



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Illinois State University

College of Arts and Sciences

Spring Address – 2016

Good afternoon, and welcome to the College of Arts and Sciences spring address and awards ceremony. We come together each year at this time for an update on College activities, but especially to honor a number of students, staff, and faculty in the College, and to recognize their many contributions to the College and the University.

The College of Arts and Sciences has had another busy and successful year. We recently finished the faculty recruiting process, one of the most exciting annual activities. We are looking forward to welcoming 10 new faculty members to campus next year. We continue to attract new faculty who understand ISU's commitment to the joining of teaching and research, who in fact nearly always mention it in my interviews with them. It must be said, though, that the current budget impasse in the state has not made recruiting easier. Some searches took longer to complete than we've seen in the past, and questions about the budget situation are common during the interview. Nevertheless, our new colleagues again are a talented and committed lot and together we are building an outstanding faculty in very difficult times, and I thank all of you for your support of that effort.

Of course, the budget situation is on everyone's mind, so there's no point in ignoring it. As you know, Illinois has been without a budget since July, so the University has received no money from the state. We are very fortunate that, through careful planning and saving, we are weathering this storm far more successfully than most universities in the state. We can't hold out forever, but the budget impasse can't last forever either. Our Board of Trustees has already given us a budget that anticipates a 10% reduction in state funding, and when a budget is finally achieved, the cut could be deeper. Our department chairs and school directors have been meeting with Associate Dean Marla Reese-Weber and College Budget Officer Carrie Wieburg to plan ways to absorb anticipated cuts while protecting our core mission as much as we can. A year or two from now, if larger cuts come, the landscape may look different to faculty and staff, but we should do everything we can to ensure that it doesn't look different to our students.

Despite budgetary hardships and even more apparent worry about the future, the College has had a very successful year. We have over 4,700 undergraduate students, and we generated over 271,000 credit hours. They were very productive in the last year. Our faculty published 18 books and monographs, four edited books, and 15 textbooks; 457 articles and chapters, 118 creative works, and 918 conference presentations (160 of which were outside the U.S.). We have over 100 editors, associate editors, or editorial board members of national and international journals. College scholars received nearly \$6.5M



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in external funding from 74 grants. This is fewer successful grant proposals than last year, not surprising in an increasingly difficult funding landscape, but a larger dollar amount than last year. We have two new inductees in the Million Dollar Club, Catherine O'Reilly in Geography-Geology and Bill Perry in Biological Sciences. Krzysztof Ostaszewski, of Mathematics, was named University Professor, and Charles Su, in Physics, was named a Distinguished Professor. The College had a very impressive Founders Day. If you look on the back of your program, you'll see the 16 faculty and graduate students recognized with University Awards for their teaching, research or creative activity, or service.

Our students were very successful as well. Once again, our Model United Nations team was recognized as a program of distinction. Nine of this year's Bone Scholars are Arts and Sciences students. The Fisher Thesis Award and The Sorensen Dissertation Award were both won this year by graduate students in our college. Nineteen percent of the journal articles published by College faculty have at least one student co-author. Several of our departments are home to student-authored journals, such as *Polyglossia* in English and *Recounting the Past* in History. Our students and faculty live up to the University motto, recognizing that learning extends beyond the classroom, and is best realized through collaboration and scholarly teamwork.

We continue to try to strengthen our outreach efforts, and to take the excellent work that is done in the College to the larger community. This is the third year of Main Street College, a series of lectures given by scholars in the College to present their research to an interested community audience. Last Fall, Dawn McBride, from Psychology, presented "Did That Really Happen: Understanding False Memory," and just three weeks ago, Doris Houston, of the School of Social Work, presented "Against All Odds: College Success among Foster Youth." Both events very well attended, including by many from outside of ISU. We are planning a Main Street event next Fall related to the Presidential election.

Two years ago, we revived the College Administrative Fellows program, which brought in one or two faculty members to work with College administration and learn about the functioning of the College. We decided to forego this program this year, due to uncertainty about the budget. One department asked if they could nominate someone for the program if they were willing to support the loss of teaching themselves. Of course, I said yes, and I'm happy that Doris Houston will be working with us next year. She and I are looking forward to working together on issues of diversity and equity, following the release of the Campus Climate Study that is being conducted this year.



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We had an amazing year in fundraising. I reported in the Fall that Stephanie Sellers had helped us raise over \$6M for 2015. By year's end, the amount had reached nearly \$6.9M. Each year the number of annual-giving donors increases, as does the amount of money raised. Stephanie is constantly on the lookout for new prospects, and takes very good care of our donors.

Illinois State is coming out of its long period of transition in leadership, but the anxiety that I mentioned at this time last year remains. A major part of that, of course, is due to the budget situation, and not knowing what will come next. However, with the new stability in University leadership, I think we can be confident that decisions, hard as they may be, will be made thoughtfully, and with the wellbeing of our students foremost in our minds. I for one am glad that we have a president who has spent his career in academe, and not in a corporate boardroom.

So we end the year on a note of budgetary uncertainty, but the University has things in place to continue to thrive, even if we have to do so with less. The College of Arts and Sciences has a very strong set of core values that emphasize attention to our students, the integration of our teaching and research, and our remarkable spirit of collegiality. I look forward to continuing work with you in that spirit in the year to come. Thank you all for being here this afternoon. *