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UA3/9/5 Faculty-Staff Convocation

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WELCOME. GOOD TO SEE EVERYONE THIS MORNING FULL OF ENERGY AND OPTIMISM FOR A NEW YEAR. AS I WAS PREPARING MY REMARKS, I MENTIONED TO JULIE HOW MUCH I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS MORNING AND IN HER OWN HUMBLING WAY, SHE REMINDED ME THAT I'D BETTER SERVE DONUTS OR NO ONE WILL COME! HOPE YOU GOT A DONUT!!

A SPECIAL YEAR WILL BEGIN THIS WEEK AT WKU. WE ARE BLESSED. WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A PART OF A UNIVERSITY FULL OF PROMISE, ENERGY, TALENT, GROWTH, NEW MEANING AND IMPACT—AND WE ENJOY THESE VALUES AT A TIME RICH IN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT—OUR CENTENNIAL!

TO OUR LONG-TENURED FACULTY AND STAFF, WELCOME AND THANK YOU. THANK YOU FOR HELPING BUILD, SHAPE, AND NURTURE ALL THE THINGS THAT HAVE BROUGHT MEANING AND DISTINCTIVENESS TO OUR TRADITIONS AND OUR VALUES—TO WHAT WE CALL THE WESTERN EXPERIENCE. TO OUR NEW FACULTY AND
STAFF, WELCOME AND THANK YOU FOR THE VALUE YOU WILL BRING TO THIS CAMPUS, TO OUR UNIQUE SPIRIT AND TO THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE WE HOLD DEAR.

I HOPE ALL OF YOU HAVE HAD A GOOD SUMMER. MANY OF YOU HAVE WORKED HARD RIGHT HERE, WHILE SOME HAVE TRAVELED, WRITTEN, OR IMPROVED YOUR SCHOLARSHIP IN OTHER MEANINGFUL WAYS. I HAD A COUPLE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SO AND I’LL SHARE THEM WITH YOU THIS MORNING.

LAST YEAR

BUT FIRST, LET US REFLECT A MOMENT ON THE EVENTS OF THE YEAR WE JUST COMPLETED. IT WAS QUITE A YEAR. MY COMPLIMENTS TO THE KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY! NO BUDGET CUTS LAST YEAR AND WE CLOSED THE BOOK ON THE BUDGET HIT WE TOOK IN 2004. OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS BUILT A GOOD STATE BUDGET LAST SPRING. IN HINDSIGHT, AREN’T WE GLAD THEY FAILED TO PASS A BUDGET IN 2004? BY WAITING UNTIL 2005, WE WENT FROM THE INEVITABLE SPECTER OF AN AUSTERE BUDGET IN 2004 TO AN OPPORTUNISTIC BUDGET IN 2005. A BUDGET WHICH HAD OVER $80 MILLION IN NEW MONEY FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION INCLUDING $9 MILLION IN NEW DOLLARS FOR WKU. IT INCLUDED MONEY TO COMPLETE THE RENOVATION OF OUR SCIENCE BUILDINGS AND START FUNDING FOR OUR KENTUCKY ACADEMY FOR MATH AND SCIENCE. IT ALSO AUTHORIZED SEVERAL PROJECTS ACROSS CAMPUS FOR WHICH WE HAVE BEEN PREPARING IN RECENT YEARS.

AN IMPROVED STATE APPROPRIATION, A PROGRESSIVE TUITION SCHEDULE, GOOD CAMPUS BUSINESS PRACTICES, AND GROWING PRIVATE SUPPORT ALLOWED US TO BUILD AN ENCOURAGING CAMPUS BUDGET FOR THE CURRENT YEAR. OUR CAMPUS BUDGET GREW BY $29 MILLION TO $273 MILLION THIS YEAR. IT INCLUDES A SECOND YEAR OF INVESTMENTS IN ACADEMIC QUALITY. IT INCLUDES, FOR THE FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW, THE HIGHEST RATE OF SALARY INCREASE AMONG KENTUCKY'S UNIVERSITIES. BY THE WAY, SINCE 2003, WE HAVE NARROWED THE MARGIN DIFFERENTIAL IN ALL FIVE FACULTY RANK CATEGORIES WHEN COMPARED TO OUR BENCHMARKS. OUR BUDGET THIS YEAR INCLUDES A FOUR PERCENT OPERATING INCREASE TO ALL DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS—THAT ONE HAS BEEN A LONG TIME
COMING. IT ALSO INCLUDES MONEY FOR CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS AND A SIGNIFICANT BOOST IN SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID.

SUCCESS CENTER, both of which are near completion. We added 1,012 parking spaces and took 162 spaces away in favor of green space. Yes, I know there are jeers and cheers for that one, depending on where you are accustomed to parking.

The most important achievement last year, however, was completing the SACS Accreditation process with flying colors. We received only two specific recommendations for improvement and we crafted a progressive quality enhancement plan which folds nicely into our campus strategic plan. Most universities breathe a sigh of relief when a reaffirmation team departs a campus. They put the accreditation report on the shelf and go on with business as usual. Not us. We put this process to work. We defined a new commitment to faculty and student engagement and student success. As a result, we are further defining and improving the WKU experience for everyone in this university family.

