

President Al Bowman

Center for the Performing Arts - September 15, 2009

Thank you Dan—and good afternoon everyone. I would like to extend a special welcome to President Emeritus David Strand, Student Trustee Geno Bagnuolo and, of course, my wife Linda.

I would also like to take a moment to introduce to you our new Vice President for Finance and Planning. Dan Layzell comes to us from the University of Illinois. He has also worked for the Illinois Board of Higher Education as Deputy Director of Planning and Budgeting. Dan brings with him a great deal of experience in finance, budgeting and planning and has a keen understanding of the State of Illinois budget process—which means he is pretty good at solving puzzles. Although he has been meeting with colleagues since his appointment was announced—this is actually his first official day of what I hope will be many years of service to Illinois State—Dan, could you please stand and be recognized?

A number of individuals worked very hard to move the search process along, and Dianne Ashby has done a wonderful job overseeing Finance and Planning since last May - thanks Dianne.

I have been looking forward to today's address since the end of the spring semester for the simple reason that this University had concluded what I would characterize as one of its best years in decades. Even a cursory examination of our progress in 2009 leads to the conclusion that we are an institution in two places. First, we are a University that, like so many public institutions throughout Illinois and across the country, is challenged by a struggling economy. It has been almost a decade since Illinois has distributed new capital funds for infrastructure improvements, and the state's decreasing support for higher education has triggered tuition rate increases that have created challenges for students who need financial assistance.

Despite those lingering problems, we are also a University that, UNLIKE most institutions throughout the state and across the country, has seen the national profile of its faculty, staff and academic programs rise. Our applicant pool is larger and more talented, and our ability to plan strategically has allowed the institution to control its own destiny.

I would like to spend the next few minutes talking about both Universities.

In his first address before a joint session of Congress, President Obama identified education as one of three areas—along with energy and health care—that are "absolutely critical to our economic future." President Obama's goal is that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in the number of college graduates.....we have slipped from first to 11th. His goals include resources like the \$5 million dollars in stimulus funds we received in our state operating budget this year. The President also wants to increase subsidies for student loans and has proposed making the Pell grant an entitlement that is indexed to inflation.

During this deep recession and a national deficit passing the trillion dollar mark, the President's goals seem largely symbolic, but importantly, they symbolize the critical need to re-invest in young minds. The road blocks to reaching his lofty goals are by no means trivial. Just before our students returned to campus in mid-August, I announced to the University community that while this year's state appropriation is equal to that of FY2009, more than \$5 million of those dollars come from the stimulus program—and those funds will likely not be replaced with state

dollars in next year's budget. If things remain the same, we could begin the next fiscal year with a net budget reduction of more than \$5 million.

Even more troubling is the lack of state support for thousands of our students with deep financial need. The tuition waivers that support our veterans and National Guard members come from universities like Illinois State, and historically the state has reimbursed us for those waivers. This year, and probably in the years to come, Illinois State will receive no reimbursement. We certainly want to invest university resources in those who defend our country, but the lack of reimbursement means that the institution will have to find a way to absorb a new unplanned \$3 million dollar expenditure. That new expenditure is more than all the new revenue generated by the tuition increase that our Board approved this past July.

An even larger challenge this year has been caused by shortfalls in funding the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. One of ISAC's grants, the Monetary Awards Program or MAP, is currently able to fund our students only for the fall semester. Illinois State enrolls more than 3,500 students who receive MAP funds. More than 1,300 of these students come from families with an income of \$20,000 or less, and MAP is a critical component in their ability to afford higher education. Last year, Illinois State students received over \$12.5 million in MAP funds and even that wasn't enough to cover the costs for our neediest students. So, last year Illinois State contributed more than \$5 million of its internal resources to cover the MAP shortfall. This year, we will again contribute in excess of \$5 million to make up that shortfall, but without second semester funding, we will still face a gap of several million dollars.

While we believe the Governor and Legislature will address MAP issues later this fall or in early spring, we must be prepared to invest—at least provisionally—in these students to protect their academic futures and our enrollment. If we don't help, these students may leave Illinois State—never to return. That action could ruin their dreams for a better life and, in my opinion, constitute a failure to adhere to our mission and values.

Depending on how our state government leaders respond, my goal and plan is to provide a modest mid-year salary increase retroactive to January 1st.

