

Northwestern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

State of the University Address

PRESIDENT SHARON K. HAHS

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011



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Thank you, Chair McKernin. Thanks to you and to all members of the Faculty Senate for the invitation to speak to the University community and 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 would 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.

Newly Promoted and Tenured Faculty

Faculty Excellence Award Recipients

Myra Werner, Hemant Shah and John Marcus and their team, as project managers for the Pedroso Center, the Alumni Center, and the Admissions and Transfer Center, as well as John Murray, Rick Matus and Nancy Medina and their team, for trouble shooting the implementation of Energy Conservation Measures

Dr. John Albazi and his committee for developing the first faculty research symposium

Members of the Working Group on needs of both women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning students, chaired by Dr. Vicki Byard

Members of the Search Committee for Vice President for Student Life, chaired by Dr. Daniel Lopez; Vice President Ross, would you please stand with them.

Members of the Search Committee for Vice President for Institutional Advancement, chaired by Dean Amy Hietapelto; Vice President Rodriguez, would you please stand with them.

The Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award recipient, Dr. Denise Cloonan and

The Bernard J. Brommel Distinguished Research Professor, Dr. Marian Gidea

Jorge Perez and Irma Suarez, for Ensemble Espanol's 35th anniversary. The Ensemble received congratulatory letters from Governor Quinn, Mayor Emanuel, the Mayor of Skokie, Senator Martinez, the Consul of Spain, and President Obama!

Dr. Neida Hernandez-Santamaria, selected as one of twenty-one E. Kika de la Garza fellows of the United States Department of Agriculture

David Green, Henry Owen, Mary Thill, and Lisa Wallace, along with Dean Brad Baker, as the lead research team for the ERIAL project—Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries project, which examined how Illinois university students, particularly minority students, use resources available to them in their academic libraries.

Associate Vice President Murrell Duster and her team, who have brought wonderful programming on-line for the Pedroso Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs.

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

And now I would like to acknowledge our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Lawrence Frank. As most of you know, Dr. Frank will be leaving the Provost's Office at the end of December. Dr. Frank has served Northeastern for nearly a decade, bringing wonderful new faculty and other leaders to the University, launching the First Year Experience, the Teaching and Learning Center, the Academic Literacy Center, and research support for faculty and students. We thank him for his deep commitment to the University, and for his many contributions and years of service. We will miss him, and we wish him the very best. Provost Frank please stand and let us thank you.

Opening

Each year we gather to consider the State of the University—How are we doing? Are we making progress? What is our future? The answers to these questions are based on Northeastern's Strategic Plan, our Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals. Additionally, each Goal has a series of Action Steps; specific activities are selected each year based on the Action Steps. Collectively these activities are called the annual workplan.

Progress in implementing the Strategic Plan is demonstrated in two ways. First, what do we say we are going to do, and what do we actually do? These are the annual workplans and their results. Both the Results of the FY2011 Workplan and the new activities selected for the coming year, the FY2012 Workplan, are posted on the Strategic Planning website.

The second way of demonstrating progress on our Plan is the Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs. These are specific quantitative outcome measures for each of the six Goals. The six Strategic Goals are Student Success, Academic Excellence and Innovation, Urban Leadership, Exemplary Faculty and Staff, Enhanced University Operations, and Fiscal Strength. The KPIs are updated annually and are posted on the Strategic Planning website as well as the Institutional Research website. They help to answer, "Are we making progress on our Goals?" Like the Plan itself, they guide decisions that are strategic rather than based on daily operations, and they promote campus alignment.

Today, I won't try to cover all of these items, so I encourage you to check the Strategic Planning website for the full array of things we accomplished last year, things we have planned for this year, and the progress we have made on accomplishing our Goals.

Important Trends

Each year we take a quick look at four graphs for you to see our progress in student enrollments. While official enrollments for Fall 2011 are not yet available, here is the unofficial data:

Graph 1, Undergraduate Enrollment and Credit Hours: Enrollments have taken a dip from last year. While they are still high, we must work to understand and take action to continue the general upward trend.

Graph 2, Graduate Enrollment and Credit Hours: The trend remains a downward one. I will discuss this in more detail below.

Graph 3, New Freshman and New Transfer Enrollments: Both measures have unofficially decreased slightly; I anticipate the official outcomes will be essentially level.

Graph 4, Degrees Conferred: This measure is up. Not only is the percentage increase the highest in the last decade, but you can clearly see that this is the greatest number of graduates in NEIU's history. This is great news.

Certainly the increase in the number of graduates explains part of the decrease in headcount enrollments in Graph 1, but only part. Given that enrollments of new freshmen and new transfer students are not increasing as they have in the past, we must identify causes and actions to move these in a positive direction again. There is cause for concern but not cause for alarm. We must be vigilant, assuring that we have a sufficient number of course sections; that we coordinate services; that we continue to have excellent teaching that includes new content and the latest approaches; that our requirements are clear; and that we have helpful, effective interactions to assist all students on their paths to success.

