

Northwestern

ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

State of the University Address

PRESIDENT SHARON K. HAHS

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Thank you Dr. Kaplan-Weinger. Thanks to you and to all the members of the Faculty Senate for the invitation to speak to the University community, and thanks for your leadership.

Good Afternoon and welcome to the State of the University Address! And a special greeting to everyone who is viewing this from CCICS, El Centro, and CTC.

Appreciation

As we begin this afternoon, I'd like to take a moment to express our thanks and appreciation for contributions to the life of the University as reflected in a variety of representative groups. As you are acknowledged, I would ask that you please stand and that you stay standing while others are called.

For improvements to our Financial Aid System—Dr. Janice Haring-Hendon, Marshall Jennings, Maureen Amos, and all the members of the Financial Aid Office.

Student Government Association Officers

Facilities Management members Gary Bryan and Hemant Shah, and University Computing head Kim Tracy and his staff, who all worked extremely hard to have the College of Business and Management Building opened early!

Faculty who are teaching in our signature program, The First Year Experience.

Marketing team—Erika Krehbiel, Matt Byerly, Julie Wight, Carolyn Bonner McCormick and Joe Davis—who developed the Learn in the City, Lead in the World theme.

Newly Promoted and Tenured Faculty

The Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award recipient, Dr. Timothy Sherman, and The Bernard J. Brommel Distinguished Research Professor, Dr. Zhonggang Zeng

Peer Leaders for New Student Orientation and Assistant Dean Robert Bedford

For grant writing success—Louise Illian and Jonathan Teuber as architects for all Title V grants, and Dean Amy Hietapelto for her contributions to the most recent one.

Fundraising team—Kathy Pace, Allen Hailey and Madeline Nelson.

Great Service Matters Committee with leadership from Murrell Duster, Yvette Lopez, Marta Maso and Janice Haring-Hendon.

And, everyone here today who has served the University for 25 years or more.

All of you are symbolic of so many who have done so much. We thank you for your contributions!

How Are We Doing?

I will frame my report to you today around our Strategic Plan which was completed just a year ago. Recall that as a University community we developed our Statement of Mission, Statement of Vision, Statement of Values, our Strategic Goals, and the Action Steps under each Goal. The Banners with our Values are hanging hereon stage. So let's begin with our Mission Statement:

Northeastern Illinois University, as a public comprehensive university with locations throughout Chicago, provides an exceptional environment for learning, teaching, and scholarship. We prepare a diverse community of students for leadership and service in our region and in a dynamic multicultural world.

How are we accomplishing our Mission? Through our six Strategic Goals—Student Success, Academic Excellence and Innovation, Urban Leadership, Exemplary Faculty and Staff, Enhanced University Operations, and Fiscal Strength. There are Action Steps under each Strategic Goal, and each year we are selecting annual activities under various Action Steps, which together make up

our Annual Workplans. The Annual Workplan for FY2009 (last year) along with its Results, is on the Strategic Planning web page of Northeastern's website. I can report to you that most of the items have been accomplished, along with many other projects throughout the University that resulted from the focus and direction provided by our Strategic Plan. The Annual Workplan for FY2010 (this current year) is also provided on the web page. Both were reported to our Board of Trustees last week.

Today I will provide some highlights from last year and signal a few of our activities for this year. I will move quickly through a number of items under each goal. I encourage you to examine the full reports.

Goal One: Student Success

Financial Aid

Our Office of Financial Aid, with the guidance of Dr. Janice Harring-Hendon, invited a professional consultant from Financial Aid Services to advise us. Together they reviewed and improved work flow and compliance requirements, and redefined a vacant position to provide strong IT support. Everyone worked very hard to make these changes. The award process, communication with students, and overall service to students have significantly improved. This has come at a critical time, and has greatly contributed to our recruitment and retention success.

Enrollments

We have four graphs for you to see our progress in student enrollments. While official enrollments for Fall 2009 are not yet available, the unofficial data looks positive.

Graph 1, Undergraduate Enrollment and Credit Hours: These measures are improving.

Graph 2, Graduate Enrollment and Credit Hours: Again we have a positive trend.

Graph 3, New Freshman and New Transfer Enrollments: Both measures are moving up, but the more interesting thing to notice is that these groups are nearly the same size. This means that they are equally important in receiving our attention.

Graph 4, Degrees Conferred: We continue to increase in number of graduates.

So these data are heading in the right direction and we must all work to keep them moving up.

Advising

This year we will create a task force to review and coordinate the various advisement systems in order to strengthen intentional advising. This is another important step in retention and graduation.

Enrollment Management

We will reorganize our retention efforts and establish an Undergraduate Retention Intervention Team. This Team will include faculty from the Colleges, as well as membership from Student Life and Enrollment Services. The Team will develop, implement and refine strategies to address the needs of at-risk students, progression rates and time-to-degree outcomes.

