

Welcome to a wonderful event that is a tradition at Murray State University for starting the new academic year. I am glad you have taken time out of your very busy schedules as we prepare for the start of classes next week – and as I say every year when we come together, this is really one of the most exciting times to work at a college or university as everyone is returning and settling back into campus life. Personally speaking, it really is wonderful for me to be out and about as campus activity picks up and to start to see so many of you again, especially since we have not crossed paths, in some cases, for some time now.

As always is the case during this speech at a campus-wide event, we do have some business to take care of. I would like to welcome the new Regents – I really look forward to working with Phil Schooley, Sharon Green and Deno Curris – Phil, particularly, as you have represented Staff Congress well and have now moved to the role of Staff Regent – and I know you are going to continue to do excellent work in representing that constituency. I also want to extend my thanks to both Faculty Senate and Staff Congress because they have provided great service this past year and I look forward to continuing to work with them as we combine our efforts to go forth into the new year. There is much to accomplish and I appreciate their assistance as we come together to advance toward common goals.

I would also like to formally welcome all of our new faculty and professional staff who have joined Murray State University starting with this 2009-10 term, either as new hires or as continuing individuals who are moving into new positions and new roles – and I do appreciate Dr. Brockway acknowledging all of these individuals. I did have the opportunity to speak at some length yesterday with the new faculty particularly – and then a chance again last night at their reception to catch up with some of them on a more individual basis – and I really am excited about the vitality and fresh perspective these folks will bring as new scholars joining a great existing community of scholars as represented by the faculty here at the University. I would also like to give one more shout out before getting into the meat of my remarks. Given that when the University officially tenured and promoted this past year was May 29 and everyone scattered for the summer, I really would like faculty who were promoted or tenured with the Board's action this past spring to please stand and receive our applause and congratulations. Dr. Brockway and my office will soon be running an advertisement in the *MSU News* to ensure this honor is known to the wider campus community.

As we come together to begin another year, and as I have done almost every year with this speech, I try to focus on the strategic imperatives of the University in a forward-looking manner. For those of you who have been here for some years, this is not new, but I want not so much to recount past successes or what has been accomplished over the past year – because this is what our *Annual Report* is intended to do and returning faculty and staff should have received a copy of that near the end of the spring semester or it can also be found on my web page – but in order not to go back and revisit success I want to use this speech again this year to spend, at the start of

a new academic year, a few moments trying to examine how we continuously reinvigorate the campus, refresh the campus around these initiatives, look at new approaches toward these initiatives while all the while certainly institutionalizing the values they represent and “driving down” those values represented by excellence, community and partnerships so that they are fully absorbed into the “deep tissues” of the University’s structure and existence.

I will again take a moment to say here – as I did with the new faculty when we met yesterday – if you are used to working at a place that has a large, thick, bulky, “big as a barn door” strategic plan and you enjoy that sort of thing then you are at the wrong place and you are working for the wrong President. When we talk about organizational goals or organizational mission, especially as you look at a more complex organization such as a university, the more streamlined and simple approach to defining institutional mission and supporting organizational growth and development is the way to go. I am convinced even more now than I have been every other year that I have come before you to make this speech, that this is the only way to give content and substance to big ideas that create a big picture for a comprehensive, public university like ours that wants to be among the best in this country.

I would like to take a moment to quote a researcher Dick Chait who is with the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is really a seminal authority on education governance generally and college and university governance particularly. To quote Professor Chait:

The strategic plan has become so cumbersome and convoluted that the process yields not so much a strategy...as a compendium of unfunded, unpriced, unranked and unabridged ambitions laced with lofty rhetoric and nebulous goals...it becomes a document closer to a case statement for a capital campaign than a template for unambiguous choices and systematic decisions.

As Jim Carter would say, “Amen, brother!”

So what I take from this for Murray State University as an organization as we look with anticipation to a new year, and given what we faced economically this past year, are a few different things, starting with the most important – the good work that has been done and is taking place across so many operational units of this University. As I was making my trip around the colleges this morning it is just amazing what is going on in all of our colleges with outreach – but also with what is happening both on the academic side of the house and in all of the units on the other side of the house of the University. This work should continue as we keep building the record of many ongoing projects, efforts and initiatives around creating community and building partnerships that, again, have been so amazing for me to watch over the past couple of years – but particularly in 2008-2009. As I have said many times before, to many of you in all kinds of venues, I really do believe this is the calling of any great public comprehensive university...and partnerships, community building and outreach efforts really are our defining mark.