The news from Springfield is, most certainly, not all bad. The Governor has signed the first state capital bill in almost a decade—a bill that includes more than \$54 million for the much-needed renovation of our Fine Arts Complex. This is a major step forward.

One doesn't have to look far to see that the challenges facing higher education are far more severe in other states.

University of California President Mark Yudof has declared a one-year financial emergency for their college system that includes pay cuts that range from 4 - 10 percent and between 11 and 26 unpaid days off. Those cuts, combined with higher tuition fees and lower admissions rates, will help the system handle a 20 percent decrease in state funding. In my home state of Colorado, Governor Bill Ritter announced recently that higher education was being cut by \$81 million in order to close a \$318 million budget hole. Colorado's director of Higher Education predicted that university funding is headed for an "absolutely breathtaking" fiscal cliff when federal stimulus money goes away.

Closer to home, the new budget at Indiana University includes a faculty and staff member salary freeze and a 50 percent reduction in travel expenditures. Even the University of Illinois has created a policy to include the possibility of faculty and staff furlough days.

In my e-mail communication to the campus in early August, I emphasized that we will avoid these Draconian scenarios—and I do not foresee layoffs or furlough days at Illinois State. Every single position at this University is important—and I will work hard to protect the positions that make ours a great institution. Still, we have to recognize that we live and work in a new economic reality—a reality where state supported universities function more like state assisted universities—a reality where public universities must derive more income from non-public sources—and a reality where faculty and staff members must be even more flexible to help meet the needs of students and colleagues alike.

I mentioned earlier that we are a University in two places. Despite the economic clouds we have faced for most of this decade, Illinois State's performance on a number of measures is unmatched.

This fall we enrolled a class of 20,856, once again achieving our target of between 20 and 21,000 students. From a record 14,000 plus applications, we enrolled over 3,033 freshmen. Our freshman composite ACT is a new record, 24.3, with a high school grade point average of 3.4. More than 400 of our students scored 28 or better on their ACT, and 165 scored 30 or better.

Even more remarkable is our retention rate. The retention rate for the 2008 freshman class returning this fall is 84.9 percent—a one-and-a-half percent jump from the previous year, and another all-time high. And for the first time in our history, the graduation rate has hit the 70% threshold.

An article in last Friday's New York Times noted that, and I quote, "*Only 33 percent of the freshmen who enter the [University of Massachusetts](#), Boston, graduate within six years. Less than 41 percent graduate from the University of Montana, and 44 percent from the [University of New Mexico](#). Economist Mark Schneider refers to colleges with such dropout rates as "[failure factories](#)," and they are the norm. The United States does a good job enrolling teenagers in college, but only half of students who enroll end up with a bachelor's degree. Among rich countries, only Italy is worse. That's a big reason [inequality has soared](#), and productivity growth has slowed. Economic growth in this decade was on pace to be slower than in any decade since World War II — even before the financial crisis started. So identifying the causes of the college dropout crisis matters enormously.*"

High-caliber students, outstanding teaching and mentoring, a caring and committed support staff and quality facilities all combine to boost retention and graduation rates, and I am proud to say we have the right mix at Illinois State.

Our numbers regarding students from underrepresented groups are also very positive. This fall, the number of new freshman African American students enrolled rose 18 percent and for Hispanic students, the jump is 36 percent. This year's retention rate for African American students rose more than 7 points to nearly 81 percent. For Hispanic students, the retention rate rose more than 4 points to just under 80 percent. As we plan and prepare for a future of shifting demographics and greater numbers of diverse populations entering the college environment, these numbers represent a great start and a base from which we can expand. In just six years, 40% of high school graduates in Illinois will be Hispanic or African American.

During last year's State of the University address, I announced the formation of two committees—one to expand initiatives and explore new ways to recruit and retain students from diverse populations—the other, to examine the campus climate and suggest ways to improve on Illinois State's already welcoming campus environment. Both committees did excellent work and many of their recommendations are being put into place. Here are just a few examples:

