

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT
STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY REMARKS
KIVA ROOM
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CHANCELLOR

Expect no eloquence in the remarks that follow. This will be a rather pedestrian, probably even boring update on the state of the university.

First of all, I want to express my satisfaction with the way the campus community handled a potentially explosive situation yesterday with a controversial event and a protest of that event happening simultaneously at the University Center. I was proud to see so many people asserting their right to free speech with tolerance, civility and respect and without fear. Our campus had not been so alive in a long time.

I also want to take a moment to thank our friends in the Ann Arbor campus for their unwavering support. The relationship between our two campuses has never been better. Vice President for Communications Lisa Rudgers was very understanding when we had to cut substantially our contribution to WFUM-TV. Without her cooperation, balancing the budget would have been much more painful. Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Tim Slottow and his staff, especially Peggy Norgren, Associate Vice President for Finance, have been extraordinarily supportive and helpful in advancing the discussion on student housing. Vice President for Development Jerry May and, most specially, Jefferson Porter and Roy Muir from his office, have been indispensable in giving shape and direction to our capital campaign. Provost Paul Courant is behind us on our efforts to increase enrollment and facilitate transfer from Flint to Ann Arbor. Mary Sue Coleman has a clear sense of the University of Michigan as a three-campus system. Whenever a decision is made or a policy is adopted, she asks Dearborn Chancellor Little and me how it would affect our campuses. And the Regents—all of them, but most particularly the one who comes from our community, Libby Maynard—have been attentive and responsive to our needs.

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Last year around this time we were facing serious financial challenges, primarily as a result of successive cuts in the state allocation and a drop in enrollment. We made difficult decisions, tightened our collective belt, and moved on. It was not an easy year; all of us made sacrifices. As you well know, there were no salary increases for faculty and staff last year.

We met the challenges without loss of academic quality and with minimal disruption of services. And we ended the year with a balanced budget, which is not an insignificant accomplishment under the circumstances. We did it thanks to the discipline, good judgment, caring and sense of responsibility of the campus community.

The main reason academic quality remained high during times of scarcity was the high quality of our faculty. Good professors don't tolerate mediocrity under any circumstances. Another major reason was the sound stewardship of Provost Renate McLaughlin, the deans and so many department chairs.

Good stewardship of our finances was indispensable to meet the challenge of balancing the budget. We were fortunate to have very competent and dedicated people in charge of that area, such as Vice Chancellor for Administration David Barthelmes, Budget Director Jerry Glasco and Financial Analyst Paula Hohn. I single them out, because I work closely with them and know first-hand the quality of their work, but there are many others in the Administration area that deserve recognition as well.

The situation is better this year. Enrollment is up by approximately 1% overall, a figure that does not signal a dramatic shift but points in the right direction. For one particular group, the enrollment growth has been dramatic, indeed. We have 17% more freshmen than last year at this time. Our task now is to keep these new students enrolled until they graduate with a UM-Flint diploma. We also have doubled the number of international students. We had 30 last year and 60 now. Five years ago we had only 2. Our recruitment and admission activities have improved tremendously, thanks primarily to the outstanding work of the staff of the Admissions Office, led through most of last year by Mary Jo Sekelsky, who is now Acting Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management. A great deal of credit should go to the Office of University Relations, its staff and its director, Jennifer Hogan.

Another reason for optimism this year is that the state government has lived up to its financial commitments... so far. As you may recall, the state agreed to restore 3% of last year's allocation and not to cut our budget anymore, provided that we increased tuition by no more than 2.8%. We have kept our side of the deal, and so has the state government... so far. By the way, institutional student aid was increased by the same percentage as tuition.

We understood that it would be inconceivable to have another year without providing a respectable salary raise to faculty and staff, so we allocated most of our new resources to the 3% average increase that has been in place since September 1. I should say that all our budget decisions were made in consultation with the Budget Priorities/Chancellor's Advisory Committee, the faculty governance group that advises me. Last year, as well as this one, this committee has been enhanced by staff and student representation. It was a very dedicated and effective group, admirably led by Donna Fry-Welch.

