



# COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

*Illinois State University*

## Spring Address – 2014

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.

Despite the continued erosion of state support for higher education, the College has once again been privileged to welcome 18 new faculty colleagues to campus this year. And again this year, we have attracted an extraordinarily talented and committed group of young scholars, dedicated to the balance of teaching and research or creative activity that characterizes the College and ISU. In addition, we just finished the most recent recruiting season, and are expecting to welcome 14 new colleagues next year. One of those is a human neuroscientist whose responsibilities will be divided between the Department of Psychology and the School of Biological Sciences. This is the first such joint recruitment in the College, and I hope will serve as a successful model for additional interdisciplinary efforts in the future. Just last week, the deans made their budget presentations to the vice presidents, including requests for the next faculty-recruiting cycle, and one of the positions that we requested is a joint effort of Women's and Gender Studies and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Although it is anticipated, University-wide, that we will not be able to recruit as many new faculty next year as we have for the last three, we remain hopeful that we will be able to continue to bring in faculty with explicit interdisciplinary interests.

You have heard me say before that in times when we aren't able to hire faculty at the rate we would like, it's more important than ever that we do everything we can to support the faculty we have. Toward this end, I'm happy to say that with additional help from the Provost this year, we have become more competitive in our start-up packages for new faculty. This is important in that start-up seems to be more expensive every year, but also we are seeing increased needs in disciplines that historically did not require extensive funds to initiate a scholarly career. New media in English and Communication, for example, have broadened the scholarship in those disciplines, and demand a level of technology that they have typically not seen in the past. We are grateful that we were provided more assistance in this area this year.

We were also able to increase our support of faculty travel this year. We augmented the Provost funds that we receive for travel by \$30,000 to the departments and schools. With

the steady rise in productivity in the College, and ever-increasing travel costs, it is impossible to keep up with travel needs, but we will continue to do everything we can to help faculty take their scholarship outside the University. This year, we also made funds available for international travel. In addition to funds available at the department and school level, we provided additional \$750 awards to faculty traveling outside the continental United States. Finally, we continue to conduct professional development series both for new and mid-career faculty. This year, we also resurrected the Administrative Fellows Program. Maria Pao worked with each associate dean on a variety of projects, and got a first-hand view of much of the workings of the College. We recently sent out the request for applications and nominations for next year's Fellowship. Finally, Carrie Wieburg has begun an annual retreat for lead staff in the College. I think that this activity is in line with a common practice at ISU that is not seen at very many universities, and that is an opportunity for units to hear and understand the activities, goals, and challenges to other units on campus. I know the deans all feel the annual budget presentations are very informative and helpful in understanding what other colleges are facing. I usually have a mixture of feelings of envy, sympathy, and relief as I hear of the strengths and challenges in the other colleges, but we all feel that we can serve better for knowing what the others deal with. I believe that the College's annual budget presentations provide the same opportunity for our chairs and directors. The lead staff retreat serves the same purpose for those who do so much to keep our departments and schools running smoothly. Thank you, Carrie.

Again this year, our faculty have shown themselves to be a remarkable community of scholars. College faculty published 14 books and monographs in the past year, along with 11 edited books, 12 textbooks, 86 peer-reviewed creative works, and 743 journal articles and chapters. This last number is an increase of over 300 such works a year ago. One of the things that is the most impressive about our faculty's productivity, in my opinion, is the degree of the engagement of students in the research enterprise. Fully 26% of the scholarly works of our faculty include students as co-authors. Considering that multiple-authored works are rare in some disciplines, this also means that this figure is considerably higher in some departments. For example, in Psychology, 67% of the published articles and chapters have student co-authors, and nearly half of the papers coming out of Chemistry have undergraduate co-authors. I think this is a perfect example of ISU's statement that we are a university with a small-college feel, but major university opportunities. The opportunities wouldn't be there for students if we didn't have such active scholars among our faculty, but such student engagement is uncommon at a flagship research university.

