



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Illinois State University

Fall Address – 2014

Provost Krejci, faculty, staff, and students, welcome to the College of Arts and Sciences Fall Address and Awards event, and especially welcome to a new academic year. I have been on a college campus for the beginning of the fall semester for 45 consecutive years, and I never tire of the excitement that those first days bring. One of the most exciting things for me as a dean is the welcoming of a new group of faculty to the College. We will meet our 15 new tenure-track faculty members shortly. I want to say to our new colleagues that success in your new careers is among the highest of our priorities, as the College's growth rests on the growth of our faculty and staff. I hope you will take advantage of our New Faculty Professional Development Series, which begins this Friday, and all of the mentoring available around campus and in your own departments.

We are working with a new set of Vice Presidents this year. I've had the pleasure of working with Provost Krejci in her capacity as Dean of the Mennonite College of Nursing since I arrived, and I am enjoying working with her now as Provost. I think I can say with confidence that if she shows a fraction of the dedication and enthusiasm in her new position that characterized her commitment to the College of Nursing, we'll be in good shape. As Dean, I don't have the same level of contact with our other vice presidents, but I've worked with each enough to be confident of their commitment to ISU, and their understanding of the centrality of the arts and sciences to the complete academic enterprise.

Especially for the benefit of our new colleagues, I like to take a minute in this address to introduce the College office, and some of the new faces in the leadership. We have one new department chair in the College: Dan Holland has taken over as chair of the Department of Physics, as Rick Martin stepped down at the end of June after many years of service as chair. In addition, Jim Skibo is beginning a two-year term as interim chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, filling in as Fred Smith has stepped down. In January, Steve Hunt will begin a term as interim director of the School of Communication, when Larry Long retires and takes up residence in North Carolina. I want to thank these colleagues for their willingness to serve in these leadership roles.

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 Persaud 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. In many universities, each of these positions I have just mentioned is filled by two or three people. I appreciate very much the hard work and selfless dedication of these colleagues to advancing the mission of the College. As most of you know, Peggy Haycraft retired as our Administrative Aid this past summer after 25 years at ISU, most of those in the College office. Tammy Hansen has very ably replaced her in that position. Tammy was already in the office, as our office manager, before assuming this position, and now the office manager position belongs to Val Ilyukhina. They present a welcoming face to visitors to the College, and are also enthusiastically planning a College office display for Homecoming. 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. Our Director of Development is Stephanie Sellers, now beginning her second year of fund raising for the College. 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.

We will continue our mentoring activities this year. As I mentioned, we will begin our New Faculty Professional Development Series this Friday. The Mid-career Faculty Development Series will resume a couple of weeks later. This year, we selected two faculty for the Administrative Fellows Program, Laura Vogel from the School of Biological Sciences and Gina Hunter from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. We look forward to working with both of them in the spring.

As you know, ISU welcomed its largest freshman class in 25 years a couple of weeks ago. College enrollments remain strong as well. Although there was a small drop in our enrollment this fall (which is common in difficult economic times), the decline was less than in the last couple of years. Several departments and schools in fact had noticeable increases in incoming students, including Biological Sciences, Economics, Social Work, and Sociology and Anthropology. Along with the University, the academic preparedness of our incoming classes is holding steady, and the diversity continues to rise. We have much to look forward to with this new cohort of students. Two days ago, I attended the luncheon honoring this year's Bone Scholars, and 11 of the 18 recipients had at least one foot in Arts and Sciences. I anticipate that we will continue to field students that reflect the academic excellence of our programs.

Our departments showed many achievements in the past year. Our School of Communication was recognized twice – once as the Outstanding Undergraduate Communication Department by the Central States Communication Association, and again by the National Communication Association as the Outstanding Graduate Program. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology welcomed its first cohort of students into its graduate program in Archaeology. We successfully moved the Publications Unit of the English Department from Rachel Cooper Hall to the Williams Annex, to provide space both more suitable to its needs and closer to the English Department offices in Stevenson

Hall. The Department of English is about to add to the Publications Unit's list of journals by bringing to ISU *Obsidian*, a leading journal of literature of the African diaspora, to be edited by Associate Professor of English Duriel Harris, and published here.