Let's give ourselves a hand for a pretty darn good year last year!
AS WE TRANSITION INTO THE HERE AND NOW, ALLOW ME TO
OPINE A MOMENT ON SOME BROADER TRANSITIONS WHICH WILL
SIGNIFICANTLY DEFINE OUR SHORT AND LONG-TERM FUTURE.

**GROWTH AND QUALITY**

FROM 1998 THROUGH LAST YEAR WE GREW DRAMATICALLY
BECAUSE WE HAD TO DO SO. YES, THE STATE CHALLENGED US TO
GROW AND THAT CHALLENGE IS STILL OUT THERE, BUT WE HAD TO
GROW TO ENSURE FINANCIAL CAPACITY IN AN ERA OF DECLINING
STATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT. THAT STATE FUNDING PENDULUM IS
NOW TURNING IN A MORE FAVORABLE DIRECTION. OUR NEAR-TERM
GROWTH, THEREFORE, WILL BE LESS ABOUT QUANTITY AND MORE
ABOUT STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND QUALITY
THE INVESTMENTS WE ARE MAKING IN OUR CURRICULUM, IN OUR
FACULTY AND STAFF, IN OUR CLASSROOMS, LABS, RESTAURANTS,
RESIDENCE HALLS, PARKING AREAS, AND ATHLETIC FACILITIES
WILL HELP US CONTINUE TO GROW OUR APPLICANT POOL. FROM A
GROWING APPLICANT POOL, WE CAN AFFORD THE LUXURY OF
BECOMING MORE SELECTIVE IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS WHILE
STILL ACHIEVING MODEST GROWTH. GREATER SELECTIVITY WILL
ALLOW US TO HAVE A BETTER SHOT AT IMPROVING OUR RETENTION / ENSURING GREATER STUDENT SUCCESS / AND GRADUATING A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF OUR STUDENTS. IT ALSO MOVES US MORE DISTINCTIVELY TOWARD THE NATIONAL PROMINENCE TO WHICH OUR CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN IS DEDICATED.


ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY THREE YEARS AGO, SENATOR JUSTIN MORRILL CHAMPIONED FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO CREATE COLLEGES FOCUSED ON SOLVING MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL,
AND SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS WHICH STOOD IN THE WAY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR OUR NATION. TODAY, WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE A FEDERAL MANDATE, WE DO HAVE A STATE AND A SELF-IMPOSED MANDATE. CONSEQUENTLY, THIS IS AN INSTITUTION WHICH TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEETING THE SOCIAL, SCIENTIFIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL, HEALTH, AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF ITS REGION. WE ARE THE STEWARD OF A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THOSE WITHIN OUR REACH. WE ARE THE IDENTIFIER AND SOLVER OF PROBLEMS WITHIN OUR REACH. WE ARE THE DRIVER OF ECONOMIC VITALITY IN OUR REGION.

NEW PROGRAMS

MISSION SHAPES CURRICULUM. OUR NEW MISSION OF HOLISTIC LEARNING, ENGAGED CITIZENSHIP AND SERVICE, AND APPLIED RESEARCH IS THE IMPETUS BEHIND NEW AND EXCITING CURRICULA. THINK ABOUT THE NEW PROGRAMS AT WKU AND THE AREAS WHERE WE ARE ENHANCING AN ALREADY STRONG CURRICULUM—BIOTECHNOLOGY, COMBUSTION SCIENCE AND ENERGY, NANOTECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, BIODIVERSITY STUDIES, SOCIAL WORK, EDUCATION LEADERSHIP, TOURISM,
COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS, A NEW E-MBA PROGRAM, NOT TO MENTION EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS IN HISTORY WITH AN ACQUISITION DEDICATED TO THE CIVIL WAR IN THE WEST. A FEDERAL RESEARCH LAB IN AGRICULTURE IS ON THE WAY, AND A BROAD RANGE OF PROGRAMS ARE BEING DEVELOPED THROUGH THE EMERGING DIVISION OF EXTENDED LEARNING AND OUTREACH.

IF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY NEED IT, WE WILL DESIGN AND DELIVER IT. IF GLASGOW, ELIZABETH TOWN, FORT KNOX, OR OWENSBORO NEED IT, WE WILL DELIVER IT. AND CONGRATULATIONS BY THE WAY TO OUR ENGINEERING FACULTY WHO JUST YESTERDAY RECEIVED WORD THAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED FINAL AND UNQUALIFIED ACCREDITATION FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS! WELL DONE MY FRIENDS!

YES, THIS IS THE NEW WKU. A WKU WHICH IS SERIOUS ABOUT TRANSFORMING ITSELF. I USE THE WORD "ITSELF" PURPOSELY. WKU IS PEOPLE. FORGET FOR A MOMENT THE PLACE, THE BUILDINGS, THE TREES, THE HILL—WKU IS YOU, THE FACULTY AND STAFF. IT IS OUR STUDENTS. IT IS OUR ALUMNI. IT IS OUR FANS. IT IS ALL THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE ENRICHED BY OUR PRESENCE AND OUR IMPACT.

IT IS YOUR FAMILY AT HOME—which by the way, no matter what I say here today in the way of strategic
CLARIFICATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT, IS AND ALWAYS SHOULD BE YOUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. WKU CANNOT PROSPER UNLESS YOUR PERSONAL LIFE IS FULFILLING. IT IS MY HOPE, AS IT IS WITH MY FAMILY, THAT LIFE AT WKU AND LIFE AT HOME ARE INTRINSICALLY LINKED. BUT I DIGRESS.