As noted, I have already commended to you the *Annual Report* if you want to go back and see all that has been accomplished in the past year on all of our campuses in this regard. It literally has involved the entire University and for that I, again, say “thank you” to so many of you here who worked on those projects. In that same vein I must also commend to you a recent video that was

produced as a year-end production for our Regional Stewardship and Outreach program under the direction of Gina Winchester. If you have not seen the video, which is now posted on the Regional Stewardship website, take 15 minutes and watch it because you too will be amazed at all that has been taking place on the campuses of Murray State to operationalize particularly the community and partnership imperatives in unbelievably creative ways. Many of you in this room have been involved in those efforts and I know that. These are ways in which we are touching not just the 18 counties we are primarily charged to serve – but the Commonwealth certainly and the larger region we are in – to make the entire area a better place to live, learn, work, recreate and be more healthy. As I relayed to the new faculty yesterday, we need to keep moving the needle on those quality-of-life indicators for the Commonwealth of Kentucky as well as for the larger region. If you have not seen the Regional Stewardship video, please watch it and review the Report and my guess is that you too will be moved and will understand this University is doing well-more than its share to make changes in the quality of life for the region and for the people the University is ultimately called to serve. Keep up the good work and – as I learned in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology this morning – if you are textually active, KUTGW, as Dean Steve Cobb would say, “Keep up the good work.” We must sustain these efforts and they must continue.

After a pilot project we conducted last spring, we are also putting together a very easy, simple and streamlined online goal-setting system for each of the University’s operational units to choose what they can do to best support the imperatives. Supplying that content and substance specific to each unit – that only your unit knows how to do best around these imperatives, whether you are in Health Services or History, whether you work for Biological Sciences or the Bookstore, whether in Athletics or Academic Affairs – illustrates that what you do around these imperatives has to very much be customized to the work of your shop or your operational unit. Anyone who knows how institutional missions work and how goal setting happens knows that it has to be customized to each unit. The way you choose as a unit or a shop of the University to work together to support and carry that big picture of the imperatives is what we are attempting to accomplish. The goal setting system will be an online pop-up version where, as a unit, you tell us what you are doing around these imperatives and share with us the progress you are making. I know this is already happening because I see examples of it every day. For the over-170 administrators at the University, this is the Triple I Planning System that we piloted last spring that will be “going live” with the start of the fall semester. The idea here is not to add any burden in reporting, but to try to capture the great work that is emerging out of all of our units around the imperatives. In the end, the best planning in a large complicated organization allows ideas to percolate up and, as I said, emerge from the units and blossom in a customized fashion and in a way that is reflective of the strengths in your units, the resources you have, your interests and talents and whatever you have that works to your benefit in each specific unit...in support of the overall big ideas of the institution. For me this is the standard of good planning, good strategy and something that is meaningful in carrying out the calling of being a great public comprehensive university and is defined by the outreach efforts that we undertake.

We have been doing that at Murray State and will continue to do it. There is an old rule when one is an administrator. The first is to do no harm – so I do not want to cause anything to impede the work that has been going on and that work will continue – but I do understand we must figure out ways to more tangibly reward successes we have had around creating community and

building partnerships. This work must continue and we are not letting up on it but I know in finding ways to fund some of these efforts, we must be more vigilant. Some of your units, offices and programs have been recipients of sizable grants from the Office of Regional Stewardship and Outreach to get this work done. Others have had projects funded directly by the University after they have come and made a pitch and we are still going to try to figure out a way to scare up resources for some smaller change grants that many of you may want to do for smaller scale projects around the imperatives...and we will get that work done. Last year we ended up giving money back to Frankfort and those small change grants we wanted to do were sacrificed by virtue of having to send money back to the capitol of the Commonwealth. I tried to talk Vice President Tom Denton out of sending the money back but he insisted it had to happen!