In last year's spring address, I detailed the hundreds of articles and chapters, and dozens of books published by our faculty. I also want to mention the grant activity in the College. In 2014, we matched the previous year's grant submissions, with each year coming in at \$23.2M in submitted grants. In 2014, we received \$5.8M in funding, up from \$5.4M the year before. Both of these are down from the over \$8M in funding in 2012, but I believe this reflects changes in the funding landscape more than in our faculty's scholarly activity.

We also had another successful year in receiving charitable gifts from our alumni and friends. Our annual giving increased this year to \$837,000, an increase of about \$30,000 over last year, despite a drop in the number of people giving to the College annually. One donor group that did increase was employees giving through payroll deduction. I thank the people in this room who show your support for the arts and sciences by your generous giving to the College. One group that we know is generous is our faculty emeriti. Each year, we hold an Emeritus Faculty Luncheon in the fall. Last year, 42 of our retired colleagues attended the luncheon. Forty-one of them are donors to the College, with a cumulative giving history of nearly \$1.1M. We are very grateful that those who have given so much of their lives to ISU and are still giving. Stephanie and I visited donors in St. Louis, Chicago, and in several locations in the San Francisco Bay area. We are planning trips to several cities in the Midwest, as well as a trip to the west coast. Stephanie has had a very successful year on our behalf. A few weeks ago, she secured a planned gift that is expected to bring in between \$1M and \$1.5M. Landing a \$1M gift is seen as a kind of rite-of-passage for a development director, and we are very grateful to Stephanie that she was able to achieve this professional milestone while working on our behalf.

Many of the initiatives of the College for the coming year are continuations or expansions of initiatives begun last year. There is a theme to these initiatives, which I think I've mentioned in previous Fall Addresses. It stems from discussions that occurred during the process of developing the latest iteration of *Educating Illinois*. You may recall that Provost Everts often mentioned that in her meetings with students, they encouraged the University to brag more about itself. We're too modest about the accomplishments of our faculty and staff about the opportunities we afford our students. Last year, the College allocated resources to make it easier for faculty, and to an extent, students, to go beyond these walls to let people know what's going on at ISU. First, we augmented our usual travel allocation to the departments and schools by \$35,000, an increase of about 25% over the usual allocation. This year, we will increase that additional allocation to \$40,000. In addition, we revived the fund for international travel for faculty, setting aside \$10,000 for a set of \$750 awards for travel outside the 48 contiguous states. I'm happy to say that we were able to go over budget in those awards, so this year will allocate \$16,000 for international travel. Last year, for the first time, we created funds, with the help of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Provost, to help with the expenses

of our competitive student teams, such as the Mock Trial Team, Team Mercury (the solar car), and the Forensics Union. We will again allocate \$10,000 for this purpose, and again, those funds will be matched by the same two offices. The College is very grateful to Vice President Paterson and Provost Krejce for their support of the student teams. When the Mock Trial Team wins head-to-head competitions against Harvard and Princeton, when a Forensics student wins a national championship, or when the solar car team is one of only a few American teams invited to an international race in Abu Dhabi (as was reported in today's *Pantagraph*), they tell the ISU story in a way that I never could, and we want to do all we can to help them.

New this year is a fund, also of \$10,000, for individual student travel. I have boasted in these addresses and to the upper administration in the annual budget meetings, that the College of Arts and Sciences is very proud of the engagement of our faculty with students in the conduct of their scholarly work. College-wide, 25% of the published works coming from our faculty have student co-authors. This figure is close to 40% in some of our departments. These numbers are matched or exceeded by the numbers of students involved in the presentation of scholarship at regional or national meetings. This fund will allow us to make 40 awards of up to \$250 to undergraduate students for travel to conferences or for other research-related travel. We ask that the departments match these funds, to bring the total award to \$500. This will help our students show their work to a wider audience, afford them the opportunity to network in their disciplines, and carry the ISU banner around the country.

