

Fall Address – 2011

Good afternoon. I would like to welcome everyone to the fall address, and to the new academic year. President Bowman, Provost Everts, faculty, staff, and students, I want to thank you all for the remarkable welcome that I have felt since arriving here at the end of June. The Redbird spirit has come through loud and clear, and I am delighted to have joined this community. I am honored that you have chosen me to serve as dean of the largest college at ISU, and I am determined to live up to your expectations.

I especially want to extend a welcome to our new faculty. We will have an opportunity to meet you in a few minutes, and I'm looking forward to my meetings with each of you individually. This is one of the most exciting times of your lives, as you embark on a fresh career. The academic environment is familiar enough, but you have a new role in a new university. We want you to know that your success is one of our most important goals, and we will do everything in our power to make you feel welcome, and to help you flourish in your new position.

I want to take a moment to recognize several people, and mention some changes in the college. We will meet our new faculty in a few minutes, but I want to take this time to introduce two new chairs in the college. Bruce Burningham in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, and Scott Jordan in Psychology, served as acting chairs of their respective departments last year, and both have been appointed as permanent chairs. I appreciate your service very much, and am looking forward to working with you this year. We are currently conducting four chair searches for next year, in Communication Sciences and Disorders, Economics, Philosophy, and the School of Social Work.

One of the things that has made my own transition to ISU very enjoyable, and easier than it might have been, is the outstanding staff in the college office. I have the privilege of working with an outstanding set of associate deans. Sally Parry is Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Affairs, and is Director of General Education; Dagmar Budikova just recently assumed the position of Associate Dean for Personnel, Budget, and Planning; and Joe Blaney accepted an appointment as Interim Associate Dean for Research, Facilities, and Technology. Debbie fox is the Assistant Dean for External Relations, and has been instrumental in my being able to meet a number of alumni around the state. Administrative Aide Peggy Haycraft and Office Specialist Elizabeth Shoemaker perform a wide variety of tasks that keep the college office running smoothly. Mary Crawford is our development officer, and together we will try to increase charitable giving to the college. Maria Pao is the college Ombudsperson.

Sandi Krumtinger has served the college for 23 years, as budget officer, office manager, and as the dean's personal assistant. In most universities, it takes at least two people to do that combination of jobs. Most of you have known her far longer than I, so I don't need to tell you that she manages the college's \$36M budget with remarkable skill. I have seen the respect that chairs and directors, and their lead staff, have for her. She has

been the institutional memory for the college, working with seven deans during her tenure. I am personally grateful to Sandi for taking the lead in my transition to the dean's office, and to the university and community. She has given simply outstanding service in every facet of her job, and her leaving will leave a big whole in the college. I am grateful to the Provost and President for allowing us to hire the new person in that position before Sandi leaves, to allow as much of Sandi's wisdom and experience as possible to pass to that new employee. There will be an open house to honor Sandi's years of service on November 11, from 3:30-5:30 P.M., in the Founders' Suite.

Although the college has been in transition, it has hardly stopped growing and changing. Some new developments worth mentioning are the movement of the Daily Vidette into the college, housed in the School of Communication. FC2, an avant garde publisher, is returning from Texas to the Publications Unit of our English department. Chris Breu and Jessica Wozniak, of the English department, were awarded Fulbrights this year. Several departments in the college involved in teacher education are preparing for next year's NCATE accreditation review. Next year, ISU will offer its first degree program overseas, a masters degree in Communication, administered by our School of Communication, and offered at Dong-Ah Institute of Media Studies, in Seoul, Korea. Finally, researchers in the college brought in \$7.5M in grants in the last fiscal year. These are just a few of the recent developments in the college; there will be many more to discuss in the spring.

Any time there is a change in leadership at any level: a new department chair, dean, provost, or president, there is understandable anxiety about the direction that the institution will take. I would like to spend my time this afternoon telling you a little about some directions that I see for the College's growth.

At the time of my interview in the spring, I was asked about my vision for the college. I said at the time that I thought it would be presumptuous of me, only having been on campus for 24 hours, to lay out a grand vision for the college's future. Indeed, I think it's somewhat presumptuous even now, after two months on the job. Consequently, my response last spring was necessarily broad. I said that I wanted ISU to be a place where faculty, staff, and students knew that this is where they can do their best work, and further, that this was a place where they knew their best work was expected of them. The implications of this statement have begun to take shape for me, and will continue to do so in the coming months.