It is the case that the diligence you have shown in this work around the imperatives will continue to be the route to utilize to obtain the margin of extra revenue, other support and help I know many of your shops need from the University. We are going to try to figure out a way as you take on this extra work and have it infused in what you do on a day-to-day basis – which is an add-on, not just with your time, but also with the treasure of the University to help fund that add-on – and give you something tangible as a result of your efforts. I know there has also been a tremendous ramp-up in grant and contract work as another means to take control of your own destiny, and this work is important as well. I applaud these efforts and they are very exciting to see. As you continue to have ideas, are committed to those ideas and have sustainable plans that come from your units that are moving the University forward on the imperatives and undertaking this work, we are committed to trying to find a way to fund these types of initiatives. We will not fund every plan that arises but when there is a plan that is well conceptualized and concrete, is well laid out and has buy-in from the unit and has been costed out, we are going to try to find a way to be responsive to that. In communications from all of you over the course of the semester, I know we have had numerous large-scale, university-wide projects and initiatives that have taken a lot of time. I say this to emphasize that I know the work around these imperatives is an add-on – it is yet something more that we are putting on top of everything else as we respond to this call for outreach as a great national comprehensive university.

The slide that is on the screen before you provides a visual sense of some of the activities that have been taking place. Beyond what is viewable on the slide there are items on top of all these activities that have been necessary around budget management in the current fiscal environment. Faculty and staff have their regular work, the strategic imperatives and the larger university-wide, large-scale initiatives and all of this work is taking place within the context of continuing to give money back to the state and not being able to have optimal access to future funding. This work is tough because just your day jobs – as defined by your job descriptions – provide enough challenges in this type of budgetary environment. I know – I get it. We have taken on a pretty strong agenda for progress and trying to move forward around our strategic imperatives. Again, it is to burnish and refine (not just because of me) – but there is consensus around this country that these imperatives represent what all great regional institutions are called on to do. We work very hard on that which has created for all of us an organizational press that becomes difficult to sustain over time, especially without meaningful adjustments to pay and compensation as we go into our second year. I know you really do appreciate the personal comments shared with you by Board Chair Alan Stout and I personally know from talking to the Board that they are collectively committed to figuring out a way to address this issue this year. We hope increased

enrollment provides the University with the extra revenue needed to address the issue of compensation that would allow an increase to be applied to the base. Increased enrollment will provide the University with the margin needed to do all of this other work as it moves forward.

Because of this background, and all that we have been doing as of late, I know I cannot use today or this particular State of the University speech, to announce yet another round of new programs or four or five new projects for the next year. As I try to take the temperature of the University, it is my impression that we probably need to take a year and, to some degree, pause and catch our breath a bit – organizationally speaking. This is true across all areas of the University – given all that we have done and have been talking about – to allow some time for the improvements we have made together to “settle in” and solidify and really become fully infused into this expanded scope of work we have taken on over the past two or three years. The University has already been about outreach, and this additional outreach push is nothing new, but the approach has really been ratcheted up over the last couple of years around the strategic imperatives. I do think it is probably time – not for me to put slides up here to say “this is what is new to add to the list” – but rather, particularly in this uncertain budgetary environment, to pause for a bit. I do not want to use the word “plateau” because I do not like it, and it tends to mean you can let your guard down. The work that has been taking place around the imperatives in community and partnership building continues, but I do not believe we should complicate this work by trying to throw even more into the hopper at this time.

However, I have not talked too much about the third strategic imperative which, of course, we list first and foremost when we lay out the imperatives – Fostering Excellence. While we are going to pause a bit this year from figuring out new and more things to do, or additional projects to take on, I would like us to use this year or so to give some thoughtful attention and organizational focus to what it means to foster excellence. I want to do this not just as individual members of the University community, but by having you do this work as a member of one or more of the bodies within which you reside at the institution. This could be at the departmental, collegiate, office or vice presidential level – or whatever the case may be. I do hope we take some time to come back and look at this imperative as we take a bit of an interim rest period from saying we are going to undertake a lot more new “stuff” this year.

Murray State is a great national comprehensive university which started with the *U.S. News and World Report* giving the University that distinction nearly 20 years ago – and again we await with some caution to see where the University comes out this year and what gets said in that regard in their 2010 edition – but over time the University’s notoriety has steadily risen and has been added to by a goodly group of third-party organizations and agencies. In this sense, we are already an exemplar of excellence and we know that. In fact, a large number of other colleges and universities around this country seek to achieve the same prominence that Murray State University already has. I think all of us here understand that. However, I do believe and would share with you that I think we have to be very careful – even though we are going to take this pause around these imperatives a bit as far as adding additional ones in – about resting on our laurels too much, particularly around excellence, because if we do so during this time other schools are going to continue striving to move forward given the competitive environment we are in and the overall context in which higher education takes place today. You all are seeing the University of Phoenix commercials on Channel 6 out of Paducah, just like I am, and while these

commercials cost a significant amount of money to run – and I am not sure why they are running these commercials in the Paducah area – I will admit I am concerned about them doing so. In the current environment I simply do not think we can rest on our laurels.

