

Good afternoon, Welcome to the College of Arts and Sciences Fall 2021 address and awards ceremony. As the Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I typically open the Fall address by welcoming each of you back to an academic year. That takes on special poignancy this year as we are not only excited to start a new academic year, but so many of us have an appreciation for being able to be back on campus, this feels new in a new way. We know the teaching we do here at ISU is a relational endeavor, built on individualized attention, mentoring of our students, and providing so much more than mere instruction. I have heard so many stories from faculty who have said it is so good to be back in the classroom and recount numerous stories of their students who express their appreciation. And although we can't be complacent in that we are still in the midst of a pandemic, I am encouraged by the very positive numbers on our COVID dashboard that indicates the majority of us are committed to being responsible and safe in fulfilling our mission of gladly we learn and gladly we teach.

As it appears we have been able to successfully and safely open this semester, I am filled with gratitude. If we have learned anything from the past 18 months, I hope it is to be more mindful of what we can be grateful for. I looked back to the virtual fall Dean's address I gave last year in 2020 when we had moved to remote learning. I closed by remarking on academic life in a pandemic as "We have certainly been humbled by these events, but humility can be one of life's great teachers. We have all the potential to rise from this stronger, more compassionate, and more hopeful for a bright future." One year later, I do think that sentiment is being fulfilled. I do see that we have learned a lot from this experience and much of the learning will push us forward in ways we couldn't have imagined, pre-pandemic. Perhaps of all, I am most grateful for our faculty

and staff who despite the challenges of moving to a largely remote delivery which was quite new for ISU, rose to the challenge because you take your responsibility to gladly learn and teach as personal as well as professional mission. I continue to be in awe of what you did.

I also am quick to acknowledge that I am indebted every day to the expertise and collaborative spirit of the College of Arts and Sciences staff.

First I would like to thank Assistant Dean Debbie Fox for her work to organize this event and so many of our events so the College of Arts and Sciences good work can reach our communities.

I also want to introduce the new face in the College office. Rocio Rivadeneyra is the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Success as she replaced Sally Parry at her well-deserved retirement. When we launched the search to refill this position, we also took the opportunity to revise the position description in two significant ways. The position title was revised from “Student Affairs” to “Student Success” as we realize the needs of our students require our mission moving forward to be more proactively engaged with our departments to partner with students for their success. We also revised the job description to embed a culturally responsive lens to all that is required in the position. These two important adjustments in the job description will not necessarily add new duties but orient a proactive, integrated lens for how we do what we do.

I am so grateful that Tony Crubaugh has been willing to continue service as the Acting Associate Dean for Personnel, Budget, and Planning, especially with challenging budget environments. Joe Blaney continues as the Associate Dean for Research, Facilities, and Technology. As we made our way through COVID

responses and the return to campus and as we make our way through new initiatives for the College, Joe has been an advocate for CAS on all of the front lines. Of course, to know our Business Manager, Carrie Wieburg is to stand in admiration for how she manages the budget for not only CAS, but for how she is a mentor to all our department's staff. I hope many of you are now finally having a chance to meet our "new" administrative aide, Denice Masters who we hired in early summer of 2020 in the midst of the pandemic. Denice hit the ground running and is one of the most pleasant people you will meet. And please join me in welcoming Jamie Rucker who just joined the College Staff 3 days ago and who will be working part time in the front office with Denice. Stop in and introduce yourself if you are in STV. We are certain that Mike Regilio, the Director of CAS-IT, wears or at least deserves a cape for the heroic measures he and his IT staff did and continues to do leading a team that assists faculty and staff with technology needs as we have passaged these historic times. Our Director of Development, Kate Childs works tirelessly and enthusiastically to promote the impressive story of the College of Arts and Sciences. I am proud to report that CAS is at 40% to our fund goal before the end of the first quarter is even upon us. Thank you Kate. I am pleased to work with this dedicated group of individuals whose commitment to the success of our students and faculty will continue to be critical to our growth as a College.

As you have returned to the campus, perhaps you have noticed our facilities were being transformed. Academic Enhancement Fee funding resulted in renovations in the Stevenson 250 Suite where room G now boasts collaborative technologies, new furniture, and overall aesthetics. Renovations are now underway for Room E and we in the college are committed to using AEF funds to make sure the entire

suite is a facility suitable to teach all ISU freshman English Composition. Across the quad, a largely unused computer lab in Schroeder 230 has been turned into a social and collaborative meeting space serving students from our departments of History, Politics and Government, and Sociology/Anthropology in addition to our cross-university friends from the Department of Criminal Justice Sciences. Stick your head into the Schroeder Student Commons and you will likely see our majors enjoying comfortable charging stations, collaborative workstations, a kitchenette, and even free coffee and tea.

Classrooms in Stevenson and Fell Hall have new carpeting, paint, technology, and in many cases new ceilings. Science labs and instrumentation, speech pathology and audiology equipment, student success spaces, and student media facilities have seen major upgrades as well.

In many ways we say “we are back” referring to our on-campus presence, but in a real sense, the momentum of the College of Arts and Sciences never slowed down as we negotiated our way through the pandemic. The College has developed a list of initiatives for the coming year, which fall under 4 topics of Student Success, Faculty Success, Program Development, and Diversity and Inclusion efforts. I have shared this list with the CAS Council of Chairs and have presented this to the College Council. I have left handouts in the back with the list of initiatives and invite your participation with me. I would like to address some of the top initiatives which I see of great importance.

Three of these areas including student success, faculty success and increasing diversity and inclusion are manifest in the College’s Faculty and Staff Professional Development series organized by the GROWTH Change team. The brochure has

been distributed in an all-College email, hard copies are being distributed to departments, and this is listed on our website. The GROWTH Change team has arranged for four sessions throughout the year. Three address improving student success, particularly for students from underrepresented groups and one is targeted to faculty success for BIPOC faculty members. All sessions will be held early afternoons on Fridays and will be available virtually through Zoom to maximize access for people. My thanks go to the Growth team of Suejung Han, Byron Craig, Reecia Orzeck, Gina Hunter, and Bekky Darner with help from Mayuko Nakamura and Steve Travers.

An important student success initiative is to organize a career development program primarily directed to students in the humanities and social sciences disciplines. Students from the liberal arts disciplines have the broad spectrum of knowledge and skills to be adaptable to a wide range of careers. Liberally educated students can think critically, communicate in both oral and written form, work in interdisciplinary and diverse teams, analyze problems with both quantitative and qualitative methods, and problem solve through reasoning. This career development program will be designed for students who are enrolled in a major without a direct linear path to a career. The career development program will have two primary objectives including:

- Advising students on adding strategic, intentional experiences such as co-curricular clubs and activities, internships, minors, a language proficiency, or certificates to their major academic discipline to expand their experiences that are relevant to a career
- Advising students how to identify and promote the breadth of their relevant experiences on resumes and in job interviews

Given the events from the recent years demanding social reckoning with oppression and privilege and given the hardship for learning our students have experienced over the past 18 months, the College will be developing a Student Advisory Council which will be parallel to the College Council. This needed addition will allow students to have a voice in how their learning environments meet their needs and for how faculty, curricula and academic content are inclusive. We need to listen to students regarding whether they can “see” themselves here and how we can acknowledge their identity in both academic and personal developmental ways. In addition to the development of a Student Advisory Committee, we plan to hold open student listening forums each semester.

The College and several departments will also be embarking on exciting program development initiatives. We are awaiting the decision from IBHE on engineering but once that is approved, several CAS departments including Math, Physics, Chemistry, and even COM and English will be updating curricula and needing to expand labs and hiring to respond to the heightened demand. CAS is involved now with COB, CAST, and the Provost’s Office to explore the development of a data science major. There is intense demand for graduates who can manage big data. We are also exploring other cross-disciplinary opportunities across departments and colleges. The world’s problems are complex and siloed expertise no longer provides for adequate responses. We need students who are educated to think in integrative ways from many perspectives to synthesize knowledge to tackle better solutions.

Several departments are or will be exploring accelerated master's degree programs and intentional online programs, particularly at the graduate level. A couple of excellent examples of accelerated master's degree programs are History and Anthropology and some very exciting online programs are the newly developing master's in actuarial sciences and an MA/MS option in English Education that is embedded in a social justice pedagogical perspective. Several departments are also looking at developing certificate or micro-credentialing programs.

In addition to curricular initiatives, the Provost has talked about raising the research profile of the university and of our excellent faculty. We have always been proud of our teacher/scholar model and our accomplishments, but we may also be indicted for being too humble. As the Provost desires to raise the research profile and productivity, CAS can boast of strength in this area. For FY22, the College of Arts and Sciences is funding ten (10) New Faculty Initiative Grants, eight (8) Pre-Tenure Faculty Initiative Grants which have been increased from \$3500 each to \$5000 each, and nineteen (19) Faculty Research Awards which have been increased from \$5,000 to \$7000 each. This constitutes a \$208,000 institutional investment in research across all three areas of the college. Notably, the University Research Grants Program has funded all meritorious proposals for the fourth year in a row and all proposals from *the humanities* for the fifth year in a row. We are thankful to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies for their commitment to our scholars in the College of Arts and Sciences.

We are particularly pleased to see the diverse sources of funding our faculty are earning. In the humanities, I would point to Dr. Paul Ugor of the Department of

English winning a prestigious National Humanities Center Fellowship. Also, from the English Department, I note that Dr. Duriel Harris has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the Amazon Literary Partnership to support her work on behalf of the prestigious journal, *Obsidian*. In the social sciences, Dr. Karla Doepke from the Department of Psychology brought in over \$400,000 in the support of The Autism Place. Dr. Doris Houston from Social Work and the Office of the President brought in over \$100,000 from the Department of Children and Family Services for the Permanency Enhancement Project for youth in youth in the child welfare system. Finally, we are very pleased for second year faculty member from the Department of Physics, Dr. Mahua Biswas, for receiving a National Science Foundation Major Research Instrumentation grant of over \$400,000.

The work of these and all our active scholars should be a point of pride for all of us.

There are two major developments that are happening at the University level that faculty and staff in CAS will have a critical stake in. The University is in the process of reviewing and revising the general education program. We have strong representation on the committees and there will be several feedback sessions for faculty to respond to proposed revisions. Everyone in CAS should be engaged in the process given that the majority of general education flows from CAS.

One exciting movement forward is that the Provost has launched the Dean's Search process. I invite you to be engaged in this process when candidates come

to campus. This will be an important decision and your input is critical for the leadership of the largest college, indeed the heart and soul of the University.

It seems to be cliché to say that we live in challenging times. As I speak of all of the wonderful things going on in the College of Arts and Sciences, and as we continue to celebrate faculty winning awards today and our bright students receiving scholarships, I find that though challenging times, I also see hopeful days ahead.