MY POINT IS ABOUT PEOPLE. PEOPLE IN THE BROAD UNIVERSITY FAMILY, PEOPLE WITH PERSONALITY, PEOPLE WITH PURPOSE AND RESOLVE AND PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO THE NOBLE VIRTUES OF WHAT WE DO AS EDUCATORS. A WKU EXPERIENCE IS ABOUT PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH PEOPLE TO ENSURE MEANING IN LEARNING; TO ENSURE SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN WORK AND LIFE. OUR WORK HERE IS NOT LIKE A GAME OF SOLITAIRE. WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER. WE DEPEND ON EACH OTHER TO ALL DO OUR JOBS WELL. WHEN ONE OF US, OR A COLLECTION OF US, DOES WELL, WE ALL BENEFIT. WHEN ONE STUMBLES, WE ALL ARE IMPACTED. SUCCESS IS A COOPERATIVE EFFORT. THE BUSINESS WORLD HAS COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT FOLLOWING INTEGRITY; INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND THE ABILITY TO WORK WITHIN A TEAM ARE THE TRAITS RECRUITERS SEEK MOST, ABOVE ALL OTHER MEASURES OF TALENT AND GRADES. BESIDES ALL OF THAT, IT IS
MORE FUN TO BE PART OF A TEAM EFFORT. NONE OF US IS AS SMART AS ALL OF US. SOMEONE IN JAPAN SAID THAT A FEW THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

**URGENCY**

THAT'S WHY WE ARE IN A HURRY AT WKU. PEOPLE'S LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS ARE AT STAKE. THERE IS A SENSE OF URGENCY HERE. OUR PACE HAS QUICKENED. WE ARE SETTING THE PACE FOR COMMUNITIES ACROSS OUR REGION. SLOW EQUALS DECLINE. IF WE STAND IN THE 21ST CENTURY CROSSROADS, WE WILL GET RUN OVER. IF WE ARE COMFORTABLE AND PREDICTABLE, THEN WE ARE NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH. THAT'S WHY WE ARE GROWING, BUILDING, AND IMPROVING AS FAST AS WE CAN. THAT'S WHY OUR MISSION IS CHANGING. I'LL SAY IT AGAIN. THERE IS NO MISSION CREEP AT WKU. IT IS FULL-BLOWN MISSION SPRINT AT WKU. ANYONE WHO TAKES ISSUE WITH THAT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE URGENCY OF OUR STATE MANDATED AND SELF-IMPOSED CHALLENGE, OR THE MAGNITUDE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT OUR COMMONWEALTH.
THAT IS WHAT MAKES IT SO MUCH FUN. MANY OF THE PROBLEMS WE NEED TO SOLVE ARE NEW AND UNDEFINED. CONVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS NO LONGER SUFFICE. WE MUST BE INNOVATIVE. WE MUST FIND UNCONVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS TO CAMPUS PROBLEMS AND TO PROBLEMS ACROSS OUR REGION. THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT FOR WHICH WE ARE BECOMING KNOWN IS SO ENCOURAGING—ON AND OFF CAMPUS. NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE, NEW USES OF TECHNOLOGY, NEW APPLICATIONS OF CLASSROOM LOGIC, NEW PARTNERS TO BRING NEW AND ADDED CAPACITY. THIS IS THE NEW SPIRIT OF WKU.

SPRIT

THE SPIRIT DOES MAKE THE MASTER. THAT'S WHAT WE LIVE BY AT WKU. DEFINED BY PRESIDENT CHERRY AS, "THAT OTHER THING." WELL, DR. CHERRY, IT HAS BEEN 100 YEARS SINCE YOU GOT LEGISLATION PASSED AND BROUGHT US TO THIS HILL. "THAT OTHER THING" TODAY IS INSTITUTIONAL HEART, CHARACTER, LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY, LOYALTY, COMPASSION, ENERGY, CITIZENSHIP, AND WISDOM. IT IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION. IT IS PEOPLE. PEOPLE TOUCHED BY
THE SPIRIT OF THIS PLACE. IT IS MORE THAN EDUCATION. IT IS MORE THAN TEACHING AND LEARNING. IT IS MORE THAN RESEARCH AND SERVICE. IT IS MORE THAN ENGAGEMENT. IT IS ALL OF THOSE THINGS—EXECUTED WITH PASSION AND PRIDE. THAT'S WHY THE SPIRIT OF THIS PLACE MAKES MASTERS OF THOSE WHO DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO WHAT WE DO HERE.

