

JUNE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

Remarks by
Adam W. Herbert, President
at the University of North Florida
Convocation

September 5, 1997

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of a new academic year is always a special moment in the academy. Following a summer which included activities ranging from much-needed vacations, to teaching, research projects, community service activities and a wide range of professional development opportunities, we welcome back home our returning colleagues.

Veteran students with an eye toward graduation are joined by new students eager to begin their college careers and commence an intellectual, philosophical and social exploration process which will change their lives forever.

It is with particular pride and anticipation that we also welcome new faculty colleagues and staff to the University. They join us with enthusiasm about the roles each will play in teaching and shaping the lives of our students and/or in assuring that we maintain an outstanding and caring learning environment.

This report to you on the State of the University is one I am very proud to give because during this our 25th anniversary year, UNF has reached a very high and impressive level of achievement. Indeed, we have had our best year ever in virtually every aspect of University life.

A YEAR OF SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration. Recognizing the importance of recalling and celebrating our institutional roots, in January of this year we began a year-long celebration of UNF's 25th anniversary. Our celebratory festivities began with a Gala during which the community joined with us in paying tribute to the University's founding faculty and staff; to their dreams, their vision, their hard work and their dedication to this special institution.

This public tribute has been followed by:

- written profiles of our founders on the UNF website and in the campus publication, Inside UNE;
- the initiation of a Presidential Lecture Series with Elie Wiesel and Maya Angelou as the 1997 Lecturers;
- the establishment of the 25th Anniversary Faculty Forum Program in which our faculty have volunteered to give presentations to community groups on a wide range of intellectually stimulating topics;
- a variety of musical events celebrating all forms of music from contemporary to classical, from jazz to opera; and

- many student, faculty and college-sponsored activities, held on campus and at off-campus sites in cooperation with community organizations such as the Cummer Museum of Art and the Museum of Science and History.

The 25th Anniversary celebration will be highlighted by a special birthday party which will be yet another memorable reminder of the significant past we share and the future we are building together.

Significant Academic Achievements. This Anniversary year has been one which reflects the quality of our faculty and academic programs:

- in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Music Program has been accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music;
- in the College of Health, the Physical Therapy program was accredited by the Commission of Accrediting Physical Therapy Education;
- the sponsored research activities of the faculty were particularly impressive, as 64 of the 103 proposals submitted to external agencies were funded, generating a total of over \$7 million;
- the College of Education has completed its high technology classroom of the future;
- the College of Business Administration dedicated its new building and began its International Business degree program; and
- students in the College of Computing Sciences and Engineering won the IEEE Southeast Regional Robotics competition at Virginia Tech where they competed against some of the best universities in the South.

An Outstanding Freshman Class. Last year I reported to you that UNF had attracted its strongest freshman class ever. I am very proud to announce today that we have reached yet another plateau in 1997-98. The University has enrolled the best and largest freshman class in its history. The 970 students who comprise the Fall class have a mean SAT of 1134 and a mean GPA of 3.3. On average, they have earned 16 hours of IB or Dual Enrollment credits. Reflective of the leadership abilities of these outstanding young people, 99% participated in at least one student organization and 68% were officers of those organizations.

They are joined by another 258 freshmen who enrolled during the Summer term. This brings the grand total of new freshmen at UNF this fall to 1228. As you can see, we clearly are becoming a much more traditional higher educational institution.

Student Financial Support. This year we also took a very careful look at the issue of financial aid to support these outstanding students. It became clear that many prospective UNF students could not enroll because of their financial circumstances. To address this problem, we have taken several steps.

First, we have allocated almost \$450,000 of tuition increase dollars to need-based financial aid for undergraduates.

Second, we have allocated \$25,000 in tuition increase funds to a new fellowship program for graduate students.

Third, along with Mayor Delaney, I recently announced a UNF goal to raise \$10 million over the next three years for a new need-based scholarship program which we have designated, "Pathways to Success." I am very proud that the community has responded to this effort which is designed to provide educational hope and opportunity to the young people of Duval County. We have already raised \$7.1 million toward the \$10 million goal. Within the next few months, we hope to add another \$2 million - \$3 million to this endowment fund.

Community Generosity. As these numbers suggest, growing numbers of donors are beginning to understand the importance of investing in UNF. Two years ago, we received donations totalling \$2.4 million. Last year our donations jumped to \$8.4 million -- a 345% increase over 1995-96. Our goal for 1997-98 is to receive gifts totalling at least \$10 million. To put this growing community support into better context, in 1990 UNF had an institutional endowment of \$5 million. As of the beginning of this fiscal year, our endowment has grown to \$18 million. By the end of 1998, it should exceed \$25 million.

