred to. Complex institutions where people have great autonomy to do what they will, when they want, and how they wish defines universities, doesn't it? In those types of places you can only deal with two or three big goals out there at any one time. So we are going to keep talking about the Imperatives which will in the future provide a shift or a reframing focus. But instead of the larger-scale, institution-wide work that we have had in the major projects we have taken on, it is not going to be as much of a direction-setting or creation of a set of foci for the University in terms of that outreach, transformational change, building of the region and that type of thing (which will still go on), but rather these will have a more narrow and truncated focus in the future, probably undertaking smaller and more directive initiatives to specifically help move the dashboard metrics.

Again...over the coming months and maybe up to a year you will start to see us redefine in a more basic, traditional, and fundamental way what we are looking to do as successfully as we

can. A lot of the same work will go on, but it may be somewhat lessened in scope and bent toward different purposes. This is the second prong of change we'll see at MSU, I believe.

I want to share a couple of examples of this. One of the things I am really excited to see that has happened through Bob Long's work – through his experience as a program officer with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation – is a coming together with Regional Outreach and the MSU academic program in Nonprofit Youth and Leadership (and others) who have established over the past few months a philanthropy network that has now become a major player in thinking through how philanthropy and fundraising program development takes place in western Kentucky. One meeting of this group included 35 to 40 individuals working in nonprofit management across the entire range of agencies, but the network can be up to 70 to 75 people at times. In the future, this work may still well go on and will be successful, but the University may not directly be investing in some partnerships. For instance (and I am making this up for illustration) you might instead see a similar partnership network develop institutionally to now tie into our 18-county area guidance counselors. To move toward the metrics there are some things we need to do; yes, we will keep doing partnerships which will exemplify outreach, but that work will be more focused and tied back to the basic metrics (such as with the guidance counselors). Many institutions across the country like MSU will also have to respond to and address the same thing.

Another example is innovation: We have a great project currently taking place in the Hutson School of Agriculture (HSOA), and you may have heard about it over the past few months – the West Kentucky Ag Bioworks project. If you talk to anyone in the Hutson School they know all about the project being led by the HSOA as well as the Regional Business Innovation Center which is located at Heritage Hall being dedicated on Friday. This unit is now on the cutting edge within the region – looking at the states of Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois and Tennessee – in figuring out how to do alternative energy sources with biocrops. A farmer network is being established, a demonstration project is going to go on at the farms, and it is through this continued work that the potential exists for Murray State to be at the epicenter of something that is going to have national impact as a move is made toward alternative renewable fuel sources from crops such as switch grass and things of that nature. There is potentially an innovation within that. Does this back-to-basics movement mean we won't do it? No...but now you might also start looking at some innovations with a different approach to them and – given the *Strategic Directions* language of having the connection to the workforce through continuing education – we may now start to see some of this innovation work additionally have to shift to figure out how to respond to workforce needs within the region. This has typically been the province of the community and technical colleges because they are heavily involved with retraining work, job displacement, and things of that nature. Clearly there is a call for us to tie more closely to the

workforce of the region...and ultimately a metric will need to be defined, because that work is going to be done for the University.

You see, we can't talk about these things and then not have a means to operationalize and measure what it is we are expected to do. We need that for institutional purposes to know if we are on the right track as it has been defined...and I want it on my evaluation as well! If you are going to hold me and us all to this standard, then tell me what it means to have a connection to continuing education for the region's workforce so I can see how we have defined that. Provide a metric and then we will innovate toward that end. Again, you see the pivot, you see the shift, within our Imperatives that I think is portended for the future – no matter who may be President.

Now let me share two points: The work that is already going on will still continue. Just because there may be an organizational shift to a more fundamental and foundational approach to define what we shall do, Bob Long will still run a philanthropy network...that is not going to stop.

With the West Kentucky Ag Bioworks project – whether or not the institution as a whole was involved to make the **Innovation for Impact Imperative** with that biofuels project does not matter – the Hutson School of Agriculture would have taken the project on and started working it no matter what, I'm sure. They are all about this work and would have secured grants and done

what they needed to do – just like all of you in your areas of expertise and interest are going out and continuing to do *your* work to make things better.