I would like to talk a little bit about what that means and what I hope we can spend this year doing. If you are a returning faculty or professional staff member and are not new, some of you will remember about 15 months ago this University considered budget cuts in the magnitude of over \$2 million. I know this was a difficult time for the campus...but do remember the steps we took then represent one reason we are able to welcome approximately 60 new faculty and staff members today! I know it was a tough time and I had talked at length in our campus budget forums about how Murray State University was right on the cusp of putting itself firmly in the group of those top 10 master's level institutions in this country – even with all of the challenges we have faced since then and with all of the stuff that (in large part) I have vented on since that time, including budgetary issues – but even with all of these challenges we are still in that cusp position and I firmly believe we remain poised to be among the best of this “best group” in the country and perhaps not just “best of the best” but if you look at that group that we are talking about, Murray State could even be at the top of that “top tier.”

I would like to take a moment to show you a few additional slides. Please do not be upset or bothered as you see these slides because they are being shown to make a point. I want you to see where Murray State sits in relative comparison to some other institutions being shown on the charts. Remember, we are talking about the best of the best on this list and just to appear on these bar graphs is an honor due to the work of all of you in this room – our faculty and staff. None of this on the slides is intended to derogate all that we have done to put ourselves in this group. What I have been working on and doing for some time is examining how we as a University look on a whole group or a wider range of federal IPEDS indicators – comparing ourselves to public comprehensives or these master's level institutions of higher education which, on points, have scored at or above Murray State in *U.S. News and World Report* for the past five years, or have beaten us on at least half of the underlying *U.S. News* indicators. I have also pulled in the top three public master's institutions by region for the most recent year if they were not swept up in those other groups.

Let me give you a couple of caveats about this. We will probably – as I continue to keep playing with this – take out a couple schools like what is done on federal ratios – and kick out the smallest and the largest schools – which might cause Mary Washington and California State Long Beach to drop off the list. A special interest school was already kicked out of the group as well. We are taking these aspirational schools, understanding that the grouping is not perfect, and I know we can also question some of the aspects of the validity and usefulness of the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. That is not a new discussion in higher education either, but suffice it to say that magazine has tapped into something which has now become the gold standard of the rankings game – whether we like it or not. The college rankings help *U.S. News and World Report* sell their largest issue every year and is a huge revenue generator. It does – for better or worse – give us a generally accepted standard, especially because MSU is a teaching university as opposed to a full research university and does not have AAU and NSF numbers, or really any other indicators short of just grouping some of the IPEDS information together. Like it or not, *U.S. News and World Report* does that with this kind of aspirational group. The point is

a number of IPEDS indicators were reviewed for purposes of these slides, but four indicators were considered both in terms of input and output variables so you can see where Murray State sits in this group of aspirational peers – just as an example.

The first IPEDS indicator considered was “selectivity,” and going from Mary Washington as most selective to Evergreen as least selective, so you can see where Murray State ranks – only one step above Evergreen. I could deliver a whole other speech on what an enrollment push does around selectivity – but enrollment growth and high quality are not mutually exclusive. The second IPEDS criteria is “six-year graduation rate” and MSU drops to the bottom of the list on this new grouping of aspirational peers, although it ranked strong in Kentucky against other institutions similar to us. If we look at those aspirational institutions, we should be proud of what we have done but we have others in our league that also have these challenges and do quite well. The third indicator is “student services expenses” which is one of the input variables. MSU does look quite good, in part because we have the residential college system and do a lot in terms of retention initiatives and strong work in enrollment and things of that nature. The fourth IPEDS indicator is “average 9-month faculty salaries” and tells us we have work to do and that work is understood among these aspirational institutions.

Again, my point here – the one thing I am positive of – is that things cannot and will not remain static. If we do not continue to press ourselves in small ways across every corner of the campus in a fashion customized – for whatever your operational units can do and can take on and sustain in a way that personally emerges from each of you and the shops you are working in as part of the collective body where you labor – we are going to have continuing trouble staying within and moving forward in that aspirational peer group.