WOLF LESSONS

THIS SUMMER, I HAD TWO EXHILARATING EXPERIENCES WHICH HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON MY RESPONSIBILITY TO ENHANCE OUR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AT WKU. EARLY IN THE SUMMER, I WAS INVITED BY AASCU TO JOIN SOME OTHER PUBLIC UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK. WE WERE THERE TO STUDY THE SUCCESS TO DATE AND ONGOING ISSUES RELATED TO THE REINTRODUCTION OF THE PREDATORY WOLF INTO THE YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM. WE WERE ASSEMBLED UNDER THE BANNER OF THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT AT THE BEHEST OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WHICH HAS A STATED PRIORITY TO ENCOURAGE UNIVERSITIES TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN THE PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC LANDS. WE LEARNED A LOT
ABOUT WOLF BEHAVIOR, USUALLY ON A COLD BLUFF AT 5 A.M., BUT WE ALSO ASSESSED THE ECOLOGICAL VALUE WHICH THE WOLF BRINGS AFTER BEING INTENTIONALLY ELIMINATED IN THE WESTERN STATES IN THE 1930’S. WE ASSESSED THE CONTROVERSY AND THE NECESSARY COMPROMISES WHICH THE REINTRODUCTION ENTAILED. PHIL LIENESCH, ON OUR BIOLOGY FACULTY, WENT TO YELLOWSTONE IN AUGUST WITH OTHER CAMPUS FACULTY TO ASSESS THIS CASE STUDY AND SEEK WAYS TO UTILIZE ITS LESSONS IN OUR CURRICULUM.

THE VALUE OF THIS EXPERIENCE WAS NOT JUST LEARNING ABOUT WOLVES, BUT LEARNING ABOUT 30 YEARS OF PUBLIC/PRIVATE TENSION FROM 1976 WHEN THE REINTRODUCTION ISSUE WAS INITIATED, TO 1996 WHEN THE WOLVES WERE FINALLY RELEASED IN THE WILD, TO 2005 WHEN THE REINTRODUCTION WAS DEEMED A SUCCESS. BUT THE TENSIONS AND DEBATES AND CONFLICTING VALUES AND PRIORITIES ARE AS GREAT AS EVER. THE LESSON IS THAT YOU CAN HAVE SCIENCE AND REAMS OF DATA ON YOUR SIDE, BUT IF YOU ARE NAIVE OR INSENSITIVE TO THE POLITICAL REALITIES, YOU WILL LIKELY FAIL. STUDENTS MUST BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT ISSUES ARE COMPLEX. ONE HAS TO
FIND SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX PROBLEMS WHICH WORK FOR THOSE CLOSEST TO THE ISSUE.

WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF HIGHER LEARNING—DEBATE, REASONING, SKILL DEVELOPMENT, AND CONFIDENCE. THESE ARE THINGS ACQUIRED IN AN OPEN CLIMATE WHERE ACADEMIC FREEDOM PREVAILS. WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF SOLUTION—OF OUR NEW MISSION OF APPLIED RESEARCH AND PUBLIC SERVICE. WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF DEMOCRACY—OF FREE AND OBJECTIVE INQUIRY. I CANNOT HELP YOU TEACH YOUR DISCIPLINE, BUT I INTEND TO HELP YOU TEACH SUCCESS, LEADERSHIP, AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP.

AS WE FURTHER THE LEARNING OF SPECIFIC SKILLS—I HOPE WE ALSO TEACH VALUES WITH A BROADER SENSE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IF THE SEEDS OF CITIZENSHIP ARE NOT PLANTED HERE, NOW, THEN THEY WILL NOT LIKELY BE PLANTED—AT LEAST WITH OBJECTIVITY AND EFFECTIVE FERTILIZATION. WE ARE THE STEWARDS OF THIS PLACE—OUR CAMPUS, BOWLING GREEN, SOUTH CENTRAL KENTUCKY, THE COMMONWEALTH, AND EVERYTHING ACROSS THE NATION AND GLOBE WITH WHICH WE ARE CONNECTED.
HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND COMMONALITY—NOT DIFFERENCE.
HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND RESPONSIBILITY—NOT INDIFFERENCE.
HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND REASONING—NOT A SUPERFICIAL QUICK FIX.
HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND INQUISITIVENESS—NOT APATHY.
HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND PERSISTENCE, ESPECIALLY IN A FIGHT WORTH PURSUING. HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND COMPROMISE, THE ART OF SUSTAINABLE VICTORY
HELP OUR STUDENTS FIND STABILITY, A SENSE OF GRACE, A NEED TO LISTEN AND A CALL FOR THOUGHTFULNESS. HELP OUR STUDENTS MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SIMPLE VOLUNTEERISM AND TRUE ENGAGEMENT IN THE SOCIAL PROBLEM CREATED BY THE SERVICE OPPORTUNITY.
THEODORE ROOSEVELT, WHO CHAMPIONED OUR NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, SUMMED THIS AMERICAN DEMOCRACY THING UP QUITE WELL, "AMERICANISM MEANS THE VIRTUES OF COURAGE, HONOR, JUSTICE, TRUTH, SINCERITY, AND HARDIHOOD"—THE VIRTUES THAT MADE AMERICA. THE THINGS THAT WILL DESTROY AMERICA ARE PROSPERITY AT ANY PRICE, THE LOVE OF SOFT LIVING, AND THE GET RICH QUICK THEORY OF LIFE. IT IS AMAZING WHAT ONE CAN LEARN BY HANGING OUT WITH WOLVES FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS!
MY SECOND SUMMER ADVENTURE WAS A TRIP WITH TEN OF OUR STUDENTS AND TWO MEMBERS OF OUR FACULTY TO KENYA. LONG VALUED AND SUPPORTED OUR MANY EFFORTS TO INTERNATIONALIZE OUR WKU EXPERIENCE AND I'VE ENCOURAGED THE GROWTH OF OUR STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS. THIS FIRST-HAND OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE OUR STUDENTS AND FACULTY, IN A TRULY MEANINGFUL THIRD-WORLD EXPERIENCE, WAS INVALUABLE TO ME. FROM A PRAGMATIC STANDPOINT, I HAVE A VALID INSIGHT INTO THE CHALLENGES OF STUDENT TRAVEL, GROUP WELFARE LOGISTICS, DIFFERENCES IN FOOD AND MONEY, AND THE FLEXIBILITIES OFTEN NEEDED TO MOVE AND ACT THOUGHTFULLY IN A FOREIGN LAND. AT THE SAME TIME, I HAVE A MORE VALID SENSE OF THE FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES WHICH WE MUST HAVE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH EXPERIENCES ARE CONDUCTED THOUGHTFULLY AND WITH PRUDENT FINANCIAL ACUMEN. WE'VE SUFFERED THROUGH SOME GROWING PAINS IN THIS REGARD, BUT SUCH PROGRAMS WILL BE ADMINISTERED MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE FUTURE. LOGISTICS ASIDE, HOWEVER, WATCHING OUR STUDENTS INTERACT WITH PEERS
FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, WITH VILLAGERS WHOSE DAILY LIVING IS, INDEED, A WORLD A PART FROM THAT WHICH WE ENJOY, AND WITH EACH OTHER IN A TRULY ACADEMIC CONTEXT, WAS BOTH EXHILARATING AND ENCOURAGING.