Student Life

We spent this last year examining our hopes and expectations for future Student Life initiatives at NEIU. A search is currently underway for the position of Vice President for Student Life.

Goal Two: Academic Excellence and Innovation

New Faculty

Last year at the State of the University Address, I announced our commitment of \$300,000 for new tenure-line faculty over the next two years. That commitment has been met in just one year. While budgeting has been complex and somewhat unpredictable, we have conducted searches for all new and replacement faculty as planned, and we were able to fill all but three.

New College of Business and Management Building

This beautiful facility was opened just in time for fall semester. We will celebrate with a ribbon-cutting on October 27, and we are moving forward with a fundraising campaign for naming opportunities. The College is also making steady progress toward program accreditation with the AACSB—the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

Accreditation for Music and Art

The University is also moving toward accreditation from the National Association for Schools of Art and Design, and the National Association for Schools of Music. Our goal is to receive not only regional but national recognition for all of these excellent programs.

Objectives for the Baccalaureate Degree

Following the discussions on University Day about the content for an NEIU Statement of Objectives for the Baccalaureate Degree, a faculty committee developed a draft over the summer. The committee is working with the Academic Deans to refine the draft and will be sharing it widely later this fall.

New Degree Programs

Faculty committees are working toward new degree programs in environmental science and global studies.

Goal Three: Urban Leadership

Illinois HSI Initiative Funding

We were pleased to receive a special FY2009 appropriation for Hispanic Serving Institution Initiatives. It was directed to activities such as mentoring, travel, panels, conference participation, and acquisition of library and other instructional materials for Latino programs. While we received this appropriation for a single year, many of the activities will have a lasting impact. We thank the members of the Advisory Group for Academic and Support Program Development; the Group was co-chaired by Dr. Christina Gomez and Dr. Paul Schroeder-Rodriguez.

Preparing Graduates to Serve Our Communities

As part of the HSI Initiative, work is also moving forward to develop curricular elements within Social Work and Justice Studies for graduates to provide services to Latino communities. Appropriate faculty have joined the University, and work is underway to develop grant applications dealing with immigration research.

Marketing

We have created a brand reflecting NEIU—Learn in City, Lead in the World. A comprehensive marketing campaign has been implemented with billboards on bridges and busses, print and electronic media, and a redesign of many of our publications, with more to come. We were honored to receive our first Golden Trumpet Award from the Publicity Club of Chicago for the second edition of our InCommon alumni magazine.

USDA

To paraphrase a famous saying, luck comes to those who are prepared: This past April HACU—the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities—approached us to consider a possible partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture's Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program—USDA HSI NP. We welcomed the partnership which includes a new USDA HSINP Midwest regional office located here at Northeastern, as well as resources for our students and faculty. The University appreciates the new opportunities provided by this new partnership.

Goal Four: Exemplary Faculty and Staff

U.P.I

As many of you know, the contract for the University Professionals of Illinois is currently being negotiated with the University. I want to thank the members of the UPI bargaining team, as well as the members of the administrative bargaining team, for their willingness to pursue Interest Based Bargaining. While negotiations have not concluded, I want to acknowledge the hard work of these teams over the last year.

Great Service Matters

One of our activities in our Workplan last year was to provide a professional development conference for all members of the University. The result—Great Service Matters—was not only an excellent two-day conference, but also included smaller follow-up sessions in June and August with topics requested by many of you. The Committee is continuing its work, with its first fall project—providing an on-line program entitled Connections NOW. The Committee looks forward to receiving additional ideas from you as it plans further opportunities this year.

Netbooks

We have implemented a new program to loan Netbooks to Instructors so that they are able to fully use the technology enhanced classrooms. Our thanks go to Terry Black and his staff for configuring the Netbooks and having them ready for fall.

Goal Five: Enhanced University Operations

Emergency Notification Systems

The public address system has been installed and is operational. The agreement for the mass electronic notification system is nearly complete. The Emergency Management Team continues to monitor and improve emergency measures on all of our campuses.

Technology Enhanced Classrooms

A full plan has been developed to place new technology in all appropriate classrooms. Last year's commitment of five classrooms across the campuses has been exceeded.

The Multicultural Center

The Multicultural Center Program Committee, co-chaired by Sharron Evans and Daniel Lopez, completed its report containing programmatic, staffing, and facility recommendations. Much of the report was very helpful, but the facility recommendations were not achievable. The Vice Presidents, the Program Committee Co-Chairs, and I have worked to develop our next steps, and progress has been made. With the move of the College of Business and Management to newly renovated facilities, there is now potential for appropriate space. In the capital appropriations for FY2010 Northeastern was appropriated funds to assist with facility renovations. However, none of the capital funding (for the entire state) has been released. So we must wait for the release of these funds to move forward.