Additionally, the University of North Florida Foundation is currently considering the initiation of the University's first capital campaign. The campaign would focus on all segments of the University and better position us to achieve our institutional objective of becoming one of the very best comprehensive universities in America.

The Legislative Process. During this special anniversary year, we requested a significant increase in the University's State funded operating budget. As we have reported to the University community, the Florida Legislature was more generous to UNF than at any point in the past twenty years.

In response to student-access demand, we were allocated \$2.7 million in enrollment growth funds. In recognition of the disparities in formulas utilized to distribute State University System resources, the Legislature allocated over \$2.6 million in new 1997-98 resources. An additional \$3 million were allocated to maintain or continue current programs. These allocations represent a 16% increase over the 1996-97 budget. For the first time, the total UNF budget has exceeded \$100 million.

REINVENTING THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE NEXT QUARTER CENTURY

It is in the context of these impressive accomplishments that I invite you to reflect with me on the future of the University of North Florida. Notwithstanding the challenges confronting all public universities today, I believe that the future has never looked brighter for this University. I am convinced that we can address these challenges while remaining true to the philosophical legacy and the commitment to both quality and service which constitute the foundation on which UNF has been built.

In reading the book, The Tao of Pooh, a few weeks ago, I was pleasantly surprised to note an observation by the sometimes insightful Winnie-the-Pooh which provides a particularly appropriate framework for contemplating our future. Placed in the form of a poem, the observation was:

How can you get very far,
If you don't know **Who You Are?**
How can you do what you ought,
If you don't know **What You've Got?**
And if you don't know **Which To Do**
Of all the things in front of you,
Then what you'll have when you are through
Is just a mess without a clue
Of all the best that can come true
If you know **What and Which and Who.**¹

Today we are operating in the context of a State government which is mandating curricular and credit hour modifications. It is demanding both greater productivity and institutional accountability. Increasingly, it is linking resources to performance standards, some of which have significant negative implications for urban institutions with large part-time student bodies. Our State government also continues to contemplate further reductions in levels of funding for undergraduate FTE's.

Simultaneously, in making its reaccreditation determinations, our regional accreditation body (SACS) is focusing greater attention on educational outcomes. Specifically, it is evaluating the extent to which all of its member institutions incorporate goals, continuous improvement and effectiveness assessments into their daily operations.

Our community also is looking to us as never before to play an increasingly more significant role in developing a larger and better educated work force. We are looked to as a significant regional resource in addressing a wide array of critical issues and problems which have both economic growth and community development implications.

It is within this very complex environmental context that we must focus significantly greater attention on Reinventing the University for the next quarter century. We must move beyond the comfortable process of reminiscing and reassessing where we have been, to the much more difficult task of contemplating the exciting possibilities which lie ahead and determining how we will get there.

This type of process demands that all members of the UNF family become aware of the **what**, the **which** and the **who** that will collectively define our future.

SACS Reaccreditation. Over the next few months each of us will in some way be involved in the SACS reaccreditation process. I cannot stress enough how important this is for the future of the institution. We have established a process through which all members of the UNF family can participate. Please do so.

The SACS visitation team will want to know that all of us are familiar with "who" we are as an institution. What is our purpose? What is our mission? Whom do we seek to serve?

The team will determine whether we have established institutional and unit goals which are understood throughout the University. Of equal importance they will ask the question -- do we all understand the parts we play as individuals in achieving these goals? Again, the team will seek to assess whether we all know the **what**, the **which** and the **who** of our university.

¹Benjamin Hoff, The Tao of Pooh, p. 58, New York: Penguin Books, 1983.

The UNF reaccreditation process is being led by the Provost. He and his colleagues will join with the working committees, your unit leaders and our association officers in facilitating participation as well as communication related to this effort. Over the coming weeks, the Provost and I will continue to monitor very carefully the Self-Study process to determine ways in which we can assure that it is as successful as possible.

Continuous Institutional Improvement. It is important to recognize that the accreditation process is simply a snapshot in time. Our reinvention process must go beyond responding to the SACS review process. We are establishing a more comprehensive, long-term and continuous reexamination process for all aspects of our operations.

This process must begin at the unit level and receive support at every subsequent decision-making point throughout the institution. It will become a fundamental aspect of all that we do. Every member of the University community will have an opportunity to shape and participate in this effort.

Decentralization and Accountability. Reflective of the intent to become an organization which is oriented increasingly toward mission, goals, outcomes and added value, this year we have made a major step toward greater fiscal decentralization and division accountability.

For the first time in the University's history we have allocated a complete fiscal year budget to each Division. Again, for the first time, this allocation includes the summer school budget for Academic Affairs. In turn, each Vice President and the President's Office have committed to achieve specific goals for which accountability has been established.