The difference comes when we can look at this type of work and take it on with the heft of the University and the commitment of the institution overall. And, no, we cannot do every single thing in the world and I understand that – most every President does. But for those things that do have impact – that move the needle and are transformative change – when the University comes and says we are going to help take part of the load and move that forward (no matter what the innovation may be we are driving for) it gets done faster because you do not have to fight as long for support, help, and resources. Transformation to the region as a means of change can come more quickly. So what we will have to do – and, again, it's not that we have abandoned our support – but rather as all of these points of light develop on our campus I think we are going to have to be somewhat more circumspect in thinking about how institutionally we can get behind an array of projects and give each a hard push to really do something powerful for the region. The work will still go on, but we are also going to have more investment institutionally to some of those changes under the Imperatives that are more direct at getting us to our traditional outcomes. We will work through that Imperatives framework with initiatives and projects, but they will be more directed in the future to what moves the needle on the metrics for those things we say define us as an institution at our teaching and learning core. This work for true

transformation is still going to go on, and all of the great stuff that is currently taking place (and I can look across the room and identify with so many and what they are doing in this vein) will continue...but you will also see a refocusing going forward under the framework of the Imperatives for large-scale, University-wide initiatives that are clearly and explicitly more directed to the outcomes of the *Strategic Directions* metrics.

The second point is the things we have committed to up to this point will not be abandoned, but will be sustained and will continue to be pushed forward. It's simply this pivot or shift that you will see taking place for the ability to keep that going forward. But we are not going to abandon work already underway because of the resources and time previously invested on the larger-scale work of the University.

III.

The third prong for the future is the budget review process that is underway at Murray State this academic year. I would suggest to you all that we are going to see this work become more cyclic and ongoing, maybe even quasi-continuous, in the life of the University. We do not want to undertake this work every year (none of us could stand that) but I do think for the future you are going to see some means by which there is a greater churning, a greater shedding off of some things, and a folding-in of some other new approaches. I don't know if this is done on a three-

year cycle – or what the timeframe would be – but whatever the future of the University we are going to see this budget review effort become imbedded into the ongoing processes of Murray State University...just like we see the latest version of a Banner upgrade...just like we have to do accreditation, whether within our disciplines or institution-wide...just like all of that stuff that we have cycle through in the life of a university – whether it is on an annual basis or a three- or five-year cycle. This work will become the third prong and it has been added to that set of things that will continually get done on campus in some form or fashion. Again, it is not just us – we are in the thick of it – but everybody is undertaking this work and you will see it become a more permanent process on campuses across the country.

So what does all this mean for Murray State University? Overall, the first thing I see – and although it sounds like it has a negative connotation I don't necessarily mean it that way because these are a matter of degrees – is the somewhat less expansive approach to the work and ongoing operations of the University as I alluded to earlier. As mentioned, we are still going to do outreach and those things that are our calling, but you are also going to see some of that bandwidth now going toward projects on a University-wide basis that are more directed toward internal types of initiatives. Outreach work will be more intricately tied to the things that will increase and strengthen the traditional and foundational college-going metrics such as graduation rate, time to degree, retention, and all of those things you know well.

The second point I also think, and it is no surprise to anyone here, we are going to have an increased scrutiny on the purpose and use of funds. This is not suggesting we are going to leave our general budgeting approach and not have control of carryforwards remain with the units, but you are going to see a more critical review of how public funds are spent. There are implications all over the board for this in terms of what we do academically, with international offerings, on communications and marketing efforts, our outreach undertakings – everything is going to get looked at as a cost-value proposition and it is really going to be across our full range of efforts. I know there will be a heightened level of review, evaluation, and analysis of any initiative that has public funds attached to it. This is, again, a national trend that is well underway. To some degree we have (for a few of you it may seem as such is not the case) tried to buffer this... and we are still not going to “pick” you to death I hope. However, you will see over time something beyond a marginal difference in how we clarify with you what you intend to do with money that comes to us from state appropriations or tuition.

Third meaning for the future: I think you are going to see a change in our community-of-interest focus. As I have talked about for a number of years, we have thought aspirationally about those eight-to-a dozen institutions within the public mid-major sector who are getting more points than Murray State from *U.S. News & World Report*, and looking at what they are doing not just on the

measurements used for the *U.S. News* score, but in broader ways – trying to determine what those places look like around giving-per-FTE student...Library holdings...staffing. All of these things combine to determine the big picture of what makes James Madison University a James Madison, or the College of Charleston what it is, with the success they have experienced. I think the community of interest is going to shift more for some of us, and you are going to see *multiple* communities of interest in play.

