Watch With Both Eyes:
Toward UVU's 75th Anniversary

Faculty Convocation Address
President Matthew S. Holland
Utah Valley University
August 20, 2013

Good morning. Thank you for coming. No doubt this is a time of great pressure for you all, as you meet the rush of demands that come with the start of the academic year. I hope that your investment in time here proves more than worth it, as we discuss, train, and reflect on the broadest and most important university issues and best practices around the academy more generally.

Dr. José Antonio Bowen, thank you for your most engaging remarks. For an institution that aspires to be a first-rate teaching institution, we’ve been instructed extraordinarily well. As for your afternoon session where there will be, I understand, an even deeper dive into the so-called “teaching naked” philosophy of teaching, I have simply asked Campus Police to turn a blind eye.

I also want to thank our leaders in Academic Affairs for their standard yeoman’s effort in pulling together this terrific set of programs. Here, Ian Wilson, Kat Brown, Julie Hayden, and Karen Cushing and their organizing committee deserve special commendation. Could they all please stand, and would you please join me thanking them now with a round of applause.

In his typically modest way, Ian took time this morning to introduce a number of new institutional leaders and organizational changes with hardly/nary word about his own elevation to Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Now, I assure you, this new title has nothing to do with the fact that Ian was a standout soldier in the War of 1812. How could Matt Holland, professional student and unrepentant apologist of the American Founding, ever stoop to rewarding Ian’s purportedly single-handed effort of repulsing the American invasion of lower Canada in that conflict? Thomas Jefferson was so confident about that invasion that he famously predicted that “The acquisition of Canada this year . . . will be a mere matter of marching.”

But Thomas Jefferson apparently knew nothing of Ian Wilson and his band of only seemingly courteous neighbors.

No, this new title is neither a tip of the hat to age nor wartime heroics. It is, however, a tribute to his proven abilities as a thoughtful and able academic leader, with a fine tuned sense of judgment for the operation of the whole campus, not just academic affairs. It is also reflects my own commitment to recognizing, in organizational structure, the fact that Academic Affairs should play leading role in leading our institutional mission. [In practice what this means is that each week, my very first meeting, before anything else, is a private one-on-one with Ian to discuss the most pressing issues in Academic Affairs and across campus. Following this meeting, he now remains with me for staff meeting, where we jointly prepare agendas for the administration’s key decision-making meetings, which he will also run when off-campus duties require my absence. Having Ian’s more direct input in the development, prioritization and running of these agendas is already paying significant dividends in terms of coordinating and addressing the key issues raised by our daily effort to carry out the fundamental purpose of the institution – to educate the student.]

This increased role and visibility only makes Ian’s announcement this morning of his impending retirement all the more sobering. Even before adding the “senior” element to Ian’s title, with its expansion of responsibility, the role of the Vice President for Academic Affairs was as critical a position as we had on this campus. Therefore, I am taking this search most seriously and will devote my fullest attention to hiring the best individual possible to guide academic affairs, and support the larger running of the university, for the next several years.

In doing so, I urge all faculty, staff, students, and administrators from across campus to engage in the process with me. Most immediately, this means that I hope you will waste no time in reaching out to your networks across the academy to let them know of this great opportunity. I also hope you will weigh in on the kinds of people, traits, and experience we should be looking for to fill this role. To that end, I have setup a

---

1 Thomas Jefferson, Letter to William Duane (4 August 1812).
dedicated email box to receive your thoughts about this position. Given the volume I am expecting, I will not likely be able to respond to each email individually. I assure you, though, that I will read every single message that comes in and consider it carefully.

Given the importance of this position, I also plan to hire a nationally reputable search firm to assist us in this effort. Along with this, we will form an internal search committee to assist in the recruiting and vetting process. You will be kept informed of progress every step of the way.

At this point, I will resist the very strong urge to add a more personal note about the meaning of Ian’s impending retirement. I resist because he does not retire for a full year. There will be ample opportunity at the end of the academic year for such sentiment. Meanwhile, there is much critical work to be done. I was moved that even as he indicated that he felt this was his time to retire, he pledged his most active and vigorous year of administrative leadership yet, which I have already seen in action.

