

Annual Address to the Campus

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Wayne State University

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Welcome to the new academic year at Wayne State University and thanks for being here today to join me in thinking about our future in the coming year and beyond. I will share a few reflections on the past year but focus mostly on some ideas about our future.

I believe we are at a pivotal period in the history of this University, poised in the next few years to have potentially far-reaching impact on the people and communities we serve, and the character of the University.

Clearly Detroit, Michigan, and Wayne State are at a crossroads. Michigan's economy is in the throes of dramatic change, and higher education provides essential energy to assure that change will convert Michigan to the

economic dynamo we know it can be (as it once was when the automotive industry was at its zenith and the backbone of the economy). The ingredients for the future economic dynamo are all here, and Wayne State is a key element.

I will describe seven issues I think we must confront in the coming year that I believe are essential to Wayne State's pursuit of excellence and essential to revitalizing the future of those we serve. This year we will pursue specific next stages of initiatives that will be critical to setting the longer term course for all seven issues. The issues are:

1. Student success
2. Incentives for productive research

3. Increased recruitment of full-time, tenure track faculty
4. Resources and revenue enhancement
5. Entrepreneurship and economic stimulus
6. Midtown-Woodward-Wayne (I'll explain more what this means later)
7. Continual Pursuit of New Strategic Directions

1. Student success

When I speak of "student success," I mean academic achievement to each student's fullest potential, through a learning environment that both challenges students to stretch beyond expectations and also nurtures students by recognizing their individual, special learning needs.

Student success requires active support by the entire University community to maximize each student's potential to achieve academically and establish a productive life course. We all know the common measures of retention and graduation

rates, and we must continually measure these benchmarks. But measurements are not enough.

An essential element in student success is admissions standards that give every student a realistic, "fighting" chance for achievement. Success goes far beyond a philosophy of open admissions. Just getting admitted to college is not success, and we do no student a favor by admission to Wayne State if they simply cannot do the work and fail. In fact, this kind of failure too often leads to disillusionment—so much so that a student will give up on higher education entirely. That's a tragedy we must avoid—and I am afraid that we sometimes actually facilitate that unfortunate outcome.

Our commitment should be essentially the same as that articulated by President Truman's Commission on Higher Education 60 years ago which stated that "every citizen should have the

opportunity to pursue higher education to the fullest extent of his or her abilities and energy.” I also like the way President Obama phrased it when he said, “We must make sure that people who have the grades, the desire and the will, but not the money, can still get the best education possible.”

We have several programs in place to help newly admitted students who need extra academic support. Among the key programs are learning communities, our Emerging Scholars Program, the Comerica Academic Success Center and APEX, the Office for Academic Pathways for Excellence. These programs seek to improve retention and graduation of students who have sufficient ability, but are disadvantaged by inadequate educational or social preparation, and need significant learning skills development to increase their potential for success. It is wholly appropriate for these programs to take risks with disadvantaged students with clear ambition. But they

must be targeted, not broadly open to all. For students with high levels of failure risk, we should provide sensitive and assessment-based guidance for alternative routes to academic success, other than admission to Wayne State, including promise of later admission to Wayne once academic deficiencies have been overcome.

So, a principal goal for the coming academic year will be enhanced and innovative articulation agreements with metropolitan Detroit’s community colleges so that we can provide contingent admissions of academically deficient students to Wayne State in collaboration with our community college partners. Wayne Direct is a good start but we must do more including increased partnerships among our respective faculties. And we have the best laboratory in America for developing alternative pathways to baccalaureate degrees through community college collaboration. Thus this is both an educational and a

research challenge in the interest of higher education innovation nationally. And we must collect detailed data on performance so we can evaluate what works and what does not and adjust accordingly—and publish the results in the education research journals.

Of course, another essential key to student success is financial aid. This year we took decisive action to dramatically diminish the financial need barrier to a Wayne State education.

First the Board of Governors adopted a modest 5.4 percent increase in undergraduate tuition, and we further mitigated the resultant student cost using federal stimulus dollars, bringing the effective tuition increase to 4.8 percent for Michigan-resident undergraduates. Wayne State's tuition is still 12th among Michigan's 15 public universities. But I must underscore this—our 12th ranking has both positive and

quite negative implications—more on that a bit later.