Fiscal Matters

Let me turn to fiscal matters. It goes without saying that these are challenging times. The development of our budgets and the stewardship of our resources need greater and greater care and attention. We have been working with the University Planning and Budget Council to match priorities and funding. The FY2012 Operating Budget was presented to the Board of Trustees last Thursday, as were the Operating and Capital Request Budgets for FY2013. They reflect the work of the UPBC, and we are grateful. These Budgets are provided on the Board of Trustees webpages. They're based on several parameters. Those budget development parameters are

- Support the Strategic Plan. (We need to assure that our decisions support the specific action steps and annual activities.)
- Support faculty and staff, protect jobs, and avoid employee furloughs.
- Assure that enrollment levels are sustainable before adding the related revenues into the recurring budget.
- Take a conservative approach to cash payments and salary and expenditure commitments to preserve cash for salaries and required vendor payments.

In looking at the anticipated revenue and spending plan, you will see that our state appropriation decreased by nearly half a million dollars from last year. Our anticipated revenue from student tuition increased by \$5.4 million dollars, due to both enrollment growth and new tuition rates for incoming students.

The net revenue gain of \$4.9 million dollars will be allocated using our budget development parameters. The largest allocation is \$2.6 million for salary increases.

Next, we will address financial aid. We created an institutional need-based financial aid program last year. Student financial aid is more critical each year given the uncertainty in MAP funding with more students needing aid. Our program helps students and helps the University to maintain our enrollment base. We began last spring with a modest \$200,000; this year we will annualize that increment and double the overall amount, directing an additional \$600,000 toward this program. We hope to continue to expand the program over time.

In support of the Strategic Plan, \$600,000 will be allocated. Half is for what we are calling a permanent pool for non-recurring projects so it will be available over again each year. The other half is for a recurring pool, meaning that it will be directed permanently to departments and units for on-going costs of agreed-upon activities or personnel within the Strategic Plan initiatives.

\$250,000 will be used to move ERP technology (Banner and NEIUport) staff from temporary ERP funds to permanent operating funds.

And \$300,000 will be left unallocated at this time, given the budget uncertainties.

Budget uncertainties have become a typical part of the process. For many years we have dealt with uncertainties in enrollments, utility costs, emergency repairs and cost increases. We have also managed cuts in base appropriations, and the occasional reserve requirement to hold part of our appropriation unspent. In recent years, we have also dealt with delays in receiving our state appropriation. For FY2011, we are still owed \$17 million as we begin FY2012. In the coming year, we will also be asked to address performance-based funding.

In last year's legislative session House Bill 1503 was passed, amending the Board of Higher Education Act to require the IBHE to incorporate performance-based funding into its annual budget request to the General Assembly beginning with Fiscal Year 2013, as recommended by the Higher Education Finance Study Commission (Senate Joint Resolution 88). The IBHE has formed the Higher Education Performance Funding Steering Committee to address this. The Illinois Public University Presidents and Chancellors have three members on this Committee, and have also provided a statement of six principles for consideration. There is some discussion of a limited number of measures that would apply to all universities, with additional measures developed by individual institutions relative to their unique missions. Northeastern is reasonably well-positioned in this regard given the KPIs of our Strategic Plan. However, the impact is yet to be seen.

Related to this, I would like to briefly discuss one of our KPIs for Goal 1, "Preparation for Present Job." This measure comes from the IBHE alumni survey of those who graduated one year earlier. The statewide average is 57%; NEIU is at 51% for graduates responding that the bachelor's degree prepared them well or very well for their present job. I would suggest that this is an area where we might need to focus. I anticipate that this concept, which is part of the Illinois Public Agenda for Higher Education, will be represented in the State's approach to performance-based funding. The Colleges were asked last year to identify curricular innovations to address areas of high work force needs. This year's workplan includes the establishment of a task force to identify new curricula based on high workforce demand, and link a portion of new faculty searches to these curricula.

As state support dwindles and we are presented with more and more operational challenges, we must take steps to become ever more self-sufficient—increase our recruitment efforts for enrollment growth, strengthen retention efforts, build institutional financial aid, continue with appropriate increases in tuition for incoming students, and raise additional private funds for student scholarships and other strategic initiatives. In order for Northeastern to thrive in this difficult climate and economy, we must proactively build our financial security.

This includes, of course, additional funding sources. For FY2011, our fundraising efforts yielded overall contributions of \$1.6 million, an increase of 7% over the previous year. And just yesterday we received word of the award of a Title V grant of \$4.3 million over the next five years for enhancing career opportunities in biomedical and environmental health sciences. This is a highly competitive grant. The funds provide for critical lab renovations, new equipment, faculty and staff positions, and student research opportunities.