Last December I presented an “agenda for action” to the campus community, a list of specific initiatives and recommendations based on four fundamental commitments:

- *To settle for nothing less than excellence in all we do.*
- *To maintain an environment in which we our students feel academically and intellectually challenged, supported as individual learners and members of a learning community, and encouraged to be good citizens and eager participants in the care and improvement of their university.*
- *To reflect in our values and behavior society not just as it is, but as it should be.*
- *To ask as we ponder every important decision, “Is it in the best interest of the students?”*

Let me give you a progress report on the items of that “agenda for action”:

- The Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management was charged with administering the Student Satisfactory Inventory every 3 years to a sample of 1,000 or more students. In the years that the SSI is not administered, the students’ perception of their campus experience will be ascertained through activities such as forums, focus groups, and fireside chats with the chancellor.

The SSI is scheduled to be administered again in the fall of 2005. During the 2004-2005 academic year, the chancellor will hold fireside chats with students and the Student Concern Committee, a faculty governance group, will hold its annual Student Open Forum, a highly successful initiative. Status: being accomplished.

- Separate reports would be issued on the status of women, minorities, the disabled, and the LGBT community in the years when the SSI is not administered.

The first of these reports—on the status of women—was intended to come out this summer, but the deadline had to be extended, given that the director of the Women’s Educational Center resigned last spring and we are conducting a search for a new director. This fall I will appoint a campus-wide diversity committee, chaired by Tendaji Ganges, one of whose charges will be to plan and conduct the other status reports. Status: accomplishment delayed.

- The Director of University Relations was charged with advancing the concept of living-and-learning centers through educational and organizational means. A report was submitted to me last May and can be obtained from my office. There will be more discussion of this concept as we get closer to a decision on student housing. Status: being accomplished.
- The Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management was charged with moving toward establishing an Office of Residence Life by fall 2005. This is

one of the division's top four priorities, and a team has been put in place to plan for the establishment of that office and, in general, prepare for the opening of student residences on campus. All the work in this regard will be preparatory until the Regents make a decision on student housing. Status: being accomplished.

- The Provost was charged with putting in place the necessary mechanisms to make a “graduation on time” commitment to students. A task force chaired by Professor Keith Moreland studied the situation and issued a report that is now being considered by the appropriate consultative bodies. Decisions in this regard are pending the conclusion of this process. Status: being accomplished.
- The Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Enrollment Management were charged with appointing an advising enhancement task force, composed of staff, faculty and students, to examine closely our overall approach to advising and make recommendations for improvement. The task force has been appointed. Johnny Young and Dennis Viele chair it. I expect a report by the end of this semester. Status: being accomplished.
- The Provost was charged with appointing a task force to review the academic schedule and recommend changes to make the schedule more responsive to student needs as well as reflective of good practices. The appointment of this task force has been delayed pending the conclusion of work on the next academic-year calendar. The task force should be in place this semester. Status: accomplishment delayed.
- The Provost was charged with identifying and/or developing degree and certificate programs, as well as a sequence of courses that will satisfy the general education requirements, that can be completed online or in mixed-mode delivery. This work is going on. I expect a report by the end of this semester. Status: being accomplished.
- The Director of University Relations and the Director of Admissions were charged with developing a marketing strategy for the online/mixed-mode curriculum. A report was submitted last month, and is available in the Office of University Relations. Status: accomplished.
- The Provost was charged with revising the review system for academic programs to emphasize the following criteria: quality, compliance, viability, outcomes assessment, participation in interdisciplinary academic activities, use of new delivery technologies, responsiveness to students and consistency with the mission and strategic directions of the university. Academic program reviews are being conducted. The Provost will look at the reports derived from these reviews and use them as the basis for broader systemic recommendations. I expect a report by the end of this academic year. Status: being accomplished.
- The Provost was charged with overseeing a viability review of academic programs. Some programs have been discontinued, others are being reconfigured. This is an

ongoing, deliberate task that must be conducted with discretion. Status: being accomplished.

