

College of Arts and Sciences

Spring Address -- 2012

Good afternoon, and welcome to the College of Arts and Sciences spring address. Thank you for being here today. When I spoke in the fall, I had only been on campus for a couple of months, but I was already struck by the cooperative, collegial atmosphere that seemed to characterize ISU. It's been closer to a year now, and I am very happy to be able to say that that impression has endured. I have been made to feel very welcome everywhere in the University, and I remain very happy, and very honored, to serve the College.

I believe that the College has had a very good year. Considering the economic difficulties that the state is experiencing, and the climate of eroding support for higher education, we have been able to accomplish much. We have continued to see some changes in the College office. Last week, I asked Interim Associate Dean for Research, Facilities, and Technology, Joe Blaney, to assume that position on a full-time basis. He has done an outstanding job in the position, and I am glad that he will be continuing. In October, we welcomed Carrie Wieburg as our budget officer. She has proven to be the quick-study we anticipated, and has made an outstanding transition into the position. This was the first time in over 20 years that the College has gone through the annual budget process without the experience of Sandi Krumtinger, so it was trial by fire for Carrie and Associate Dean Dagmar Budikova, (with some very long nights and weekends), but they completed this difficult job very effectively. As I have come to appreciate the size and scope of our undergraduate offerings in the College, and our role in General Education, I have similarly come to appreciate the work of Associate Dean Sally Parry. Finally, Assistant Dean Debbie Fox does a tremendous job for College outreach, producing CAS News each week, organizing events, and helping us tell our story to our alumni and friends. Suffice to say I am very pleased to work with such a dedicated College staff.

We have successfully recruited three new department chairs or school directors, and a fourth search is ongoing. In July, two of our interim chairs/directors will remove "interim" from their titles: Ann Beck in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Diane Zosky in the School of Social Work. I am grateful for the service they have given to their respective units, and to the College, and look forward to working with them in the coming years. We also conducted two external searches for chairs this year. The search for an Economics chair is not completed, but I'm happy to report that on Monday, Dr. Tom Buller, currently in the Provost's office at Governor's State University, accepted an appointment as chair of Philosophy.

I believe our recruitment of new faculty in the College went better than we could have expected. Next year, we will welcome 18 new assistant professors into the College. In nearly every case, the person hired was the first-choice candidate of the department. We have successfully recruited faculty members currently holding positions at the University of New Hampshire, the University of Oklahoma, and Ohio State. At the same time,

though the recruiting season is not quite over, we have not lost any faculty to positions at other universities. We were able to retain several faculty that I believe were particularly vulnerable to raids from other institutions.

As we did this year, we will welcome our new colleagues with our Faculty Professional Development Series. If repeat attendance is any indication, this series was very successful this year. The College deans met with new faculty this year in sessions addressing the first year experience, research collaboration, productivity reports, the ASPT process, and other topics designed to increase the likelihood of success for our new hires.

While the welcoming of new colleagues is one of the most exciting things we do each year, we can't forget the accomplishments of our current faculty. Last year, our faculty produced 18 authored books and monographs, six edited books, and 539 journal articles, among many other scholarly accomplishments. Faculty and staff generated nearly \$8.5M in grants and contracts, up \$1M from last year. An impressive number of our faculty have been honored for their scholarly achievements, including the latest Distinguished Professor, Jim Skibo of Sociology and Anthropology, and University Professor, Ali Riaz of Politics and Government.

In addition to scholarly pursuits, our faculty have continued to provide outstanding instruction to our students, and to give them opportunities for growth outside the classroom. History has been cited as a Model History Education Program by the American Historical Association. Physics ranked sixth in the nation in production of undergraduate physics degrees by undergraduate-only departments. Our departments maintain strong commitments to student research involvement, with Sociology and Anthropology, History, and English requiring capstone research projects of all students. Units in the College are also always looking at new opportunities for students outside the University. The College has partnered with Politics and Government and History to provide funding for three students to take part in the Washington Internship Program this summer. The School of Communication has a field experience program that has grown 67% since 2008. The Mock Trial Program in Politics and Government, the Forensics Program in the School of Communication, and the Solar Car Project in Physics, are all very successful programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply their learning in a competitive environment outside the University.

I mentioned in the Fall Address that one of my goals was to increase participation in these kinds of opportunities, and, where appropriate, open up new opportunities, including those involve international study. At the beginning of the year, with Mary Crawford's help, we established a new fund with the ISU Foundation called the Worldwide Campus Fund. It is my hope that one day, this fund will provide financial support for students who wish to take advantage of opportunities to learn beyond the University's walls, whether domestically or abroad.

While we are on the subject of fund raising, I'm very pleased to report that private giving to the College this year stands at nearly \$2M, including four estate gifts. This represents a

104% increase over last year's figures. The number of donors has also risen, which is remarkable in the current economic climate.

Yesterday, the College made its presentation on Program Planning and Budget for FY 13 to the Vice Presidents. While we won't know for a while whether the initiatives proposed in that presentation will be funded, I have been encouraged by the University's receptiveness to the needs of the College. The part of the presentation that was most awaited, of course, was the request for 20 tenure-track faculty lines. We also discussed ways of addressing rising start-up costs associated with faculty recruitment, and the raising of the profile of Latin American and Latino/a Studies. I am confident that, with the University's help, we will continue to bring in excellent new faculty who understand ISU's commitment to the balance of teaching and scholarship. We will continue to provide our students with unmatched opportunities, inside the classroom and out, and we will continue on our path of helping make ISU the first choice of excellent students in the state of Illinois.