Graduate Education

I indicated earlier my concern with declining enrollments in our graduate programs. Over this last year the Graduate Education Task Force considered several important questions with regard to graduate education at Northeastern. The Task Force is completing its work this fall. We may look forward to a statement of goals for graduate education to guide program development and improvement, as well as recommendations regarding organizational considerations. We have taken steps to improve the admissions and records processes. A new graduate recruiter will be hired and a special-focus marketing campaign will be undertaken. In addition, the connection between research and graduate studies will be strengthened. The value and number of grants available through the Committee on Organized Research have been increased, and a new summer research stipend program for faculty will begin next summer. This year we celebrated the first faculty research symposium; we will take the next step to identify and publicize faculty research.

Highlights

Let me briefly mention several other items from our Workplans:

- The Angelina Pedrosa Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs was officially opened this fall.
- We have a new Admissions and Transfer Center, with emphasis on admissions counseling, improved transfer articulation, recruitment and retention, veteran services, and transfer peer mentoring.
- Two new degree completion programs will be offered at the University Center of Lake County—the BA in Accounting began this fall and the BA in Political Science will start in the spring.
- Building I has been renovated to house our new Alumni Center. With a library, lounge, computer stations, and designated parking, this is a welcoming place for alumni to visit the University.
- Energy conservation measures are being implemented.
- \$2.5 million was re-allocated from the Office of Academic Affairs to the Academic College Offices in order to provide greater authority and responsibility to the Colleges to manage the academic program offerings.
- The UPass program has been implemented this fall.
- The Board of Trustees has approved the B.A. in Latino and Latin American Studies, the MAT in Early Childhood Education, and the B.A. in Global Studies. These new degree proposals have been forwarded to the Illinois Board of Higher Education for degree-granting approval.
- We are exploring new sites for our El Centro campus in order to provide growth opportunities for that campus.
- Under the guidance of Vice President Ross we will implement recommendations from the Working Group on the Needs of Women and LGBTQ Students. The full report is on NEIUport.

Shared Agenda and Stronger Communications

In many ways, last year was a difficult time in the life of our University. There are, of course, multiple causes, and multiple explanations and interpretations, of various events and perspectives. However, the UPI contract was settled with a 94% yes vote for ratification. The administration is committed to full implementation of the contract. In addition, the Faculty Senate and the administration issued a joint invitation to the AAUP to identify a consultant to visit Northeastern, review the status of shared governance, and to offer recommendations. The report from Dr. Ken Andersen is on NEIUport and on the Faculty Senate website. Following Dr. Andersen's recommendations, we will bring together working groups to consider an Ombuds program and a University Council. The Faculty Senate will be determining appropriate actions it will initiate. I share Dr. Andersen's optimism that as a university, Northeastern has the wish and capacity to improve our shared governance processes. It will take good will, improved communication, development of a shared agenda, and working together. I look forward to working together with the Faculty Senate and all of our shared governance groups.

Closing

In thinking back over this year, I am reminded of a presentation I attended a few years ago at a conference entitled "Public Challenges and Personal Commitments: Reclaiming the Purpose of Higher Education." The presentation was given by Sharon Daloz Parks, former Harvard University faculty member and now senior fellow at the Whidbey Institute. My sense of her message goes something like this:

We are being asked to live in a hinge time of history. It is difficult because we are global citizens with tribal souls. This hinge time is a new reality—politically, socially, and economically—and we must not be overwhelmed and retreat.

Those individuals who are able to wade into the diversity, complexity, and ambiguity of a new reality for the common good share two things:

First, a sense of trust, which I would define as a willingness to reach out to others, to collaborate in the search to identify issues and to work toward solutions.

And second, a sense of agency—that is, a sense a power, a belief that they can make a difference, a belief that the challenges they face are not greater than their capacity to discover, develop, and implement successful responses to those challenges.

Dr. Parks said that as we grow up and go through life—at home, in the world, and then in the larger world—at each step the questions of trust and agency are up for grabs all over again. Thus, it is important to have positive elements working in one's life to help to regain that sense of trust and agency at each step.

From my view, this is not unlike our own Northeastern Illinois University.

We, too, not only as individuals but as a University, have been asked to live in a hinge time of history—perhaps even more so now than when Dr. Parks first spoke about this. As our University has grown—changing in each phase of its development in the context of that particular time—the questions of trust and agency have arisen and been resolved. We find ourselves at present, again, in turbulent, uncertain times. So we must, as a community, work to renew our sense of trust and our sense of agency. We must together create those positive elements.

I believe the steps we have planned for the coming year will help us on our path to accomplish this, so that we may collectively, as a community, wade into the diversity, complexity, and ambiguity of our reality for the common good, to fulfill Northeastern’s mission—“. . . to provide an exceptional environment for learning, teaching, and scholarship. . . and to prepare a diverse community of students for leadership and service in our region and in a dynamic multicultural world.”

Thank you.



