

Jay Noren's remarks
Swearing-In ceremony
August 1, 2008

Judge Keith, thank you for honoring us by officiating at this ceremony. Thanks also to Governor Richard Bernstein, Professor Seymour Wolfson and Student Council President Jason Kinde. And special thanks to Former President Reid. Irv, you have been very generous with your time and your insights during the several weeks since I was named President-elect. You have left huge shoes to fill and I hope I can build on all you have accomplished during your tenure.

I am humbled, privileged and excited to join the Wayne State family and the Detroit community as the next president of the university.

The central tenet of Wayne State University's mission is preparing students to excel in an increasingly advanced and interconnected global society. The mission is achieved superbly by engaging students in creatively focused efforts that address a complex array of real-world problems.

Those creative efforts place Wayne State at the forefront of the nation's premier urban research universities. We possess a remarkably diverse and motivated student body, a faculty with not only nationally recognized academic expertise but also an unmatched social conscience and an abiding commitment to sharing their expertise with the entire metropolitan community.

These assets, and the profound social and economic challenges facing urban communities here and across the nation today, lead me to an

exhilarating prediction. This is the right time and the right place for Wayne State and our partner organizations and businesses in metropolitan Detroit to produce far-reaching and nationally significant creative solutions that will serve as models for metropolitan communities throughout the country. Clearly these challenges are not unique to Detroit and Michigan, although they are probably more intense here than anywhere else.

Wayne State's character calls for continual reaffirmation of our commitment as a university of opportunity, a university of discovery and a major community collaborator in solutions to major urban and social issues.

I think many fundamental challenges underlie this commitment; I will briefly mention just four:

1. 21st century transformation of the Detroit and Michigan economy and its workforce

Wayne State will conscientiously drive economic and technological development throughout our region and beyond through research and educating the workforce for the knowledge economy. No other area in the country can exceed the potential we have in the powerful University Research Corridor partnership of Wayne State, Michigan State, and the University of Michigan.

2. Unwavering investment in access to education for the full spectrum of energetic students:

Harry Truman's Commission on Higher Education was right 60 years ago and remains correct today: Its central principle was that every citizen should have the opportunity to pursue higher education to the

fullest extent of his or her abilities and energy. Wayne State embraces that principle enthusiastically by assuring access to higher education for all qualified students, including special support for those who have academic potential and ambition to overcome life circumstances that have caused significant educational or economic disadvantage.

3. Resolution of uniquely urban problems and related complex public policy issues:

For the foreseeable future, successful urban research universities, and Wayne State is preeminent in this group, will be essential resources in addressing urban stresses through many efforts including urban planning, alternative energy, workforce retooling, economic development, K-20 education, and the delivery of health care and human services to underserved populations.

4. Preparation of students for informed participation in LIFELONG community engagement—and the essential lifelong learning skills required

A critical higher education mission for the 21st century is teaching students to engage enthusiastically in their responsibilities as informed citizens, resulting in lifelong commitment to full participation in the democratic process and community service, which is essential to sustaining an effective government and productive community action.

In summary, I think the beauty of Wayne State University is this—we have 33,000 students, more than 8,000 faculty and staff, and a long history of partnerships with a richly diverse community energized to

revitalize Detroit, the state of Michigan, and by example those beyond our borders.

I am anxious to join this engine of people power to participate in crafting an upward path to a brighter future. There is no better place in the country to energize that bright future than here at Wayne State University and Detroit, and no better time than right now.

Thank you.