- We will implement a three-year phased in plan to increase support for tutoring, particularly for courses that have high failure rates.
- We will continue to expand retention programming such as Project Success and Success 101. University College and the Julia Visor Academic Center received a \$30,000 gift from Archer Daniels Midland corporation in support of these initiatives for this fiscal year, in particular for the expansion of Success 101, a program that helps students make a smooth transition to the university and to college-level coursework.
- The Office of Admissions has added a second counselor who resides in the Chicago area and replaced two open counselor positions with staff fluent in Spanish.
- Admissions also created a brochure in Spanish outlining important facts and the benefits of attending Illinois State as well as an e-mail address where family members can communicate in Spanish with members of our staff. We are also in the process of creating a Spanish version of our college affordability.
- The two Chicago-based Admissions Counselors visited over 20 community based organizations during the summer months and provided services to the groups that ranged from navigating the college selection process to application workshops. Admissions also offers transportation to campus for these groups to attend specific programs such as You Can Do ISU, which provides information regarding financial aid as well as life on the Illinois State Campus. This initiative has attracted more than 300 students from low income/educationally disadvantaged areas throughout the state.
- Once the budget uncertainty that has placed several administrative searches and compensation increases on hold has been resolved, I will begin the search for a full-time Director of Diversity Initiatives. This position will report directly to me and will develop and administer programs and services designed to promote an even more positive and welcoming environment for underrepresented groups across campus. The University's compliance functions will remain under the able leadership of Dr. Shane McCreery—and the name of that office will be changed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, Ethics and Access.
- Finally, beginning in October, the Media Relations Department will produce and distribute a monthly faculty and staff e-newsletter entitled *Identity: Valuing Our Diversity*. The publication will feature profiles of faculty teaching, research and service, the efforts of our support staff, and news of university programs and events that center on race, ethnicity and the LGBT community. Also included will be issues pertaining to the concerns of those with special needs and other underrepresented groups. A committee led by Dr. Toure Reed will serve as the publication's editorial board.

As Illinois State enhances its environment for people from all walks of life, we will also work to create a safer and more sustainable campus environment.

In terms of safety, this will be the first year of our new Emergency Alert system on campus. The system will provide instant phone, text and e-mail notification in the event of an emergency,

adding an additional layer of protection and comfort. It is something that many students and parents have asked about since the tragedies at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University—and I am glad to see that our Emergency Management staff has found a reliable, robust system that complements our Web and e-mail based procedures. As we planned for the alert system, we were concerned that sign-up percentages from students, faculty and staff members would be low as they are at many universities across the country. Thanks to a solid marketing program and collaboration among several units across campus, more than 15,000 people have already signed up for the system.

Although we prepare for the emergency we hope will never occur—one issue facing college campuses nationwide is already upon us—the upswing of H1N1 Influenza cases. As you know, I sent an e-mail to the campus community two weeks ago outlining our plans to help prevent spread of the virus as well as information for those who have influenza symptoms. Illinois State is following protocols set by the Centers for Disease Control, and while the guidelines do not include automatic H1N1 testing for most people who develop flu-like symptoms, we assume that many flu cases this year will be of the H1N1 variety. I believe we have a good, common sense plan in place, but I know that faculty and staff members will need to be flexible as we work through a flu season unlike anything we have seen in recent years.

As we protect ourselves for the coming months—we also continue to look for opportunities to protect our environment. That collaborative effort is ongoing and includes many groups across campus. As a result of our ongoing energy efficiency, water conservation efforts and infrastructure improvements, we have seen noticeable reductions in our utility consumption as compared to previous year averages, including an impressive 13.2 percent reduction in water consumption.

Additionally there are three new renewable energy installations on campus in conjunction with our Renewable Energy major. Last year, Illinois State became a signatory to the American College and University President's Climate Commitment. The Greenhouse gas inventory has been completed and this year we will begin work on our Climate Action Plan to create strategies for the University to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

We continue to add to our portfolio of alternative transportation options. Last year our nationally recognized Reggie Ride bike program was unveiled, and it has been very successful. In addition to Reggie Ride and Universal Access, where all faculty, staff and students can ride the public transit system for free, we have two new options this year. There is an electronic ride share board on the Parking and Transportation Web site to assist people in finding carpooling options. And just two weeks ago, we announced that car sharing is coming to campus. *Connect*, by Hertz, allows people to rent cars for as little as an hour, with fuel and insurance included in the rental price.