THE EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WE CONSUMMATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI IS A MODEL FOR UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION. WE HAVE TRADED SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT. DRS. MCELROY AND STOKES HAVE TAUGHT NAIROBI STUDENTS. NAIROBI FACULTY HAVE TAUGHT OUR STUDENTS. DR. CHARLES KIMWELE, THE LEAD NAIROBI SCIENTIST IN OUR AGREEMENT, WILL BE SPENDING THE FALL SEMESTER WITH US TEACHING AND FURTHERING OUR SHARED RESEARCH IN ANIMAL PHYSIOLOGY. MOST IMPORTANTLY, OUR STUDENTS SHARED CULTURES, BELIEFS, HISTORIES, AND PHILOSOPHIES ON EVERYTHING FROM WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION TO SOCIAL VALUES AND GOVERNMENTAL POLICY. THE RICHNESS OF THIS PARTICULAR UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION IS THAT THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING GIVES WKU BROAD ACCESS TO THE KENYAN NONPROFIT YOUTH FOR CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION AND THE KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE. KWS IS THE PRIMARY GOVERNMENT
AGENCY IN CONTROL OF KENYA’S EXTENSIVE SYSTEM OF NATURAL PARKS AND RESERVES AND THE UNIQUE PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE THEY SUPPORT. WE CONDUCTED DISCUSSIONS WITH VILLAGE LEADERS. WE REMOVED ILLEGAL SNARES FROM THE BUSH. WE USED GPS TRACKING TO PINPOINT ILLEGAL BUSH MEAT TRADE. DOUG, MIKE, CHARLES, AND OUR FRIENDS FROM YOUTH FOR CONSERVATION AND THE KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE ENGAGED OUR WKU AND UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI’S STUDENTS IN NIGHTLY DISCUSSIONS ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES IMPORTANT TO KENYA AND BEYOND.

LET ME GIVE YOU ONE EXAMPLE. BRADLEY SMITH IS A SENIOR FROM LOUISVILLE. HIS HONOR’S THESIS IS CENTERED ON DNA ANALYSIS OF NUMEROUS MEAT SAMPLES HE PERSONALLY COLLECTED FROM SMALL PRIMITIVE BUTCHERIES THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN KENYA. HIS OBJECTIVE IS TO SCIENTIFICALLY DOCUMENT WHICH OF HIS PURCHASES ARE LEGAL DOMESTIC MEATS—BEEF, PORK, CHICKEN, OR GOAT; AND WHICH ARE EXOTIC BUSH ANIMALS KILLED BY ILLEGAL POACHING AND PASSED OFF TO THE CONSUMER AS DOMESTIC MEAT. HE ALSO USED GPS TRACKING TO DOCUMENT WHERE BUSH TRADE IS OCCURING, AND
CONSEQUENTLY WHERE POACHING IS MOST ACTIVE AND WITH WHAT ANIMALS. IF KENYA CAN GAIN CONTROL OF POACHING, THEN IT CAN STEM THE TRENDS OF DECLINING WILDLIFE AND BUILD A SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM INDUSTRY. THE ONLY PREVIOUS STUDY IN THIS REGARD WAS CONDUCTED RECENTLY BY THE BORN FREE FOUNDATION. IT WAS DONE WITHOUT DNA ANALYSIS AND GPS TRACKING AND, THEREFORE, LACKED EMPIRICAL VALIDITY.

BRADLEY’S WKU HONOR’S THESIS IS A REAL LIFE FOLLOW UP TO THAT STUDY AND IT WILL IMPACT REAL LIVES FOR MANY WHOSE QUALITY OF LIFE IS DESPERATE. IT WILL HELP SHAPE GOVERNMENTAL POLICY FOR THE NATION OF KENYA. BRADLEY SMITH IS WITH US THIS MORNING. BRADLEY, STAND UP AND BE RECOGNIZED FOR YOUR IMPORTANT WORK.