If we are to expect people's best work, and if they are to perceive that their best work is possible here, then that places certain obligations on us to ensure that these goals can be met. It is the responsibility of the college and the departments to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to enable the best possible teaching and scholarship. Over the last few years, the size of start-up packages for incoming faculty has grown, allowing us to compete for the best new scholars, and providing the kind of support that they need to thrive. In addition, the college several years ago instituted a mentoring program, the Faculty Professional Development Series. This program includes presentations and discussion focusing on the first year experience, enhancing scholarly productivity, faculty

evaluation, and promotion and tenure policies, among other important topics. I encourage all new faculty to take advantage of this program, and also to tell us if there are additional matters that would be helpful for us to address. As I said before, your success is one of our primary concerns, and my door is always open to discuss the role that the college can play in that success.

I have said before that I believe that in these times in which we're unable to recruit new faculty at the rate we would like, it becomes more important than ever that we nurture the faculty and staff we have, at all ranks. While there has been mentoring activity for new faculty in the college for several years, and while that will continue, I think it is important that we realize that the need for support and guidance does not end with the achievement of tenure. We in the college office are therefore working to create development programs for post-tenure faculty, addressing such topics as getting to full professor, leading interdisciplinary research teams, and similar issues that mid-career faculty may face. Of course we anticipate that post-tenure faculty will continue to make innovative contributions in their teaching and scholarship, and not to do so should not be seen as acceptable. Consequently, it's important that the college not leave associate professors (who still have most of their careers ahead of them) adrift, under the mistaken belief that the achievement of tenure confers complete knowledge of the university and its policies, opportunities, and expectations. If our expectations of excellence continue, so must our support.

Finally, having been a department chair myself for 10 years, I recognize the need for mentoring for this group as well, particularly those who are new to the role. I have given this considerable thought, having myself experienced numerous chair-mentoring programs and activities, some very effective, and some frankly not effective at all. Department chair is one of the most critical, and difficult, positions in the university, and I would like to develop a program for helping chairs be as effective in the leadership of their departments as possible. We will have four new chairs or directors in the college next year, and will begin a mentoring program for them a year from now.

It is hard to imagine an address such as this that doesn't eventually come around to finances and fundraising. As you know, under the leadership of President Bowman, ISU is not facing the dire financial circumstances faced by most other universities, including those in our own state. Some universities in Illinois are facing drops in enrollment so severe that residence halls are being closed. Faculty on some campuses are facing furloughs. Here, we have seen salary increases and an increase in operating budgets. These increases are modest, to be sure, but in today's higher education climate, we are doing remarkably well. We are welcoming 12 new faculty colleagues this year, whom you'll meet presently. This year, we are recruiting for 18 positions. So the university continues to support the college in its drive to build an exceptional faculty. I can't tell you how much I appreciate the support that the President and Provost have given us this year, and we are eager to begin the recruitment process in earnest. Nevertheless, as generous as the administration has been to the college, we have to expect that state support for public education will continue to decline, and we, like nearly every state university in the country, will struggle to maintain the level of staffing that we have

now. We recognize, therefore, that we must be aggressive in seeking other sources of revenue.

One such source, of course, is external funding for research and scholarly activity. Levels of this funding have been holding fairly steady over the last several years. The number of successful proposals in the college was 63 in FY10, and 62 in FY11. The amount of funding was nearly identical as well (slightly more \$7.5M in each year). I am hopeful that the mentoring programs in the college and in individual departments will help these numbers rise. The guidance of senior colleagues is an important factor in building a culture of seeking external support for research. We can increase these numbers by aggressively recruiting the most promising young scholars, and providing the help that they need as they build their research programs.

The second source of additional revenue comes from alumni and friends of the college. As I have attended events in Chicago, Peoria, Indianapolis, and of course right here in Bloomington-Normal, I have been struck by the tremendous loyalty of our alumni. From those only recently graduated to those dating back decades, and coming from all walks of life, our alumni cherish their time in the college, and want to do what they can to make it even stronger. Even in this difficult economy, our alumni and friends continue to show their commitment to the college. In the last fiscal year, both the number of individual donors to the college and the funds they provided showed an increase over the previous year. Last year the college received nearly \$1.8M in gifts and bequests, up 45% from the year before. The number of donors rose by 219, to 4,261, a 5.4% increase. For this growth, we are grateful to our committed and generous alumni, and also to Mary Crawford, the college's development officer, for her tireless efforts on our behalf.

Outreach and fundraising are activities for which all of us can take some responsibility. I do not mean by this that every faculty member should be going door-to-door cultivating donors. Pre-tenure faculty in particular have far more pressing and immediate responsibilities. I mean simply that each one of us recognizes the importance of the arts and sciences, and should understand where we, as individual scholars, fit in the arts and sciences picture. To the extent that each of us is able to convey the importance of the arts and sciences to our various constituencies – students, other units in the university, the community, and to alumni and friends of the university – we help in the attempt to raise more support for our efforts.