Our financial aid program for this academic year has several highlights:

- An enhanced financial aid stimulus package, which doubled the amount of need-based aid for most Wayne State students.
- Our alumni tuition reduction program, through which alumni or their spouses who recently have lost their jobs can take up to four classes at 50 percent of the cost of regular tuition.
- We participate in the “Yellow Ribbon” program for veterans, a national program that allows returning veterans to attend the university at a reduced rate.
- In January we began a campaign called *Aim Higher for Students* to raise funds for both

merit- and need-based scholarships. *Aim Higher for Students* already has resulted in nearly \$2 million in gifts to the University, so we have momentum building toward our \$10 million goal.

2. Incentives for productive research

This semester I will convene a Research Incentive Task Force to create a university-wide approach providing strong incentives to productive researchers. This plan is part of a strategy to strengthen our research activities and expand grant and contract funding. It's essential that we reward successful researchers in a variety of ways and that we leverage our faculty recruitment by using extramural funds to support existing faculty salaries. In doing so we can recruit additional faculty colleagues using the salary savings gained from extramural grants and contracts. Faculty

incentives for research will enhance this leverage.

Clearly a defining characteristic of Wayne State is its outstanding research accomplishments and this has been another successful research year. Many people in the general public -- and amazingly, some people on this campus -- are not aware that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching designates Wayne State in the highest possible research category, a distinction held by only 3.6 percent of U.S. institutions of higher education and awarded in Michigan only to Wayne State, Michigan State and the University of Michigan. This is an impressive accomplishment and a defining characteristic of Wayne State.

Our research credentials are outstanding. And I am pleased to say that we have raised our research expenditures by 10 percent this year to more than \$253 million, a figure we intend to grow and accelerate.

This year Wayne State faculty members received \$21 million in research grants under the federal stimulus American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These 42 grants include five from the National Science Foundation for \$2 million and 35 totaling more than \$14 million from the National Institutes of Health -- the second largest number of NIH grants in the state exceeded only by the University of Michigan.

And our University Research Corridor alliance with U of M and MSU continues to pay off for Michigan in many ways:

Our three URC institutions already account for \$1.38 billion in research expenditures in Michigan every year, 95 percent of all federal research dollars coming into the state. The URC also has invested \$900,000 of its own resources in seed grants to speed up the development of feasible alternative energy research.

And additional Wayne State accomplishments occurred this spring, when our College of Engineering opened the Marvin I. Danto Engineering Development Center and the School of Medicine dedicated the Richard J. Mazurek Medical Education Commons, two new facilities that exponentially advance our capacity for research and education.

3. Increased recruitment of full-time, tenure track faculty

The most critical factor in undergraduate and graduate student success and research productivity is our full time, tenure track faculty. During the past decade, largely because of inadequate state appropriations and tuition revenues, we have neglected this asset to a degree that will threaten the quality of our institution unless we energetically reverse this trend. Currently the proportion of our faculty that is full time tenure track is behind our peers nationally and in

Michigan. At Wayne State the proportion of credit hours taught by full time faculty is 35 percent -- behind our Michigan research university counterparts MSU and U of M at 45 percent to 50 percent. Additionally, our full-time faculty level is 5.3 per 100 students, although close to Michigan State University's 5.6 per 100 students, it is still considerably behind our peers nationally which averages 7.2 full time faculty per 100 students. And while we balance our lower ratio of full time faculty with part-time faculty who bring valuable work experience to teaching, it is essential that we return our full-time faculty complement to the level of our research university peers in Michigan and nationally as soon as possible. This is very important to sustaining our excellence in research and education at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Our goal is to do so over the next three years. We will energetically recruit more full time tenure track faculty through a combination

of new resources and reallocation of existing resources.

4. Resources and revenue enhancement

Successfully addressing each of the three issues I have mentioned thus far requires resource investment. And investment is the correct term because the result of these resource enhancements will be return on investment that is absolutely essential to the future of not only Wayne State but also Detroit and all of Michigan.

Michigan has a significant economic challenge - to transform itself from a narrowly focused automotive manufacturing base to a diversified participant in a global, knowledge-driven economy. Wayne State University has a major part to play in this transformation. In fact, I expect it will not happen without our investment in excellence, particularly in partnership with our University Research Corridor colleagues.

