



# COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

*Illinois State University*

## Fall Address – 2013

President Flanagan, Provost Everts, faculty, staff, and students, welcome and thank you for being here today. This is the most exciting time of the academic year. To see the returning students, and especially the new students, again filling the campus imbues us with hope and anticipation. For a dean, the most exciting event is the welcoming of new College faculty. This year, we have 17 new tenure-track faculty, whom you will meet in a few minutes. So let me extend a particular welcome to these new colleagues, and assure you that your growth in your new position is our highest priority.

President Flanagan, on behalf of the College of Arts and Sciences, I want to add to the long list of welcomes you have received over the last couple of weeks. All of us in the College are looking forward to working with you to fulfill your vision of excellence at ISU. We've heard you speak on more than one occasion of a commitment to student success as the premier hallmark of a great university, and I assure you that our faculty and staff are also so dedicated. I think you'll see that we have an outstanding faculty in Arts and Sciences, on and off the tenure track, and that our nurturing of students through our teaching and advising, our mentoring of them in research, and our sponsorship of them in extra- and co-curricular activities, is the match of any university. As with the faculty, the services that our staff provide are essential to our educational mission through critical support of the College's academic programs. Welcome, and I look forward to your getting to know more of our faculty and staff.

Especially for the benefit of our new faculty, I'd like to take a minute to introduce the College office, and bring to your attention some new faces in the leadership of the College. We have a new department chair in the College; Chris DeSantis assumed the chair's position in the Department of English on July 1. We have two chairs beginning two-year interim terms, Craig McLauchlan in Chemistry, and Eric Peterson in Geography-Geology. Finally, two are serving one-semester interim terms while their chairs are on sabbatical, Steve Hunt in the School of Communication, and T.Y. Wang in the Department of Politics and Government. I want to thank all of these colleagues for their willingness to serve in the leadership role of chair or director.

I have the privilege of working with an outstanding group of people in the College office, 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. Debbie Fox is the Assistant Dean for External relations, and is responsible for College events. She also publishes CASNews weekly, and mentors student interns in its preparation. Finally, Debbie assists with the organization of several advisory boards in the College. Carrie Wieburg is our Business/Administrative Associate, managing the budget and serving as the Dean's assistant. Peggy Haycraft is our Administrative Aid, and helps with the smooth running of the College office, as well as managing the CAS website. Mike Regilio is the Director of CAS-IT, leading a team that assists faculty and staff with technology needs, in desktop support, web design, and advice on recent technology advances. I'm very pleased to announce that Stephanie Sellers, who comes to us from Iowa State, is our new Director of Development. The College had been without a development officer since November of 2012 until Stephanie joined the Foundation in July. I'm looking forward to going on the road with Stephanie to visit alumni and friends of the College around the country to increase private giving. 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.

Finally, this year we have revived the College's Administrative Fellows Program, which brings a faculty member into the College office to learn about the various administrative activities of the College. This year, our Administrative Fellow is Maria Pao, of the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. She will be in the College this year, working alternately with the three Associate Deans, and we're looking forward to having her in the office.

I think that we can say that, despite the continued financial difficulties that we and other universities are facing, the College of Arts and Sciences at ISU is in very good shape. Again this year, we have a strong class of first-year students. Although the number of on-campus students is down somewhat in the College, the quality of our incoming classes continues to rise. The average ACT score of the incoming students is up again, at 24.3, and we've welcomed the most diverse class ever. Thirty-one percent of our incoming students are from underrepresented groups, up from 24 percent last year. The College of Arts and Sciences is looking forward to working with Troy Johnson, the new Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, to continue bringing classes to ISU that represent further strengthening of the quality and the diversity of our student body.

Our academic programs remain strong. You will meet some of our award-winning faculty and staff shortly, but in addition to these individual achievements, I'd like to mention some program-wide recognition of some of our departments. Three of our units have been accredited or re-accredited in the last few months: the Ph.D. program in School Psychology in the Psychology Department, both the Master's degree program in Speech-language Pathology and the Doctor of Audiology program in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and the Public Relations program in the School of Communication. These join our several teacher-education programs in being recognized for their excellence nationally. I mentioned last spring that research funding has been up from previous years, and grant submissions continue to rise in the College. Much of the research that we conduct involves students, so that one quarter of the publications coming from College

faculty include student co-authors. Our faculty recognize the importance of integrating their teaching and scholarship, and consequently give our students a more complete educational experience than is typical at most universities.