The strength of our faculty is apparent in other ways as well. Between July 1 2013 and February 18 2014, we generated \$3.6M in external funding, and three of our College faculty were inducted into the Million Dollar Club: Amy Bloom in Geography-Geology, Craig Cullen in Math, and George Rutherford in Physics. Dave Malone in Geography-Geology was named a University Professor, and Saad El Zanati in Math was named a Distinguished Professor. We had two outstanding Distinguished Lecturers this year, in Tim Lash of Chemistry and Lou Perez of History. I'm pleased to announce that Bob

McLaughlin of English and Roger Thomas of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures have been named as next year's lecturers.

I have focused on our faculty thus far, but we have much to say about the performance of our students as well. The College had eight Bone Scholars this year, and I've already mentioned our students' involvement in research and creative activity. In addition to the many individual accomplishments, we have several very successful competitive teams among our students. This year, the College partnered with the Office of the Provost and the Office of Student Affairs to provide funds for team travel, as this is an expense that is an excessive burden for a department or school. Funds were provided for the Mock Trial Team, Model United Nations, the Forensics Union, and the Solar Car project – Team Mercury. All of these teams have continued to be very competitive nationally, with both Mock Trial and Forensics yielding individual national champions.

The College continues to reach out to our donors and friends. For part of the year, we were without a Director of Development, so fundraising came to a virtual standstill. However, in August, Stephanie Sellers joined the Foundation as our development officer, and she has been working tirelessly to raise the level of donations to the College. I'm very pleased to report that we benefitted from \$2.6M in charitable giving this year, which is an increase of \$450,000 over the year before. These funds provide for student scholarships, as well for faculty awards, program support, and other initiatives. We have also enjoyed increased annual giving this year, in both number and amount of donations. Stephanie and I have trips planned for St. Louis, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay Area in the next three months, as we attempt to broaden our base of donors and friends.

Just last week, we initiated a new program to reach out to the community. I have been saying since I came to ISU that I believe that all of the scholars in the College should be able to explain what we do to an intelligent audience not in our own disciplines. We seek the support of the public, but how can we expect it if they don't know what we do? Last Thursday, Bob McLaughlin and Sally Perry gave a public lecture, "We'll Always Have the Movies," at the Alumni Center. As is often the case for such a first-time event, we hoped that we would fill a respectable portion of the 100 seats that were ordered. They twice had to bring in more chairs to accommodate the audience, and the event was very well received. It is our intention to hold such a public lecture each semester. This is not simply a move to find and cultivate new donors, but to form a relationship with the community in which we work and live and with which we want to partner in the development of an intellectual relationship. I would also ask this audience to feel free to email me with suggestions for future speakers. If you have a faculty member in mind who can present his or her research in an engaging way, and who can make clear the importance of the work and why people outside the discipline should care, I'm very interested in hearing of it.

So the College has had a strong year, despite the challenges of a limited budget. As we look to the future, we know that we will continue to face challenges. The state of the pension system in Illinois is leading people to retire in larger numbers than we've seen, and to do so in a way that is harder to predict than in the past. Of course, this makes

planning for even the near future unusually difficult. We know we have the support of the University, and the ingenuity of our faculty and staff, to see us through uncertain times.

When I first arrived at ISU, I knew that there was recently developed strategic plan in place in the College. Frankly, that was a relief. There is plenty to do, and to learn, in taking a new position like this. Having to develop a new plan on top of all of that, before really having an opportunity to understand the University, is probably not the best thing, either for the new dean or the College. However, the time is rolling around again, and this summer, we will begin discussions in the College office about preparing for the next planning process. This hasn't begun yet, so I can't say anything substantive about it, but rest assured that we will approach this task with the same openness and transparency that is so typical at ISU. You will hear more about the process in the fall.

This has been an unusual year at Illinois State, with two leadership changes in rapid succession. As you know, there will continue to be further changes, as President Dietz leads the recruitment of three vice presidents in the next couple of years. Administrative changes, however, should not be felt by our students, and in the College of Arts and Sciences, we will continue to think of our students first, in our offering of courses, and in our presenting challenges and opportunities for students, inside the classroom and out. The goals and the core values of the College are constant, and our work will continue unabated, regardless of any changes in University leadership. We will continue to prepare students for life and work in a globalized society, to inspire students in civic engagement, and to help students acquire those skills that characterize the arts and sciences graduate: critical thinking, communication, and adaptability. I ask your help with this in the coming year. Thank you all for being here this afternoon.