When we talk about telling our story, we have to remember that we have multiple audiences. There are, of course, the audiences of our disciplines, which is what the funds mentioned previously are intended to address. There is also the audience of the nonacademic community in which we live. ISU enjoys the best town-gown relationship I've ever been associated with. Much of that concerns the support that the community shows for our athletic teams, but it is also seen in academics, certainly in the upcoming opening of the galleries in Uptown Station. I have spoken of this since the year I arrived at ISU, that we lament the decline of support for public higher education, not only in the financial support we receive from the state, but in the understanding of the outside world of the importance of the things we do. As academic success is seen more and more in terms of test scores in K-12 schools, and Return on Investment in higher education, the public has lost sight of the role of the arts and sciences, and the importance of the traditional goals of higher education, particularly the importance of an educated populace for the health of a democratic society. I have expressed my desire previously that every faculty member be able to explain to an intelligent lay audience what he or she does, and why it matters beyond the walls of the university. Toward that end, last spring we offered the first of a series of public lectures by our faculty, designed to inform the Bloomington-Normal community of the scholarship that goes on in the College of Arts and Sciences, in a clear and compelling way. The first such lecture was presented in April, by Sally Parry and Bob McLaughlin. We were very pleased with the turnout of around 120 people at the Alumni Center. We will continue the series this fall, with Fred Smith presenting "Visiting the Ancestors: A Night Out with Neanderthals," late in October. We are tentatively

calling the series “Main Street College,” and intend to have one presentation each semester.

In addition, I brought up this series in a recent meeting of the College’s Chicago Advisory Board, and proposed initiating a similar series there. They were very enthusiastic, and began suggesting, and even volunteering, venues for such presentations. In this way, we hope to take the College story to the Chicagoland area, further encouraging a strong relationship with our many alumni in that region.

I want to talk briefly about a couple of other areas that I have spoken of before. The first is our desire to promote interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching. One of the new faculty members whom you will meet momentarily is Amrita Puri, who was jointly recruited by the Department of Psychology and the School of Biological Sciences. She is a cognitive neuroscientist, and is the first person recruited under our initiative to bring to the faculty scholars whose training explicitly places them at the intersection of two or more of our traditional disciplines. This year, we will be recruiting a faculty member to reside in the Women’s and Gender Studies Program and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I am very pleased that our departments and schools recognize, in addition to their own many faculty needs, the value of recruiting scholars with a broad view of how our disciplines may inform each other, and of the importance of working across the traditional boundaries of our fields. Also this year, I asked a group of faculty, led by Tom Gerschick in Sociology and Anthropology, to develop an Introduction to Queer Studies course. This committee comprised faculty from Philosophy, Politics and Government, Psychology, and the College of Fine Arts. The course was successfully developed and is being offered for the first time this semester, hosted by Women’s and Gender Studies and taught by Chris Horvath. With that success, including strong enrollment in this introductory class, I will next ask this committee to consider the development of an LGBTQ curriculum, I hope ultimately to be considered for a minor and/or certificate program. There may well be opportunities for further development of interdisciplinary programs, and groups have already spoken to me about beginning new programs or expanding existing ones, including European Studies and Environmental Studies. I want to say that I welcome such discussions, especially when they are proposed, as these have been, as “revenue neutral.” We are often able to achieve these ends within our existing resources (curriculum, faculty, space), and I don’t see any insurmountable obstacles to our providing new exciting opportunities for our students in this way.

I have also spoken before about my desire to help with the University’s goal of increasing the number of students taking advantage of our study-abroad opportunities. This year, our Administrative Fellow Gina Hunter has spoken to me about wanting to work on just this issue. We intend to work with departments and their advisors to provide information about study abroad for incoming students when they first arrive, so that, if the desire to study internationally is there (and my informal experience tells me that it is), they will be prepared to do so without delaying appropriate movement through the curricula of their majors.

Every year, we hear anew about the decline of the arts and sciences, particularly the humanities and social sciences. A traditional arts and sciences education seems like a luxury, and one that students can't afford to indulge. We feel as if students, and their parents, are demanding fields that appear to lead directly to a career. It may be true that this puts the arts and sciences at a disadvantage, but of course, liberal education was never meant as a direct career path. Rather, the skills that students acquire in our College will stand them in good stead for any field they choose to pursue, immediately or following graduate or professional training. Communication, critical thinking, adaptability, and the ability and desire always to learn more are the characteristics of a successful person in any field, while profession-specific skills change with the times. We may be down slightly in our freshman class while the University numbers rise, but I see the Arts and Sciences as very healthy at Illinois State, fulfilling the mission of building thoughtful, creative, and accomplished students, and seeing the benefit that they bring to our society.