In this vein, I want to stress that as grateful as we are for the monetary contributions that our alumni provide, we recognize that their loyalty and commitment to the college help us in other ways as well. They are enthusiastic boosters for ISU, encouraging prospective students to consider us carefully in their college decisions. Many are also in positions to provide opportunities for our students, in the forms of internships and co-curricular experiences. There are many ways of contributing to the college, and I will continue to meet with alumni and friends locally, regionally, and nationally, to draw on their expertise and their dedication to our college.

As a state university, we are well aware that our primary obligation is the education of Illinois residents. However, we must realize today that although our obligation may be regional, the education that we provide must be much farther reaching. I would like to work with the departments and with entities outside the university to create more internships and co-curricular opportunities for our students. The more opportunities we give our students to apply their learning outside the university, the better we serve them. I have spoken with Marissa McCord in Research and Sponsored Programs about the college's participation in the Washington Internship Program ISU has established. Students from a variety of majors may be matched with opportunities directly related to their course of study. At least one college at ISU has participated in this program, creating \$5,000 scholarships to assist students taking advantage of this opportunity. I would like our college, working with the departments, to create similar scholarships, to allow our students to participate in this outstanding program.

The world today requires that our educational opportunities not only look beyond the state line, but indeed far beyond our nation's borders. Students today are at a tremendous advantage if their college experience includes an international component, both in terms of their future employment and simply in terms of the depth of their education. Study Abroad programs, international visitors, and the internationalization of courses all provide students with perspectives that can truly be life changing. Only 2.6 percent of ISU students avail themselves of Study Abroad opportunities currently offered by the university, and I would like to see a dramatic increase in this number. We must first identify what barriers might exist to students' participation. If students find that the curricular demands of their major are prohibitive of studying abroad, then we should work with departments to ensure that students are able to study in a foreign country without unduly delaying the completion of their degree requirements. It's certainly understandable in today's economy that students and their families find that studying abroad, even for a short period, is simply more than they are able to afford. In that case, I would like to see the college provide assistance to those students who want to take advantage of international opportunities but are unable to do so for financial reasons. One of my highest priorities for fundraising will be for support for the kinds of external activities that I have mentioned. We believe it is important for students to have opportunities for growth beyond the campus, whether in Normal, Chicago, Washington, D.C., or Paris. The college will do everything in its power to assist students in taking advantage of these opportunities.

We in the arts and sciences often talk about being the heart and soul of the university. This is not because we are the largest college, or the one responsible for much of general education. It is because the arts and sciences address the fundamental questions of higher education, the nature of our world and our humanity. Unfortunately, we often feel that we are in the position of having to defend the relevance of an arts and sciences education. Especially in difficult economic times, we feel that the nature of our work is underappreciated outside the university. As students and their families face the expense of a university education, they may favor fields that provide an apparent path from the classroom to a well-paying career, turning away from the integrated intellectual pursuit that characterizes the arts and sciences. We consider this thinking to be

shortsighted, and we recognize very practical flaws in it: that an arts and sciences education provides students with intellectual skills and a breadth of training that prepares them for jobs in areas that may be far removed from their majors; that we are educating students today who in 20 years will hold jobs that we have not even imagined yet. Nevertheless, this is an attitude that we face, and we should be prepared to address it. The situation is not fully beyond our control. As I mentioned before, we could do a better job, as individuals, as departments, and as a college, at telling our stories outside our small circle of colleagues and to the larger community, within the university and beyond. Any one of us should be able to describe, succinctly and for a lay audience, what we do and why they should care. Not all scholarly work is applied or translational, but even the most basic research in chemistry or psychology or literature can be linked to people's lives, and we should be able to make clear what that link is in our own work. *We* see the relevance of our work beyond the "laboratory," whatever form that may take in our particular discipline. If we are to gain the support we believe we deserve, from the community, from legislators, from those with control or influence over resources that we desire, we need to be able to tell our story in a convincing way. I would urge each faculty member to think about how to describe his or her work in a way that will further understanding of the role that the arts and sciences play in our world today. In the college office, we are talking about how we might create college-wide programs that will take the work that we do to the communities of which we are a part. We will be talking to department chairs and faculty as these programs begin to take shape. The rewards that we reap from such activity will come in the form of increased support of the community and our alumni, and all the benefits that come with that support.

I believe this is a very exciting time in the college. We have a very talented faculty and staff. With the recruitment of 30 new faculty over a two-year period, we have an opportunity that can truly be transformative. The expectations are high, and the work is hard, but the rewards, to faculty and staff, and especially to our students, are great. Together, we can make this a college of arts and sciences that is envied by universities everywhere.