I know we are all at different places in our units with regard to our strengths at any given point – and moving forward depends on our level of resources, including staffing, resources, equipment needs that are being budgeted for, university commitments already made and the typical range of crises that can hit a department at any time. I understand this, but that is why there is not one type of fix but institutionally; so you look at what you can do in excellence and what kind of conversation we can start around this imperative. I really believe if we do not start pushing with some vigilance in ways large and small to keep edging up into that group of aspirational peers, we are going to start sliding down in the other direction. It is going to happen subtly and will happen one IPEDS indicator at a time, one variable at a time, and before you know it, if we let our guard down, we are not going to see our name on that aspirational slide as other universities would emulate us, just as we have used some of the institutions you have seen here. If we do not keep up efforts around excellence, what I do worry is we are going to slide into a group of schools – and we know which schools those are and we can probably even name a few of them – where a majority of them are never heard from on the national stage or viewed on these “best of the best” lists...because there is a *reason* why we do not hear about those institutions in national conversations.

We cannot let everything you have accomplished slide one step at a time out of that group – away from these aspirational peers and still be able to accomplish what we want to be able to do for our students in the Commonwealth. And, yes, it will take money as I have alluded to earlier if we are going to court ourselves among the “best of the best” group, it is going to take more

and better sources of funding – money applied in careful and well thought out and strategic ways – in areas, again, where opportunities exist, where a plan could be crafted up and we can help fund an opportunity. We also need stable state support and rational tuition proposals as we move forward to continue this work. I understand that – I get it – and, trust me, we are striving mightily to ensure this is the case going forward. Know that additionally we are trying to do a number of important things campus-wide which I think are anticipatory events or pre-conditions as we start convening a new conversation about excellence – things that need to happen on this campus to provide better supports, props, foundations and structures for all of you within the University organizationally for us – because there are hundreds of separate offices, departments and entities and these supports are necessary to collectively keep us always moving forward.

As I near the end of this speech, I want to talk about a few of those things today if you will permit me just a bit more time – and you have been very kind with your time and I thank you for it. Our *New Library Task Force* continues its work in anticipation of the 2010 legislative session to demonstrate the need and create a shared vision for a state-of-the-art 21st century academic Library. This is the core facility of any outstanding university around the world. There are materials in front of each of you which speak to this effort. And, by the way, you have not even seen the amazing statistics on Library usage this past year that Interim Dean Adam Murray shared with his Library faculty and staff this week. Considering this usage is taking place in a substandard facility, it is amazing and even more so to me creates and bespeaks the case for a new Library facility. We have to figure out a way, considering our other needs, to keep pushing and prodding on that initiative because it will be tied to the excellence that we want in order to continue to grow.

You have not heard much about this next item because we have been fairly quiet about it this summer from an implementation standpoint, but the University, as we are here today, is a wired or should I say, a wireless campus. You can now go virtually into any major building on campus and have the wireless capability and Linda Miller tells me we are close – although we are not quite there yet – to having that wireless capability across the green space of the University as well. Again, if we are going to be a truly excellent institution, we must do some of these things so I applaud Linda, as our Chief Information Officer, and her IT/IS staffers for taking on this installation. And I know Bob Jackson also appreciates our Racerthon folks, our students particularly, who worked in the Office of Development to help us raise a large portion of the money utilized for this initiative through the Parent Fund.

We are also trying to respond to your other technological needs to do this type of work on the campus, wherever they may exist and looking at all possible pots of money that are available, and this will include federal stimulus funding. You cannot be world class for the 21st Century if you are working on equipment and technology that is from the 20th Century. This is a “no brainer” so I pledge to you to continue to strive to figure out how we can assist in this area if it is an issue for you, particularly in some of the fields that we have represented on the academic side of the house.

At this point, I do have to do another little shout out and that would be to some folks – and I think they are in the room – who have helped the University secure its first federal non-earmark stimulus funding under a competitive grant. This grant was secured by Professors Kevin Revell,

Edie Banner and Ricky Cox in the Department of Chemistry, who, again on this grant basis, gave us our first taste of federal stimulus funding. They received \$200,000 in National Science Foundation funding to be used to purchase a spectrometer. Dean Steve Cobb, again trying to work with them as I have told our Deans and Chairs we are going to do, matched the stimulus funding with \$50,000 for this purchase. Congratulations to these professors and please give them a round of applause. We are willing to commit just as Steve did – and as I have charged our administrators to do – where these opportunities exist.