THAT'S ONE EXAMPLE OF THE VALUE OF STUDY ABROAD. I KNOW THERE ARE HUNDREDS MORE THROUGHOUT OUR MANY DISCIPLINES. I WANT TO FACILITATE OUR INTERNATIONALISM TO THE POINT WHERE THOUSANDS OF WKU STUDENTS HAVE SUCH OPPORTUNITIES.
"Learning Matters" is a national documentary on the state of higher education in America. This summer, another interesting WKU matter was "Learning Matters," a two-hour special aired on PBS on June 24. It was filmed by an education interest group called "Learning Matters" and produced by John Morrow, a journalist and visiting fellow with the Carnegie Foundation. If you did not see it, I encourage you to check it out. It was about real concerns of declining public support and quality in our colleges and universities. It was about the struggles our students and our faculty often face. It was about all of us in higher education. It was called, "Declining by Degrees, Higher Education at Risk." It featured good and not so good examples from four campuses: University of Arizona, WKU, Amherst, and the Community College of Denver. I found it to be reasonably fair, although somewhat subjective and an attempt to validate a hypothesis of concern. The points made are, however, valid and deserve our attention. Declining public support is a contemporary reality we must find.
SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT STUDENTS DO STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET AND MANY OF OURS SIMPLY CANNOT. EVIDENCE OF GRADE INFLATION DOES EXIST HERE AND ELSEWHERE. COMPENSATION IS OFTEN INADEQUATE.

I COULD GO ON—but rather than assuming "a sky is falling"/view, I prefer the more positive/"we shall control our own destiny"/point of view

CHALLENGE OUR STUDENTS/CAUSE THEM TO RISE TO THE OCCASION. GIVE THEM THEIR MONEY'S WORTH. I DON'T MEAN JUST IN THE CLASSROOMS OR LABS, I ALSO MEAN IN THE RESIDENCE HALLS, ACROSS OUR LAWNS, ON THE ATHLETIC FIELD, IN OUR CAMPUS RESTAURANTS, AND ON THE BIG RED SHUTTLE. HAVING SAID THAT, HOWEVER, IT IS ACADEMIC RIGOR THAT WILL DEFINE THE REPUTATION WE EARN IN THE FUTURE. NOT RIGOR FOR RIGOR'S SAKE, BUT LEARNING'S SAKE. DON'T JUST GIVE STUDENTS DIFFICULTY, HELP THEM GET THE POINT. HELP THEM GET VALUABLE INFORMATION. HELP THEM FIND SOLUTIONS. HELP THEM CONNECT CAUSE AND EFFECT.

STUDENT SUCCESS IS A VICTORY FOR ALL OF US. STUDENT FAILURE OR PREMATURE DEPARTURE MAY BE A FAILURE FOR ALL
OF US. A DEGREE OF FAILURE AND WITHDRAWAL IS INEVITABLE GIVEN THE PERSONAL VARIABLES WHICH OFTEN CONFRONT OUR STUDENTS. LET’S NOT, HOWEVER, BE COMPLACENT OR ALLOW IT TO HAPPEN IF WE CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. LET US TAKE STUDENT SUCCESS PERSONALLY.

I DO NOT BUY THE PREMISE, AS IT WAS INTIMATED BY JOHN MORROW, THAT $40,000 A YEAR IN TUITION BUYS A BETTER PRIVATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE THAN WHAT COULD BE FOUND HERE. I’M OPTIMISTIC ENOUGH—OR PERHAPS STUBBORN—I HOPE NOT NAÏVE—TO THINK THAT OUR STUDENTS CAN GET A FIRST-RATE HIGHER EDUCATION HERE. DON’T GIVE ME THE “YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR” AS ONE FACULTY MEMBER IN ARIZONA SUGGESTED. I PREFER TO LIKE THE “PAY FOR WHAT YOU GET” LINE OF THOUGHT. WE ARE IMPROVING COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS. WE ARE IMPROVING OUR FACILITIES AND CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT. WE ARE PRICING OUR EXPERIENCE AT A FAIR MARKET RATE. CONSEQUENTLY, WE ARE ALSO IMPROVING OUR STANDARDS AND OUR EXPECTATIONS.
I'M OPTIMISTIC AND I WANT TO FOCUS THIS MORNING ON OUR OPTIMISM AS AN INSTITUTION. AS MOST OF YOU MAY KNOW, I'M A BASEBALL FAN, SO LET ME GIVE YOU A BASEBALL TAKE ON OPTIMISM.

STRUCK OUT. WHY ARE YOU SO HAPPY?” THE BOY SAID, “BECAUSE I'M REALLY GOOD AT PITCHING!”