New Education Building

I am very happy to report that funds for the Education Building have also been appropriated; but here again we must wait for their release. We do hope to begin the planning and design soon.

Scheduling Software

The R-25 scheduling software has been installed. It will soon be operational so that the space reservation process is easier, and we are able to make more efficient use of our limited facilities.

Goal Six: Fiscal Strength

Welcome Home

We were very pleased that the Chicago Teachers College Association, whose members are alumni, faculty emeriti, and friends of our predecessor institution, requested that we blend their association into our alumni association. Not only has this expanded our alumni and donor base, but it has also allowed us to reconnect with an important part of our heritage. Their first gathering on this campus was on August 19—it was called Welcome Home. The Chicago Teachers College Association also generously established an endowment for education scholarships in perpetuity.

Fundraising

We have had a very successful year, raising just over one million dollars! As you can see from the graphs, scholarship contributions are up 79% from the previous year for a total of over \$625,000 for FY2009; faculty and staff contributions are up 80% for a total of nearly \$276,000 and we are especially grateful to everyone who has contributed. Lastly, overall contributions are up 47% for a total of \$1,000,759. And this has been achieved in difficult economic times. We also have received two endowed Presidential Scholarships which will support two Scholars for four years. So we are making wonderful progress here.

Operating Budget

Our operating budget for FY2010 is essentially the same as last year. You will recall that it consists of two parts—our state appropriation and our income fund, which is basically student tuition. On the chart you see that our state appropriation for this year is \$43,401,900, exactly the same as last year. While this is manageable for this year, the funding includes over \$4 million in stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, an amount that will not be available next year, FY2011. So we must brace and plan for that loss next year. Also on the chart is our income fund of \$37,597,400. This figure is based on the approved tuition rate increase for FY2010 and the projected loss of MAP funding for NEIU students who may not attend in the spring due to lack of MAP financial aid. So we are also planning for a potential loss of spring enrollment. The issue of MAP

funding has been explained in my e-mail message yesterday; today I want to emphasize that the University has joined with other colleges and universities across Illinois, coordinating with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the Illinois Board of Higher Education and its Student Advisory Committee, and the UPI, to lobby for the restoration of these financial aid funds for students. Nevertheless, at this time we are working with the same budget as last year.

Grant Awards

Acknowledging that our Chicago Teachers Center has long been the leader in grant writing at NEIU, we are gathering strength as an institution in writing and obtaining grants. Over the last few years we have been awarded two major Title V grants to support the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Center for Academic Writing; as well as two major science grants to encourage study and careers in the sciences. Over the last two weeks—this is an historical moment for NEIU—we have received notice of two additional Title V grant awards: \$3.5 million (over five years) for a cooperative grant with the College of Lake County to strengthen retention, transfer and graduation at both institutions. This is one of only five cooperative Title V grants awarded in the country. And secondly, we received a \$2.6 million grant (over five years) for the expansion and enhancement of the College of Business and Management Master of Business Administration and the Master of Science in Accounting programs to better serve the needs of the Hispanic student population as well as other underrepresented groups and students from low-income backgrounds.

Once again we would like to acknowledge the leadership and hard work of Louise Illian and Jonathan Teuber in writing these two new grants, and to Dean Hietapelto for her contributions to the second one. Grant funds provide professional development for faculty, academic support for students and funds for facility improvements. In four of these major grants we also received endowment matches. I encourage all units to pursue grant opportunities to support our priorities.

Green Initiative

As part of our effort to establish environmental sustainability as a key element of NEIU's identity, the University has entered into an Energy Audit Agreement with an energy services company. An investment grade energy audit is being conducted and conservation measures will be taken over the next several years to reduce our energy use. The photograph is of our beautiful very old Swamp White Oak just north of the Physical Education Building. . . I thought you might enjoy this symbol of our green initiatives.

University Planning and Budget Council

Members of UPBC are working diligently with Chair Tim Scherman to transition the former University Budgetary Council into a new group having the same broad representation, with the goal of broader input on planning, greater fiscal transparency, and a stronger link between planning and budgeting.

Closing

So how are we doing? Certainly our challenges are many. But we are making steady progress, as I hope my remarks today reflect.

In closing, it is my honor and my joy to serve as the president of Northeastern. In that regard, let me pledge again today what I pledged to all of you at my inauguration two years ago this month—my full commitment to the duties of this office and to the stewardship of this extraordinary university. Through our Strategic Plan we have a solid road map into the future—a wonderful future—and we are travelling the path together.

And together we will work hard to achieve our plans, step by step, year by year. We will be sustained by the knowledge and belief that Northeastern Illinois University is a very special place, worthy of our hard work and commitment. And in so doing, we will help Northeastern to be

. . . a leader among metropolitan universities, known for our dedication to our urban mission, for the quality of our programs, for the success of our graduates, and for the diversity of our learning environment.

Thank you.