This fall, we welcome 17 new tenure-track faculty to the College. These new colleagues address needs in their respective departments created by retiring faculty, or those leaving ISU for other reasons. Equally important, if not more so, they also represent strategic growth of their respective departments. I have been very pleased, and impressed, in our spring College budget presentations, how thoughtfully departments adhere in their recruitment requests to the vision laid out in their own strategic plans, as well as the College's plan and *Educating Illinois*. This sounds simple and obvious, but it is very easy for departments to fall into the habit of feeling the need to replace the most recent loss, regardless of its relation to the department's shared vision for future growth. I'm pleased that our departments keep the long view in mind, and this year's cohort of new faculty members shows how successfully departments have recruited for long-term growth and success. I have enjoyed my one-on-one meetings with our new colleagues, and am impressed with the degree to which they already "get" ISU, our dedication to our students, and our understanding of the balance of teaching and scholarship so characteristic of this university. Soon, recruiting season will be in full swing once again, and I am very pleased to announce that the College has been authorized to search for 16 new positions, and I'm confident that our departments and schools will once again bring in an outstanding cohort of scholars to build further on the strength of our College.

One of the lines we will be recruiting bears particular mention. Last year, the College encouraged our departments and schools to consider the possibility of two units collaborating on the recruitment of a faculty position. We recognize, increasingly, that some of the most exciting things happening today in academe are occurring at the intersections of our traditional disciplines. I anticipated that this would be particularly important in the development of our programs that are already interdisciplinary by their very nature. In our College at the present time, these would be the programs in Women's and Gender Studies and in Latin American-Latino/Latina Studies. That may ultimately turn out to be the case, but the first such request was made by the Department of Psychology and the School of Biological Sciences. They will be searching this fall for a cognitive neuroscientist, whose primary appointment will be in Psychology, but who will have teaching responsibilities in both units. There are hurdles to overcome in order for such recruitment to be successful (and by success I mean the hiring and eventual tenure of an excellent teacher and scholar). Expectations of such a split appointment must be made clear to the faculty member hired, and also to the units which will be home to the new colleague. DFSCs and SFSCs must be ready and willing to take the advice of the other unit concerning, for example, publications in journals they may never have heard of. In discussions last year, the chairs and directors were very thoughtful and helpful with their advice on how to shape the parameters of such initiatives, and I anticipate that the collaboration between Psychology and Biological Sciences will serve as a model for successful joint ventures in the future.

Last spring, at the University's public budget hearings, we laid out several requests for enhancement funds. We are very grateful for the support that the Provost has provided in her positive response to those requests. We received funds for the replacement of aging equipment for our teaching laboratories in Biological Sciences and Chemistry. Also supported were our requests for technology and facilities upgrades for the Psychological Services Center, and for funds for continued training of our CAS-IT staff. With the rapid changes typical of the IT world, it is critical that our staff stay absolutely up to date in order to continue to provide the excellent service that they're known for.

If you've attended one of these addresses before, you know that I never fail to mention my concern over the growing cost of new-faculty start-up. The recruiting landscape gets more competitive every year, and start-up costs are a major part of that competition. I've said before how much I appreciate the cooperation of our chairs and directors in working with our recruits to make requests that are reasonable, that is, that provide the faculty member with the resources he or she needs to be successful, while not inflating the start-up beyond what is really needed, creating what some of my dean colleagues at other universities ruefully call "signing bonuses." Similarly, our faculty recruits have been very cooperative in their willingness to spread their funding over multiple years. Sometimes, however, equipment cannot be purchased piecemeal, and a large portion of the funds must be expended in the first year. All this is leading up to the very happy announcement that the Provost has provided an extra \$100,000 to the College to assist with our start-up expenses for the upcoming recruitment year. I can't express how grateful I am for this support, and the recognition of the importance of this to our successful recruiting efforts. Thank you, Provost Everts, and you can be assured that we will continue to work with our chairs and directors, and our faculty recruits, to use these funds frugally, and for further enhancement of scholarship and teaching in Arts and Sciences.