YOU GOTTA LOVE THE SON'S ATTITUDE. HE MAY NOT TURN OUT TO BE A GREAT HITTER, BUT IS LIKELY TO LEAD A HAPPY LIFE. WHAT'S MORE, HE IS LIKELY TO BRING WARMTH AND CHEER INTO THE LIVES OF OTHERS BECAUSE ATTITUDES ARE CONTAGIOUS. WE CAN'T ALWAYS CONTROL WHAT HAPPENS TO US, BUT WE CAN ALWAYS CHOOSE HOW TO REACT. PESSIMISTS PREDISPOSED TO NEGATIVISM AND WORRY THINK PEOPLE LIKE THE YOUNG BOY ARE DELUDING THEMSELVES BY LOOKING AT THE WORLD THROUGH ROSE COLORED GLASSES. YET, THE SON'S WORLD IS REALLY AS HE SEES IT AND HIS DECISION TO VIEW HIMSELF AS A SUCCESSFUL PITCHER INSTEAD OF A BAD HITTER, WILL NOT ONLY MAKE HIM HAPPIER, BUT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO HIS SUCCESS.

TO REINFORCE MY "CUP HALF- FULL" VIEW OF THE WORLD, I READ A THOUGHT-PROVOKING BOOK THIS SUMMER CALLED HARD OPTIMISM BY DR. PRICE PRITCHETT. IT IS ONE OF THOSE POSITIVE THINKING READS, AND IT IS A GOOD ONE. IT IS ABOUT DEVELOPING "DEEP STRENGTHS FOR MANAGING UNCERTAINTY, OPPORTUNITY, ADVERSITY, AND CHANGE.” IT STARTS WITH A QUOTE FROM W.
CLEMENT STONE—"There is very little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative." The book ends with a great quote from John M. Shanahan, "If you don't bring Paris with you, you won't find it there." In between those two quotes are 72 short pages which are long on insight. I purchased several copies of this book and I'm giving it to our department heads across campus when I meet with them two days from now.

WKU'S PSYCHOLOGICAL BALANCE SHEET

I also did a little research and found that Dr. Pritchett has created a survey for evaluating an organization's optimism. That survey is circulated among you. It won't take you but a moment to assess how you feel we at WKU rank as an organization. Ten attributes offer a glimpse into our institutional psyche, our campus attitude. It is not about morale or climate or tension or even our culture, although a positive attitude can shape
A culture. This is, as Dr. Pritchett puts it, "our psychological balance sheet". These attributes reflect our collective mental and social condition. Our condition affects our performance and ultimately our personal and professional well-being and even our institutional financial condition.

If you wish to send your completed survey to me with whatever thoughts you wish to share, great. I look forward to seeing them. My intent, however, is not to collect them, but to cause you to think about our internal attitude. I do want each of you to fill this out, if for no other reason, to assess your own attitude about our campus and perhaps even your personal role in creating the score you give. Check it out.

**Our Future**

I am optimistic about our future. We will serve the future well. As we celebrate our history, our first 100 years during this centennial, I hope we also contemplate the years ahead. Will we concede to the decline which

WHILE WE ARE STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED ON THE NEXT FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS, THINK WITH ME FOR A MOMENT ABOUT WHAT WE MIGHT FIND IN 20 YEARS. I AM CONVINCED THAT WE WILL LOOK BACK IN 20 YEARS AND KNOW THAT WE DID MOVE IN A PROGRESSIVE, RELEVANT, AND MEANINGFUL MANNER. OUR SUCCESSORS WILL BE ABLE TO MEASURE POSITIVE RESULTS FROM THOSE WHO SHARE OUR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE TODAY.

CLOSE YOUR EYES. THINK OF THE TOP FIVE COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES IN AMERICA. NOT GRADUATE RESEARCH OR LAND GRANT, OR PRIVATE OR LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTIONS, BUT COMPREHENSIVE, UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITIES WITH RELEVANT
MASTERS PROGRAMS AND, YES, SELECTIVE DOCTORAL PROGRAMS. KEEP YOUR EYES CLOSED. NOW, WHAT IN YOUR MIND CAUSES YOU TO ZERO IN ON THOSE FIVE INSTITUTIONS? AT SOME POINT IN THE DAYS AHEAD, WRITE THOSE INSTITUTIONS DOWN AND TELL ME WHY YOU THINK THEY ARE TOP RANKED.

WHY NOT WKU?

MY MESSAGE NOW, TODAY, AS WE OPEN OUR EYES ON A NEW YEAR, AS WE EMBARK ON A CENTENNIAL, IS "WHY NOT WKU?" CAN WE NOT EARN OUR WAY ONTO YOUR LIST? WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO GET THERE? NOT FOR THE SAKE OF GETTING THERE; BUT FOR THE SAKE OF OUR STUDENTS AND THE VALUE OF THE DEGREES THEY EARN; BUT FOR THE SAKE OF OUR FACULTY AND STAFF WHOSE CAREERS ARE BOLSTERED BY ASSOCIATION WITH SUCH A HIGHLY VALUED PLACE; BUT FOR THE SAKE OF OUR ALUMNI AND OUR RETIRED FACULTY AND STAFF WHOSE EMOTIONS ARE STIRRED BY SUCH NATIONAL PROMINENCE. IF NOT FOR THEM, IF NOT FOR OUR CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS, IF NOT FOR THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF EVERYONE IN OUR REGION, THEN LET'S DO IT FOR OURSELVES—ALL 2,000 OF US WHO LABOR TO BUILD A
PROFESSIONAL LIFE WELL LIVED AT WKU. IF WE SUCCEED, WITHIN A FEW YEARS SOME GROUP, SOMEWHERE, MAY BE ASKED TO CLOSE THEIR EYES AND THINK OF THE BEST COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES IN AMERICA. WILL THEY THINK OF WKU? IF THAT OCCURS, THEN EVERYONE THAT I HAVE MENTIONED WILL HAVE BENEFITED BY WHAT WE DO TODAY AND TOMORROW.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE WORLD’S INTELLECT FOR ALL TIME EXISTS TODAY. THAT MAY BE TRUE, BUT LIKewise, I SUSPECT THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE WORLD’S PROBLEMS FOR ALL TIME, ALSO EXIST TODAY. I LOVE BEING A PART OF AN INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY WHICH IS FOCUSED ON USING ITS INTELLECT TO IDENTIFY AND SOLVE THOSE PROBLEMS. I LOVE BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY OF FREE DEBATE AND DIFFERENCE, DIFFERENT PEOPLE, POSITIONS, IDEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY, AND CAPACITY, BUT ALL DEDICATED TO ONE CAMPUS AND ONE WORLD AND FULL OF HARD OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE.