- The Chancellor and the executive officers were charged with developing a system for the periodic review of non-academic programs and activities. The office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration has taken the lead on this project. Several of its units are being reviewed, some for the first time. Also, Tendaji Ganges has graciously agreed to have a review of the Educational Initiative Offices this year. I will work with him on setting it up. We should have a campus-wide system in place by the end of this academic year. Status: being accomplished.
- The Provost and the directors of Admissions and University Relations were charged with setting in motion the academic and non-academic aspects (e.g., admissions and marketing), respectively, of creating a seamless transition for community college students, especially those from Mott Community College, to our campus once they have completed their associate degrees. On the academic side, this task will be assigned to the yet-to-be-hired Assistant Provost. In the mean time, we have completed and signed a number of articulation agreements since the beginning of this year. The Provost's Office can provide more information about these agreements. On the non-academic side, Jennifer Hogan and Mary Jo Sekelsky submitted an admissions/marketing plan last May. Status: partly accomplished, partly being accomplished.
- The Vice Chancellor for Administration will develop a new budget model for the university, giving greater responsibility to individual units for administration of their own resources and creating incentives for the units to grow and be entrepreneurial. After broad campus-wide consultation and with the unanimous support of the Budget Priorities/Chancellor's Advisory Committee, the concept for a new budget model was approved and will be implemented for FY 2006. Status: accomplished.
- The Chancellor was charged with developing a strategic plan for the university. The Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Professor Madhu Angur and Library Director Bob Houbeck, has been meeting regularly since the beginning of this semester. Its membership consists of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and alumni/community members. There will be opportunities for everyone to make suggestions for the strategic plan. The charge to the committee and the names of its members were included in an e-mail I sent to the campus last month. They are also available on the university's website. Paper copies can be obtained from Connie Cantu in the Chancellor's Office. The plan will be submitted to the appropriate governance bodies for their review and will be presented to the campus by the end of this academic year. Status: being accomplished.
- The Chancellor was charged with seeking ways to facilitate the transferability of students among the three campuses of the University of Michigan. I have been talking to Chancellor Dan Little, of the Dearborn campus, and Ann Arbor Provost

Paul Courant, both of whom are very supportive. I am encouraged by the tenor of our conversations. Status: being accomplished.

- The Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement were charged with planning and leading the UM-Flint component of the University of Michigan's capital campaign, "The Michigan Difference." We are moving right along. I chair the coordinating body, the Campaign Planning Group, which consists of four teams:
 - The campaign priorities team, co-chaired by Dean D.J. Trela and Vice Chancellor George Wendt.
 - The external community team, chaired by Kristen Skivington, Executive Director of University Outreach.
 - The communications team, chaired by Jennifer Hogan, Director of University Relations.
 - The kickoff-event team, chaired by Professor Carolyn Gillespie, with vice chair Stephanie Brown, my executive assistant.

The kickoff event will take place in the middle of next April.

The campaign will be a great opportunity for the university to raise the funds that will help us achieve our ambitious goals, move the campus to a higher level, and, in the process, reach out to our alumni and supporters, to our friends in the community, and showcase the marvelous things that we do at UM-Flint. It will take a great deal of energy and enthusiasm, two attributes that we have in abundance. I'm ready to get on with it. Status: being accomplished with gusto!

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That's where we are. As you see, this will be a very, very busy year. We have some major items on our agenda, some of them of historical proportions:

- The strategic plan will be the guiding document for the campus for the next 5 years. It has to be a carefully considered plan, both visionary and realistic.
- The capital campaign should involve everybody on this campus in one way or another. We need to create the resources that will allow us to accomplish our strategic goals and to raise the university to its next level of development. I cannot emphasize sufficiently how important it is for all us to become engaged in this initiative with enthusiasm.
- The review of the general education program is one of the most important—perhaps the most important—academic tasks being undertaken. It will provide the answer to a

fundamental question: what common learning experiences should all our students have had by the time they graduate?

- We will continue the steady progress toward student housing. In the last few months, the pace has accelerated significantly. We have issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) that elicited many responses from developers. Pending regental approval, four national companies, selected from the larger number that responded to the RFQ, should receive a request for proposals (RFP) late in November or early in December. At that point our conversation will be moving from speculation to specific facts, a major step forward. The key decision—whether to go ahead with student housing at UM-Flint—depends on our ability to show that the project is not only desirable but feasible. The developers' responses to the RFP's will help the Regents make that determination.

And then we have our regular jobs to do. So, get some rest this weekend. We need the campus community to be at its best in order to accomplish the ambitious agenda that we have set for ourselves. I get exhausted just thinking about it, but I am also keyed up, energized, ready to go. As they say in New Orleans, "laissez le bon temps rouler," let the good times roll!

Thank you for your patience and support.