Each Vice President now has complete flexibility within specified, guiding University-wide principles to utilize their resources in a manner which will achieve agreed upon results. No decisions related to allocated funding require Presidential approval. Appropriately, in an accountability-based system, the buck now stops with the Vice President of your division.

We will continue to refine this system over the next 2-3 years with a view toward devolving to the operating units as many resource decisions as possible in response to unit-defined goals and outcome accountability obligations. We also will challenge the units to present creative ideas related to quality enhancement which can be supported through this same process.

This process will be the subject of considerable discussion and refinement over the next two years.

EXCITING INITIATIVES FOR 1997-98

Reaffirming Our Commitment to Excellence. I would like to conclude this Report by stating as clearly and strongly as possible our institutional commitment to **excellence**; excellence in our teaching, our faculty research and in the services we provide both within and external to the University.

Reflective of this commitment, I would like to announce several major initiatives which will better enable us to achieve our institutional mission. The new resources we have received from the Legislature this year and/or the realignment of existing resources to new priorities have made these possible.

With regard to new staff, we have allocated \$2.69 million to establish a record number of new positions throughout the University, including 39 positions in Academic Affairs. In this same context, the 1998-99 Summer School budget has been increased by \$191,000. We will add an additional \$800,000 to the summer school budget in January. This commitment totals \$2,969,000 and constitutes the largest Summer School budget in the University's history.

In the area of **faculty development**, I am very pleased to announce that the University will establish a **Faculty Development and Resource Center**. As many of you know, this topic has been the subject of considerable analysis and discussion over the past Summer and Chris Rasche has made clear that this is one of her highest priorities.

Both the Provost and I have made this one of our highest priorities as well. While we are awaiting receipt of a final set of recommendations from the faculty, we have already begun to consider alternative space options. In the interim, we also have:

- set aside \$50,000 to support the establishment of a Center for Teaching Excellence; and
- expanded the staff of the Center for Instruction and Research in Technology (CIRT) by one more professional position.

Also in the faculty development area, we have:

- established a permanent, recurring equipment budget for each College to be used in your instructional laboratories. The total initial allocation for this purpose is \$250,000;
- provided appropriate new computer and office equipment for new faculty;
- set aside \$60,000 in equipment start-up funds to assist new faculty in the sciences and specialized areas; and
- established the principle that Academic Affairs will, to the maximum extent possible, provide matches for equipment grants.

With regard to **faculty travel**, we recognize the critical need to enhance support of faculty research and professional development. Accordingly, beginning this Fall we have set aside \$250,000 for a faculty travel fund. These resources will be allocated by the Provost next week to each academic unit and will supplement funds already available in your current budgets.

In addition to the Faculty development initiatives referenced earlier, we also are undertaking several other important initiatives which will be supportive of teaching. Several are worthy of note:

- the Faculty Colloquy Program has been funded again for 1997-98;
- we have again allocated 9 grants @ \$5,000 each for the Summer Educational Technology Program which was initiated in 1997; and
- we have established a new Summer Research Grants Program and funded 9 grants @ \$5,000 each. These two programs total \$90,000.

The final initiative which I would like to share with you is one of the most significant

opportunities our academic units have ever had. Subject only to a second iteration of funding from the Legislature next year, I am very pleased to announce that we have established an Undergraduate Enhancement Fund of at least \$1.5 million. These funds will be allocated to academic units for the most creative ideas to significantly enhance the quality of the undergraduate programs we offer at UNF.

The Provost will announce the timeline and establish the format for proposals. These resources will be allocated in keeping with a clear plan, established outcomes and accountability for the accomplishment of proposed goals. This exciting initiative illustrates in a tangible way the institution's commitment to both quality and decentralization.

Both the Provost and I anticipate some innovative plans that will enhance the achievement of our institutional goal of becoming one of the best comprehensive universities in America.

CONCLUSION

It is my hope that this Report on the State of the University has conveyed the reasons for my significant optimism about the future of this University. Let us utilize our expanding resource base and our collective talents to pursue this future, always cognizant of what has brought us to UNF, what keeps us here, what inspires us to make this a stronger, more dynamic institution -- our students.

James Freedman, the President of Dartmouth College, has so effectively described our special concern and aspirations for the students we serve. Let us consider his words -- paraphrased into a UNF context -- as one of our priority challenges as we enter the next quarter century.

By the time they are graduated, [UNF] students should feel that they have been exposed to an educational process of such transcending reach and transforming power that they have been challenged in every segment of their being. They should truly be able to say: "I am today a different person -- a person more deeply aware of ambiguity, beauty, complexity, suffering, and truth than I was when I entered. My liberal [UNF] education has changed me utterly."²

That is **WHO** we are; that is **WHAT** we are here to do; this is the **WHICH** that makes UNF the very special place we call **HOME!**

²James O. Freedman, Idealism and Liberal Education, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996, p.4.