Michigan must link its aspirations for economic turnaround to the transforming capacity of higher education. Time and again, national research has shown that a state's economic prosperity begins with its universities. However, so far such research has not yet convinced our Michigan public policymakers to turn away from partisan debate and toward bold, productive action driven by concern for the public good rather than political expediency.

Our state appropriation is catastrophically inadequate for the tasks at hand. Michigan ranks 50th in the nation for increases in state appropriations to higher education in the past decade. 50th out of 50. Dead last. You can't get any worse than that.

Gross underfunding by the state is one of the most serious threats to this University—and to the state itself.

Because of this failure by the state, we absolutely must lift our traditional Wayne State restraint on tuition revenues. Our failure to be realistic about tuition in the face of state funding inadequacies threatens our academic programs and infrastructure and this could diminish the level of excellence our students deserve. We have been frugal -but we cannot allow frugality to compromise our excellence anymore. Our recent frugality is the main reason we are threatened by our relatively low proportion of our faculty who are full-time, tenure track engaged in high quality education and research.

We must make bold yet pragmatic decisions about the way we balance tuition revenues with financial aid. Fortunately, our Board of Governors recognizes the validity of this point, and I believe they will act courageously to assure the excellence remains an essential trait of this university

through rational and substantial increases in tuition revenue.

Most important to Wayne State's continuing excellence, despite the dramatic shortfall in state support and tuition revenues, is the amazing success of our Foundation and its highly competent staff in private fundraising. Every day we must thank them and our generous donors for their absolutely essential sustaining commitment to Wayne State's national prominence among the very best urban research universities. This continued prominence would not be possible without that commitment. We will continue our development effort with all the energy possible in the year ahead and beyond.

5. Entrepreneurship and economic stimulus

Frankly, we are not waiting for the state to catch up. We already are doing our part for Michigan's economy. I'll give you just a few examples:

Vigorous research universities like Wayne State produce innovations, inventions, patents and licenses, as well as new companies and jobs. The discovery, production and commercialization of new products and services are of direct and lasting benefit to our economy. We can see this process at work on our own campus in several spinoff companies resulting from the work of our faculty.

TechTown continues to stimulate the creation of new businesses and jobs in Detroit and Michigan through its community of entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, and corporate partners. TechTown's signature building, TechOne, is home to nearly 100 new and established companies from this country and abroad—up from only 40 just one year ago.

For those of you who haven't heard, our Wayne State Office of Technology Commercialization was re-located to

TechTown as of September 1. This change will better integrate academic programs with entrepreneurial programs at TechTown, facilitating connections between faculty and the business community.

And TechTown recently became home to *FastTrac to the Future*, a \$9.25 million grant-funded entrepreneurship project of the New Economy Initiative and the Kauffman Foundation that promises to train entrepreneurs and create 400 new companies to boost Southeast Michigan's economy in the next three to five years.

This year TechTown also became home to Michigan's first stem cell commercialization lab with support of a \$750,000 grant from Wayne County Executive Bob Ficano.

And this year the U.S. Department of Energy awarded Wayne State \$5 million to provide an electric vehicle engineering education and workforce training

program. Professor K.Y. Simon Ng is leading a team to provide a comprehensive set of educational degree programs in electric-drive vehicles, electric transportation technology and electric vehicle maintenance from associate degrees with Macomb Community College to graduate engineering degrees at Wayne State.

6. Midtown-Woodward-Wayne

It will take a great effort to fully revitalize Detroit. But it can happen. Twenty-five years ago, Pittsburgh was in dramatic economic decline much like Detroit's recent experience, having lost its historical manufacturing base in steel. Unemployment was higher even than currently in Detroit. But Pennsylvania enlisted its research universities on Pittsburgh's behalf, and provided stimulus funding. Today Pittsburgh is a center of entrepreneurship in computer software, biotechnology and world-class health care and medical

research. It's a city that works.

What happened in Pittsburgh can be a model for the renewal of Detroit. The key is collaboration—among higher education, business, foundations, and government. Will it be easy? No. It wasn't easy for Pittsburgh. But no American city is more tough-minded or has a stronger work ethic than Detroit.

I am convinced that Wayne State University will be fundamental to any renewal of Detroit and Michigan. Midtown, our neighborhood and the cornerstone of Detroit's critically important Woodward Corridor, will lead the renewal of the city's quality of life and economic strength. This is so because of Midtown's assets in cultural institutions, entertainment, employment, neighborhood value and of course—education. And Wayne is fully engaged in the Hudson-Webber Foundation's imaginative "15,000 by 2015" initiative, which hopes to

attract 15,000 young professionals to live and work in Midtown by 2015. The efforts of Hudson-Webber, Kresge Foundation, and Wayne State have already injected new life into expectations for Midtown and all of Detroit.

Additionally Hudson-Webber and other foundations have partnered with several of Midtown's anchor institutions in revitalization—in addition to Wayne State, the Detroit Medical Center, Henry Ford Health System, the University Cultural Center Association, the College for Creative Studies and others. The Wayne State mantra that has emerged to capture this growing optimism is "Live, learn, work and play in Midtown." Our relationship to this revitalization, and our considerable influence, takes in myriad activities including public schools, public safety, housing, transportation and economic development, among others. Wayne State is deeply involved in all of these and will be even more

involved in the coming year and beyond. I'll describe just a couple of examples.

First, an upgrade of Detroit's K-12 public schools is absolutely fundamental to attracting the young professionals essential to 15x15's success. Wayne State has more than 120 partnership programs with Detroit Public Schools. This fall, we also assumed responsibility for the complete math program at Detroit's Western International High School. This project builds on our Math Corps program, which has an astonishing record at improving the performance of young people in DPS. Since 1995, 90 percent of Math Corps students have graduated from high school and 80 percent have gone on to college. That 90 percent graduation rate compares to only 45 percent among DPS students overall.

Second example—this year Wayne State invested more than \$500,000 in 13 faculty research and development

projects aimed at transformation of urban life.

Third, Wayne State's urban engagement task force, under the leadership of Professors Lyke Thompson and Robin Boyle, has proposed that a Center for Urban Engagement, Research and Education be created to identify opportunities for Wayne State's engagement and research in the community.

As I mentioned, Detroit's revival will take great effort. But all things of consequence take great effort, and in this case, great vision and optimism. The ingredients are here. The vision is clear. The optimism is palpable. Now we must make it happen.

7. Continual Pursuit of New Strategic Directions

Consolidating and refining all of these pursuits of excellence is the rationale for a newly formed strategic directions initiative. The goal is to develop quantitative

consensus objectives for the University and continually monitor progress and adjust accordingly. The strategic directions initiative engages campus leadership, deans, cabinet, faculty leaders and students. The intent is determination of the University's specific quantitative goals and objectives subjected to ongoing evaluation and allocation of resources based upon progress or lack thereof. We must be willing to continually reinvent ourselves, but do so with specific analytical justification for sustained long-term accomplishments. We will engage in campus wide and targeted forums throughout the year as well as focused task forces of which there are six operating currently. We will then continue the effort in subsequent years and publish an annual progress report describing revised quantitative objectives and resource allocation.

In closing I'll reflect a bit more personally on the past year. When I spoke at my first public forum on campus slightly more than a year ago, I said I believed the presidency of Wayne State University was the most exciting leadership opportunity in higher education today. My first year as president has proven last year's characterization of Wayne State to be true in even more ways than I anticipated.

In the past year I have been warmly welcomed into this vigorous community of educators, researchers, and community activists, as well as a student population more rich in its diversity and commitment to community than any in America. We have very much enjoyed learning about Midtown, Detroit and Michigan. My wife Sheri and I have thoroughly enjoyed campus events—from the farmers market, to town forums to very successful Warrior athletics—walked from Wayne State to the Riverfront,

sampled the city's outstanding cultural life, watched the Tigers and Red Wings win - (and the Lions lose which was great football to watch despite the loss) and met literally hundreds of people who share our belief that Detroit is on the verge of a real and lasting renewal.

We deeply appreciate the kindness and generosity that this community has shown me and my family. Serving Wayne State University, and working with its students, faculty, staff and alumni, is a profound privilege. I am confident that we will make Wayne State University a beacon illuminating a bright future for Detroit, as well as the engine driving its return to economic prosperity.

Thank you.