This fall, many of you in this room will be invited to the launch event during Homecoming weekend where we will start the public phase of our long-awaited Comprehensive Campaign. I cannot really let out too many details yet because we are going to share those as part of a pre-launch event for University leadership in September but, as many of you know, we were primed to do this a year ago until plans were derailed by what some have called the “econoclipse” of last September and what occurred with the economy at that time. Over this past year we have continued to talk heavily with our donor base, specifically at length with our major givers, and we know it is time to come back and start moving our aggressive fundraising campaign forward. As we do this it is going to allow us, again, to better control our fiscal destiny in much more powerful ways than we have been able to do before – just like I am commending you all to go out and try to find the money. We must carry this same message at the University and not just whine and cry about Frankfort and Washington, but take control of the situation and try to move the ball forward ourselves.

Again, congratulations once more to the College of Humanities and Fine Arts because all of you as employees of the University are doing such great things in giving, which is the mark that makes this University such a wonderful place.

To better symbolize and represent a new drive for Fostering Excellence, we have also undertaken, as you have seen, a large-scale marketing project to rebrand the University and you are seeing today some of the more tangible outcomes of that effort: Murray State University: Your World to Explore. Part of this rebranding is a new mark or logo which we will be rolling out. There will be a wholesale web redesign that will follow on from this during the fall semester. I guarantee you that part of excellence is the *perception* of excellence and this rebranding is crucial to cementing that image in a credible way with all of our external constituencies. You have seen Jim Carter, Catherine Sivills and Bonnie Higginson modeling the new shirts today, you have the new logo in your “goodie” bags and will start to see even more and more as this brand rollout continues.

Those of us particularly who are administrative staffers have a special responsibility on our campuses to do all we can to make sure we provide a work environment for everyone of you at the University who are bringing us the success we enjoy today and which we will achieve even more of in the future. Many of you know that during the summer we had some recognition come our way, although it may have slipped by some of you a bit unnoticed. Murray State, indeed, has been designated one of the 2009 “Great Colleges to Work For” by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for large schools. We were cited in nine categories, really blowing away other Kentucky competition, although ECU had two categories of citing, but Murray State received top distinction in areas such as “Perception and Confidence in Fair Treatment,” “Internal

Communication,” “Professional and Career Development Programs,” “Healthy Faculty-Administration Relations,” and “Collaborative Governance.” You cannot have excellence in any organization where people do not feel like they are valued, where they do not have some sense of fair treatment and where they have an opportunity to shape and impact the place where their work is being done. If this does not take place you do not get to excellence – it is a precondition that must be there. I know we have more work to do in this area and we will. For those of you willing to share in those efforts, this can be heavy lifting in overcoming old perceptions and attitudes or ways of getting things done. If you are willing to work on that heavy lifting we can continue to create a culture of collaboration and mutual support. When that exists in an organization there is a rising tide that lifts all boats.

As Ronda was probably ready to say ten minutes ago, and as she often tells me, “Wrap it up!” As we go through the year I look forward to establishing venues with all of you where we can start convening this conversation in a more direct fashion about how we better pursue certainly all of our initiatives, but particularly have a special focus on excellence as we move forward. Again, I do not want to let up on our great outreach efforts and I want to continue the work currently taking place. Please do not leave here today thinking that was part of the message or when I say “breathing room” think, “Wow, now I can quit that stuff.” That is not the case and we actually want these ideas institutionalized. As we do that, I do think we start to build dialogue over the course of the year about what we can do in pushing on excellence particularly. I am coming up on almost three years at the University myself – and I know some of you think it is more like 30 years – but as three years come I am going to allow for a little breathing room myself. I feel like I am just starting to get a little organizational bandwidth and I want to use this year to start connecting in better and more direct ways with these individual programs, offices, projects, people, shops and units to start engaging that conversation. I actually really do look forward to maybe getting some time to start doing that in better ways and directly with all of you, particularly as we use this year without “adding on” – to instead start talking about what we do over the next two to five years to push forward on the imperative of fostering excellence.

This speech will be posted sometime next week to my webpage and I want to thank you again for your very kind attention here today. I know my speech went on a little longer – which is okay because as you know as professors in prepping your lectures, you cannot really cut out anything that is riveting, so you just talk faster. That is how it works! You have been very kind in your attention throughout the room for what went on a little longer than I intended. It really is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to work with so many of you great scholars, researchers, teachers, folks dedicated to public service, staff members who support this work in critical ways...and I cannot think of a better place to be or a better community to be engaged in these efforts with. Thank you so much and have a great 2009-10.