In my first Fall Address two years ago, I discussed the need for a College of Arts and Sciences to look beyond itself, and into the communities in which it resides: the University, the city, region, state, nation, and world. We should do a better job of telling our story. That means not only promoting the arts and sciences idea outside the University, though we should certainly do that. It also means that we should be able to take the scholarly work that we do into those communities. If we talk about our work only to our colleagues with the same expertise as we, we can hardly expect the outside world to be very enthusiastic about supporting us. We should all be able to take our work outside and tell our stories in a clear and compelling way. After all, much of our audience consists of alumni of this college, and if we believe what we say about the arts and sciences creating in people a lifelong desire to learn, we should be ready to continue to teach. Beginning this spring, the College will work with our Community Advisory Board to initiate a series of community-based lectures, one each semester, by College faculty on their research. The first such event will take place at Ewing Manor in the spring, and will feature Bob McLaughlin and our own Sally Parry, talking about their work in wartime cinema. I plan to initiate a similar program in conjunction with our Chicago Advisory Board, as so many of our alumni reside in the Chicago area. The goal of these programs will be to ensure that our constituencies understand the breadth of scholarly work that

goes on in our College, and the critical role that that work plays in the building of a healthy society.

Along these lines of taking our work outside the University, I would also like to announce several initiatives to assist with student and faculty travel. The purpose of these initiatives is to aid our faculty and students as they represent the College and ISU around the country, and around the world.

The greatest ambassadors for our academic programs are our students. The College has an outstanding track record of sending students to conferences to present research and creative activity on which they have collaborated, or produced independently. Also, however, the College is home to several competitive teams in a variety of disciplines that travel to competitions around the country. Our Mock Trial team competed in the American Mock Trial Association National Championship tournament last spring. The Forensic Union brought two individual national championships home to ISU. Team Mercury, the solar car team, drove to a second-place finish in a recent national race. These student successes bring positive attention to ISU in a way that no marketing firm ever could. However, the expense of sending an entire team to a national competition is prohibitive for a single department. I am very pleased to announce a new cooperative initiative involving the College of Arts and Sciences, the Provost's Office, and the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Each of these three offices is contributing \$10,000 to create a fund to assist in the travel of groups such as these to national events or competitions. I am very grateful to Provost Everts and Vice President Dietz for their cooperation in this program. Their participation is recognition that there are extra- and co-curricular activities at ISU that have their feet planted both in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, and together we can better assist students in activities that reflect so well on Illinois State.

To assist travel by our faculty, we are providing supplemental funds this year to assist in faculty travel. First, we have made an additional \$30,000 available to departments for travel to remote sites for their scholarship, or to conferences to present the fruits of their research or creative activity. This is a very modest boost to the funds already provided, to be sure, but if just one additional person in each department is able to represent ISU on the national stage, that helps the College and the University.

In addition to supplementing the standard department travel budgets, we have revived a program that was suspended a few years ago, to facilitate faculty travel abroad. The faculty International Travel Grants provide funds to supplement those that the department is able to provide, to assist a faculty member traveling outside the contiguous 48 states for purposes of research or presentation. Those of you who may remember this program from a few years ago should note a couple of changes. First, the maximum amount of the grants has been increased to \$750. Second, the application process has been greatly simplified, and travel will be funded in two cycles, in spring and fall, so that 6-7 proposals will be funded in each semester, largely on a first-come, first-served basis. I wish we had funds to fund international trips fully, but I hope this program will ease at least some of the financial burden of foreign travel.

All of these initiatives, the travel funding and the faculty presentation events, are intended to address the need to shed our “best-kept secret” reputation. During the information-gathering process for *Educating Illinois*, the steering committee was told by students that we “needed to brag more.” That is true. So Deans and the Provost and the President will sing the praises of our faculty and students, as well we should. But nothing we say can speak as loudly about the quality of this University as the students and faculty doing what they do in a way that the world can see. The winning of a championship or the presentation of a game-changing paper or the compelling story of faculty research given to a community audience say more about the quality of the College of Arts and Sciences at Illinois State than I could do in a hundred speeches. These are activities that go on here every day, and this is the message I would like to send to our newest colleagues: ISU is a place where the expectations for student achievement and for faculty productivity, in teaching, scholarship, and service are very high. We expect the very best from people, and when they achieve it, we want the world to know. I am looking forward to working with you, and with all the faculty and staff in the College, to make the new academic year the strongest yet for the College of Arts and Sciences and Illinois State University. Thank you very much for your support, today and every day.