When it comes to things like completer programs (and this is a hot topic as evidenced in a meeting last week where the CPE President spoke to this issue as we are now going to be looking at how the for-profits are doing their completer programs) to bring students in, giving them credit for experience, and getting them fast-tracked to baccalaureate completion that will have its own comparison group. Thank goodness we have the Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS) degree and are well on our way to being able to address this issue. The comparison group will not be whether James Madison has a BIS program and how it is operated, but rather how the for-profit institutions do this work, how long it takes to get to degree, the nature of the experience, and thinking through that specialized community of interest. On the workforce side, as you saw with the *Strategic Directions Statement* language, the community of interest may have to do with what the community colleges are doing. We are not going to become the community college – that is a mistake and we cannot go down that path and chase that rabbit – but for certain

workforce goals we are going to be asked to take on, KCTCS may be the community of interest we compare to. You understand what I am talking about.

After six years here you have likely figured out from what I have talked about and tried to do that I am of the presidents' group which sees a university, particularly a public university, standing for much, much more than simply degree attainment and workforce preparation. That is important, and as I mentioned at the outset that is the core of our business and is the "knitting" we must do first and foremost, but universities also are responsible – in my view – for a push toward progress, for elevating the place we are called to serve over, to look at quality-of-life indicators and make them better, to start transformational change and make it more powerful. In the 19th Century this was probably best characterized by Charles W. Eliot. If you have ever taken a history of higher education course you have read about what he said as President of Harvard University. He was the fearless crusader for progressivism in higher education and, of course, he was also about the core business too because if you remember what you read, Eliot led the push to reform American high schools and make them something of quality as those students fed into Harvard. He took care of the knitting, yes, but he had this expansive view tied to his progressivist bent that saw the university as much more. A more recent name – Clark Kerr – had been at the University of California and, again, if you have taken a history of higher education

course you read him too. He talked about the uses of the university in more recent writings and I want to share this quote:

The university started as a single community – a community of teachers and students. It may even be said to have had a soul in the sense of its central animating principle. Today the large American university is, rather, a whole series of communities and activities held together by a common name, a common governing board, and related purposes. This great transformation is regretted by some, accepted by many, glorified in by a few. But it better be understood by all.

He wrote those words a long time ago in the modern sense and it sounds on point now, doesn't it? We are obviously moving in a different direction in defining public regional universities in this country. It is happening – it is happening across the country- and as I earlier mentioned, it is happening in public higher education at the regional state universities maybe most of all. We are not going to escape it here in Murray, Kentucky. The call for the future as we figure out how to navigate all this, as we get the metrics, as we figure out what the scope for the Imperatives is, as we look at what to fund, what to do, what to pull back on, where to go, how to serve – the thing that will allow us to get through this is really going to be the same values which define the

University and have made Murray State what it is: Connectedness, Community, Commitment, Concern, Caring. These are all broadly defined. If we stay with all of the things that make Murray State University what it is we will be able to navigate and work our way through to the future.

Yes, we are going to be marked by a more inward focus in the future. We are going to see some level of institutional retrenchment. This is true no matter the Board, no matter who the President – it's what is coming. But if we can remember those things that everyone knows us for, it will keep the University in good stead and will allow all of us to keep stewarding the University until that day (if it does in fact come again for public higher education at the regional state university level) where we can reach out more vibrantly – not apologizing for it – not having to say it is a bad thing to work merely beyond degree attainment and beyond simply bumping up the metrics every year. But working in a way, as Abraham Flexner said in 1930, “where the University becomes an expression of the age, an influence upon today and the future.”

We are doing the pivot we're called to do, but we are not going to forget that larger arc of a university as we are able to come back to it, as we firm up new metrics, as we continue to use that success as a means to bring in resources, we will come back even more strongly in very exciting and transformative ways for the place we are called to serve.

Thank you for attending today. I have gone way over and you have been very kind. I'm going to forego the planned Q&A given the hour. But there is a reception in the Wrather Room so I am going to be around and we can talk as long as we like – glad to engage individually – but in the interest of time, we can just talk one-on-one and can stay here as long as necessary. I have been doing that for the last three days anyway, just talking to people! Thank you so much and from my heart and please know that I value and appreciate the work all of you do in important and life-changing ways for Murray State University. Godspeed and Go Racers! Thank you everybody.