Over the last few years, our students have shown an increasing commitment to sustainability. Within the Association of Residence Halls there is now a Student Sustainability Coordinator that oversees sustainability representatives from each residence hall. The Renewable Energy Society, a new registered student organization on campus, has been established to further educate Illinois State and the surrounding communities about the role of renewable energy in our future. In April, the Student Government Association created a new executive position – Secretary of Sustainability. This year, sustainability will be a central focus for SGA as it seeks to increase awareness and provide additional educational opportunities for our students. I would like to

congratulate members of our Green Team, everyone associated with the Center for Renewable Energy, the campus recycling program, and our student leadership, for their vision and hard work as we work toward a more sustainable campus environment.

As we look ahead, we will continue to invest in faculty resources and the outstanding academic programs they have helped build. As I indicated earlier, we have placed several administrative searches on hold, and I will continue the practice of signing-off on only the most important non-faculty hires. As an employee who spent many years in the classroom on this campus, I am very happy that we were able to hire 60 faculty members and for next year, I have authorized 41 searches for Tenure Track faculty, a commitment of almost \$3 million. High-quality faculty members mean high-quality academic programs and experiences. Here are just a few examples of that excellence on our campus.

- For the fourth time in five years, a student in the Actuarial Science program has been named as one of the top actuarial science students in the world. Thomas Lauren is the recipient of a 2009 Woody Scholarship from the Actuarial Foundation. Only about ten students in the world receive this distinction.
- Illinois State University is one of 11 schools world-wide aligned with the University Sales Center Alliance, and our Professional Sales Program is recognized as one of the best in the country.
- Interim School of Theatre Director John Poole was inducted into the National Theatre Conference. He joins a select group of just 120 distinguished leaders of the American theatre from universities, communities and the professional world.
- Last Thursday, the Mennonite College of Nursing held its 90/10 celebration, commemorating 90 years of nursing education and the 10 year anniversary of joining Illinois State.
- Thanks to the collaboration between Representative Dan Brady and Milner Library's own Associate Dean Dane Ward, the State Property Control Act was recently amended to permit Illinois academic libraries to sell materials that have been withdrawn from library collections. Prior to the passage of the bill, libraries had few options for the disposal of withdrawn books, which in most cases, were simply discarded.
- The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Child Life graduates earned a 100 percent pass rate on the National Child Life Examination this spring. The national pass rate is 71 percent. This exam is a prerequisite licensure exam for those professionals seeking employment in the field.
- College of Education faculty members have once again enjoyed great success in capturing a substantial level of grant awards and contracts in FY2009. COE faculty members have been awarded approximately \$8.5 million dollars in external awards this past fiscal year.
- In the 1980s—Illinois State brought in somewhere between \$2 and \$5 million in grants annually. In the 1990s, that number jumped to between \$8 and \$9 million per year. During this decade, that annual number has been between \$18 and \$20 million. And in the fiscal year that ended on June 30th, faculty and staff were awarded a record \$22.3 million—a major milestone for our campus.

Our students, staff members and faculty deserve and receive many external and campus honors and awards. Today, I am pleased to announce the creation of a new faculty honor through a designation that was recently endorsed by the Academic Senate. The designation is called “University Professor” and is a companion award to our Distinguished Professor honor. I asked for the creation of this designation to enable Illinois State to honor individual faculty members or administrators with appropriate faculty rank. To be eligible for an appointment to University Professorship, an individual must already hold the rank of Professor at Illinois State University or another institution and must have achieved distinction in one of the following areas:

- National recognition for scholarly research, creative production, or leadership in creative or scholarly activities, or
- Substantial recognition from students, colleagues, or external agencies as an excellent teacher

The nomination process for University Professor will be administered through the Division of Academic Affairs. The University Professor will be formally recognized during each February’s Founders Day ceremonies.

The next announcement represents progress on one of the University’s long standing goals. Next month ground will be broken for a new child-care facility that will serve the children of Illinois State University employees. The center is a partnership between ISU, Illinois Wesleyan University and BroMenn Healthcare. It will be located at the corner of Main and Harris Streets, just a few blocks from campus, and is scheduled to open in August of 2010. Our Child Care Task Force has been negotiating with Rogy’s Learning Place, which will operate the facility. The agreement with Rogy’s will include a faculty advisory board and an oversight committee composed of individuals from each of the three institutions. There will also be requirements for level of education for each of the teachers employed in the center. A University sponsored child-care option for faculty and staff members has been a goal for many years and with the construction of the facility, that goal will be realized.