THE STONEMASON WHO LAID THE COLUMNS IN FRONT OF THIS BUILDING HAS LONG SINCE BEEN FORGOTTEN BUT HIS WORK IS STILL ADMIREd. OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, A NEW STONEMASON WILL ERECT A FOUNTAIN IN FRONT OF THIS
BUILDING. HE OR SHE WILL MAKE A SIMILAR STATEMENT. HE OR SHE WILL BUILD SOMETHING TO LAST. HIS OR HER RESULTS WILL REMAIN STRONG AND BE ADMIRE FOR GENERATIONS. THE FUTURE IS Ours TO CARVE, TO DEFINE, TO CREATE, AND TO SHAPE. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO LEARN AND GROW BUT WE MUST DO IT TO LAST; AND IF WE ARE GOING TO DO IT, THEN LET'S DO IT WITH THE BEST OF THEM!

THIS IS A BIG YEAR FOR WESTERN. IT IS OUR CENTENNIAL. WE HAVE RECORD NUMBERS ACROSS THE BOARD. THE 2006 KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS CRITICAL IF WE ARE TO FULFILL THE PROMISE OF A TRUE TRANSFORMATION. LET US USE THIS MONUMENTAL YEAR AS A SPRINGBOARD TO OUR FUTURE. I AM OPTIMISTIC.

I RECENTLY SENT A STATEMENT AROUND TO SOME DEANS AND OTHERS ABOUT WHAT I THINK WE SHOULD ACHIEVE BY 2012. ONE OF THE REACTIONS WAS THAT IT SOUNDED LIKE IT WAS COMING MORE FROM SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO BE THE PRESIDENT OF WKU THAN SOMEONE WHO IS. WHEN TOLD THAT, MY REACTION WAS BINGO! VERY PERCEPTIVE. THE DAY I QUIT DRIVING AS HARD
TO SUCCEED IN THIS JOB, AS I DROVE TO GET THIS JOB, IS THE DAY I RETIRE FROM THIS JOB.

**A LOCAL CALL**

IN CLOSING, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A RECENT CONFERENCE CALL WHICH THE PRESIDENTS OF THE EIGHT UNIVERSITIES IN KENTUCKY HAD WITH GOD. WHILE WE WERE WAITING FOR GOD TO JOIN US, MY COLLEAGUES WERE LAMENTING ABOUT THE LONG DISTANCE CHARGES. MOREHEAD AND NORTHERN WERE PAYING $1,000 AN HOUR. UK, EASTERN, AND KENTUCKY STATE WERE PAYING $800 AN HOUR. MURRAY WAS PAYING $500 AN HOUR AND U OF L WAS PAYING $300 AN HOUR. I SAT QUIETLY, WHEN THE OPERATOR REVEALED THAT THE CALL FROM WKU WAS FREE, THE OTHERS, CONFUSED, ASKED WHY. THE OPERATOR SAID "FOR WKU, IT IS A LOCAL CALL."

I AM OPTIMISTIC! ARE YOU? LET'S HAVE A GREAT YEAR.

THANK YOU!
Hard Optimism

Deep Strengths Survey

Optimism has a broad and potent impact on performance. It's a feeder system for an array of positive attributes—deep strengths—that help organizations deal effectively with uncertainty, opportunity, adversity, and change. Use this scorecard to evaluate your organization's deep strengths. Please circle a number on each 5-point scale to indicate where you think your organization ranks today on these 10 important factors,

1. **Resilience** *(The ability to take problems in stride, to bounce back quickly from difficulties or defeat)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

2. **Confidence** *(Organizational self-assurance; belief in the organization's ability to perform effectively)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

3. **Energy Level** *(The “corporate metabolism”; vitality; the capacity to do work)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

4. **Creativity and Innovation** *(Coming up with viable new ideas; implementing fresh approaches)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

5. **Can-do Attitude** *(A success-minded bias to “go for it” and make things happen)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

6. **Ambition** *(Aspiration level or drive to achieve)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

7. **Hope** *(Faith in the future; favorable outlook regarding things to come)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

8. **Happiness** *(Positive, upbeat mental state; sense of well-being)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

9. **Competitive Spirit** *(Playing to win; determination to outdo the opposition; pushing to improve)*
   - Low
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - High

10. **Staying Power** *(Emotional stamina; the psychological strength to persevere)*
    - Low
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - High