

College of Arts and Sciences

Fall Address – 2012

Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to welcome everyone to the fall address, and to the new academic year. I have now been here a little over a year, and the atmosphere that attracted me to the University in the first place, and the atmosphere that made my transition into the dean's office so smooth, remains. Many of you told me from the beginning that ISU provided a very collegial and collaborative environment, and I have seen little to dispel that image.

I especially want to welcome our new faculty, whom we will meet shortly. I have enjoyed my individual conversations with some of you already, and I'm looking forward to joining the rest of you in the next couple of weeks. This is one of the most exciting times of your lives, and it's clear from our discussions that you recognize this very well. Your success is one of our most important goals, and we will do everything we can to make you feel welcome, and to help you flourish in your new career.

There have been several changes in the College this year, and I would like to take a minute to recognize several new department chairs. Ann Beck and Diane Zosky served as interim chairs of Communication Sciences and Disorders and the School of Social Work, respectively, and began their terms as permanent chairs this year. We also have two chairs new to the University, Tom Buller in Philosophy, and David Cleeton in Economics. In addition, Jim Skibo is serving as the Interim Chair of English this year, as the department begins a search for new chair to begin in July.

I also want to recognize the staff in the College office. I have the privilege of working with an outstanding group of people, who possess tremendous knowledge of the College of Arts and Sciences, and are committed to its mission. Sally Parry is the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Affairs; Dagmar Budikova is Associate Dean for Personnel, Budget, and Planning; and Joe Blaney is Associate Dean for Research, Facilities, and Technology, after having served in that capacity on an interim basis until this past July. Debbie Fox is the Assistant Dean for External relations, and is responsible for College events. She also publishes CASNews weekly, and assists with the organization of several advisory boards in the College. Carrie Wieburg assumed the position of Business/Administrative Associate, managing the budget and serving as the Dean's assistant. She has been in the position almost a year, and we could hardly ask for a better person in the role. Peggy Haycraft is our Administrative Aide, and helps with the smooth running of the College office. Mary Crawford is our Director of Development, and works tirelessly around the country with alumni to increase private giving. This is a 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.

Just as the University remains on solid footing, so too is the College of Arts and Sciences in excellent health. Our enrollment remains strong. We have 883 new freshmen in the

College, compared to 905 a year ago. This is in line with the University's enrollment target for the year, as we, like the University as a whole, are maintaining strong enrollment of excellent students. The diversity of the College student population increased slightly, enrolling 99 more students from underrepresented groups than a year ago. I think it is encouraging that, although we are likely to become increasingly tuition driven, ISU is resisting any temptation to admit more students than we can educate successfully, just because we want the money. The quality of our students continues to rise, and we will continue to provide them with an outstanding educational experience.

We welcome 19 new faculty members to the College, and are preparing to recruit for 14 more positions this year. Given the uncertainty of the pension system in the state, retirements are occurring at a faster rate than in past years, so we hope we are able to recruit at a rate that keeps us moving forward. As I have spoken with our newest colleagues, and even when I met them during interviews last year, I was impressed by the quality of their work, and their understanding of and commitment to the balance of leading scholarship and excellent teaching expected of faculty at ISU.

These new colleagues are joining a collegial, and highly productive, faculty. Last year, College faculty published 18 books and monographs, 539 journal articles and book chapters, and made 778 conference presentations, invited talks, and panel discussions. Grant activity showed an impressive increase over the previous year. In FY 11, faculty in the College had 76 proposals funded; in FY 12, that number rose to 96. Awards received totaled over \$8.7M, making this past year the best in this regard in the College's history.

Even in this difficult economic climate, private giving also remains strong. With Mary, I visited this summer with alumni in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago. I continue to be very impressed by the dedication of our graduates to ISU, and the particular programs from which they graduated. Giving in the past fiscal year totaled over \$2.5M, higher than the year before. On the other hand, the number of donors is down somewhat this year. So, while our benefactors have been unusually generous, it is important that we work to increase our donor base. We have been talking in the College office about how we might effect such an increase, focusing on younger alumni as well as established donors. Any gift to the College is a further investment in our students. This year, the Mock Trial Team, the Forensics Squad, and the Solar Car Project all brought national attention to ISU. These are just three such activities that reflect well on the University, but require private support in order to flourish. We will continue to work to bring greater support for all of the projects that enhance our students' educational experience at ISU.

I have now had a little more than a year in the College, and although things don't always move as rapidly as we would like at universities, we have been able to make progress on several initiatives. Last year at this time, I discussed the College's desire to increase opportunities outside the campus walls, through, for example, internships and study abroad. This past year, sharing costs with the departments, we were able to assist three students in participating in the Washington DC Internship Program, and we hope to send at least that many to the program next summer. I have discussed with the College's

Community Advisory Board (and will do so similarly with the Chicago Advisory Board) ways in which they can help provide more internship opportunities here in Bloomington-Normal and in Chicago.

We are seeing increased international opportunities for students, including discussions of a cooperative agreement between our Economics Department and the Center for European Studies in the Netherlands. Since last year, a number of connections have grown between ISU and universities in Brazil. A number of Brazilian students are studying here now with the Science Without Borders program, and opportunities for our students in Brazil are increasing. This semester, for the first time, our department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures is offering instruction in Portuguese. We anticipate growth in this program, and we will continue to explore additional opportunities.

As I visited a Preview session this summer, students were asked who among them was hoping to study abroad during their time at ISU. Every single student (and some of their parents) raised a hand. In this light, it is surprising that, in the end, only 2.5% of our students do in fact study in another country. The passion is there, and it is our job to make sure that we make it easier for them to fulfill that dream.

Of course, raising your hand in a meeting is easy, but in the current economy, it can be difficult for families to afford to send a student to study abroad. We have established a new fund through the ISU Foundation, the World Wide Campus Fund. When endowed, we will be able to use this fund to assist students with costs associated with study abroad, or with internships that require travel. I encourage anyone who agrees with me that these experiences outside the University are an important component of our students' education to consider this fund in their charitable giving.

The other barrier to studying out of the country may be structural. For example, curricular demands in a department may lead a student to conclude that both studying abroad and graduating in four years will not be possible. I was very pleased to see that the draft of the latest iteration of *Educating Illinois*, ISU's University-wide strategic plan, states as an explicit goal, that we "Identify cultural and structural barriers to collaboration, and develop strategies to overcome them." This statement applies to interdisciplinary programs, teaching, and research, but is also an apt goal with respect to student opportunities such as study abroad. I also want to encourage departments to work with students to help them plan their entire course of study at ISU to allow for opportunities off campus, without jeopardizing their timely movement through the curriculum.

For many years, there have been large and vibrant Latino communities in the Southwest, South Florida, and New York. We are now seeing a tremendous growth in our Hispanic population throughout the Midwest. As I learned by serving on the Educating Illinois Task Force, diversity in our student population has increased noticeably since 2008. Virtually all of that growth is due to an increase in the numbers of Latino/Latina students we are enrolling. Although we have had a minor in Latin American, Latino/Latina Studies in the College for some time, the changing demographics in Illinois suggest that this is the time for the University to reflect that change. We have found office space in

Williams Hall to house this program, and provided a modest base budget, where before the faculty in the program had only their home departments' generosity to rely on. We will be looking at the curriculum, with an eye toward designating courses that reside specifically in that program. In addition, we have authorized recruitment this year for an anthropologist specializing in Latin America. Recently, an exhibit opened at the McLean County Museum of History, Fiesta, A Celebration of Mexican Popular Arts, a collaboration between the Museum and our program here at the University. We believe that these developments will enhance the academic experience of all students in the College, and also serve to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of ISU to the growing Latino/Latina community of Illinois.

Since the first time I visited campus, I have said that I wanted the College to be a place where people knew they could do their best work, and a place where they knew their best work was expected. I see people every day working toward exactly that end – being the best teachers, researchers, and university citizens that they can be. I would like us to be more vocal about the great work that we do. When people call a university, or any institution, a “best-kept secret,” they usually mean it as a compliment, but this is nothing to aspire to. I am impressed constantly by the dedication of our faculty and staff and our students. This is no time for the Midwestern modesty which we all find so comfortable. We have an inspiring story to tell, and it's time to tell it, often and loudly. Thank you for coming this afternoon.