Our enhancement and renovation projects also continue at full speed. Just two weeks ago, we dedicated our East Campus Complex—a project that was completed in just over two years and has transformed Hewett and Manchester Halls and the Vrooman Center. The residence halls look almost brand new—serving as home to 1,400 students. The Complex also features the Julia N. Visor Academic Center—and during homecoming week, we will formally dedicate the Marilyn M. Boyd International House in Manchester Hall and award an inaugural scholarship in her honor and memory.

Elsewhere, we continue to make progress on improvements to Stevenson and Turner Halls, and I would like to once again express my appreciation to our faculty, staff and students for your patience as we move toward the summer 2010 completion of that rather complex project.

I also have good news to announce regarding changes that continue to happen at Bone Student Center. In addition to the renovation projects in the Courtyard, Prairie Room, Atrium and main concourse, we are bringing in a new venue with a name quite apropos to a University community—Einstein Brothers Bagel.

Meanwhile, our most ambitious construction project in campus history, the Student Fitness/Kinesiology and Recreation Building, is proceeding on schedule. About 75 percent of

the building structure has been completed. The two-story bridge portion of the building has been erected across University Street and McCormick Hall has been gutted to a structural shell. We expect the building to be enclosed soon so that contractors can continue to work through the winter months. I am happy to report that the building will include sustainability features equivalent to a LEED silver designation. The building's operations will be overseen by Dawn Sanner. Dawn has been appointed Executive Director of Recreation Services and the Student Fitness and Kinesiology and Recreation Building. Dawn earned her master's degree at Illinois State, and has more than 20 years of experience in campus recreation and in the operation of recreation facilities. Dawn comes to us from North Carolina State University, and we welcome her back to Illinois State.

The amazing physical transformation that has taken place on the Illinois State University campus over the past several years is consistent with the mission, vision and values of Educating Illinois, and its companion document the Campus Master Plan. The last Campus Master Plan was completed in 2002 and was written with consultation from the entire campus community, as well as members of the Normal-Bloomington communities. As we look to the future development of Illinois State University, I ask today that Vice President Layzell work in collaboration with Vice Presidents Everts, Ashby and Adams to undertake a revision of our Campus Master Plan. Once again, the process will include full campus consultation and input from citizens of the greater community.

Increasingly, our facility and programmatic enhancement initiatives are being accomplished with limited or even no new state support. That makes our fundraising efforts even more critical, and I am proud to say we are responding to the challenge. Once again, the Illinois State Foundation raised more than \$10 million in new gifts for FY2009, and the new year is off to a good start as well. In addition, the number of faculty, staff members and retirees contributing to our "Gladly We Give Campaign" jumped by more than 25 percent. I can't thank you enough for your generosity to Illinois State, and for your commitment to those who need our help outside the University community through our State Employees Combined Appeal effort.

The efforts of our Athletics Department and our student-athletes have been impressive both in and out of the classroom. Last year, for the second-straight year, Illinois State finished in the top five in 16 of the 17 sports in which we compete, the highest percentage of top-five finishers in league history. In the classroom, a total of 254 Redbird student-athletes earned AFNI Athletics Honor Roll designation by earning at least a 3.0 GPA during the fall 2008 semester. Additionally, in each of the past four years, ISU student-athletes have contributed more than 2,000 hours of community service to the Bloomington-Normal area, including a school record 2,500 hours during 2008-09 academic year. Despite the outcome of last Saturday's football game, intercollegiate athletics is healthy and thriving at Illinois State.

I would like to conclude today's message by briefly expounding on three words that have quickly become the motto for Illinois State University. Those words are "State Your Passion." State Your Passion is a simple slogan—but its creation by our Department of University Marketing and Communication speaks powerfully to everything you do to make Illinois State the finest state university in Illinois.

You state your passion every day in the classroom and research laboratory. You state your passion in the way you nurture and mentor our students and in the unselfish manner in which you

help each other reach out to parents and other stakeholders. Your passion is reflected in documents like *Educating Illinois*, and in programs like the Civic Engagement Project.

Today, Illinois State is indeed an institution in two places—a place of economic challenge, yet a university that has seen its student selectivity and national profile advance to a level few would have thought possible 20 years ago. In the next decade, you will see substantial improvements in our facilities, our national reputation, our research enterprise, and most importantly, the student experience. It will happen for the simple reason that we have a highly skilled faculty and staff who share a common educational vision, as well as a personal and professional commitment to the institution's success.

Thank you.