At this point, let me just say that I can’t quite believe that a whole year has passed since we were last together in this setting. You may recall that last year I began by noting the shame I felt in response to my father’s quite unexpected, semi-public, summer announcement that he and I would be going on a diet. Sadly, not only do I have to report that the diet did not work—or at least not very well—but now my physical self-image is under assault again. Just a few nights ago, I was home one evening visiting with my wife, Paige, when our strapping, high school sophomore son, who is playing varsity football, walked past us, fresh from an evening work out. As he moved out of earshot, Paige turned to me, and in fairly gushing tones, said, “Look at that handsome son of ours, do you see how big and strong and muscular he is? Where does he get that?” In a spirit of marital loyalty, I will not make further comment. Yet, having dragged us into the very personal, let me continue in that vein for just moment.

Looking Back

If this last year has gone fast, the last four years have gone at lightning speed. For reasons I cannot fully explain, last spring’s graduation ceremony caused a fairly profound moment of personal reflection for me. I don’t know if it was the size of the record breaking class, the quality of the invited speeches, or the tighter time frame and hitch-free process of marching in and through the program, but it felt like a watershed moment and caused a cascade of contemplation about my four years here at UVU and what we have accomplished together. In considering all of this progress, and what it took to get here, my mind went next to a very vivid moment during my final interview for the presidency. At one point, a Regent asked me, if I got the job, how long would I stay. For reasons I need not belabor here, my off the cuff response was a “soft target of seven years,” which, though I did not know it at the time, happens to be the average length of a university presidency today. Recollecting this exchange startled me. If my original “soft target” was seven years, and I held to that, I would only have three left.

That just seemed too short. At a minimum, I felt compelled to adjust my target by at least a year, taking me to eight. This seemed good for other reasons too; including that another four-year horizon takes us to the Fall of 2017, which just happens to be UVU’s 75th Birthday or Anniversary. Besides holding out the promise of preparing for and participating in such an exciting marker in our institution’s history, this lends itself nicely to something we have not done much at UVU, but must start doing.

We are now to a stage where we must begin a regular, rolling process of longer-term strategic planning. For many large, mature, and complex institutions, four-to-five year strategic plans are something of a norm. For us, it is more than just a matter of prudence to do so. In the face of the various forces threatening higher education today—forces I have discussed at length in a previous State of the University address—we will have to be strategic to survive, let alone thrive reach our fullest potential. And, as transparent, and collaborative as our current budget and planning process is, it currently operates on year-to-year thinking and inputs, which significantly inhibits the institutional strength that can come from more sophisticated, longer-view planning.

Moving Forward

In consequence of this thinking, I met this summer with our deans and other senior division heads across campus and asked that they begin developing a rolling four-year strategic plan for their area so that such plans can be presented during the late November, early December public discussions about the budget.
I stress the “rolling” nature of these plans. Far from being cast in concrete—or worse yet, published in a glossy, institutional report that will be published once, announced to great fanfare, then pleasantly set on an administrator’s shelf never to be viewed again—these plans will be reviewed and updated every year, giving them a dynamic and responsive quality all too often missing in planning products of so many universities. This will also provide ample opportunity for departmental input, which will be important. Thus, I invite you all to start thinking now about your areas and their future development, passing along your thoughts to your chair, who will in turn be visiting with your dean.

As you do this thinking, please keep the following in mind. If strategy is about anything, it is about making informed choices that produce unique value and, therefore, sustainable and successful outcomes.2 With respect to the “choice” side of this formulation, this means that you have to choose to do some things and, with equal intention, choose not to do other things. Such decisions are sometimes difficult, but often they must be made for an organization to overcome the threats and seize the opportunities that will enable the institution to flourish.

As you work to help formulate the strategic directions of your respective areas, recognize that choices will have to be made. Plans that come forward looking like highly traditional and expansive developments of every discipline, and then every subfield of that discipline, because that is how it looked at your graduate school institution, will not work. As a result, such plans will not be encouraged or funded. That is not intended to sound like a threat. It is simply a statement of fact given UVU’s particular environment and distinctive mission.

This leads to a second point. For your choices to be “informed” you must give careful, realistic, and creative thought to the larger UVU environment, and all that means for the financial, technological, and regional obstacles and opportunities we face. And, there should be an equal accounting of the significant work that has already been done in helping to define the overall strategic aims of the university. Said another way, these strategic plans need not start, indeed, must not start, from scratch.

**UVU’s Uniqueness**

We speak often here of UVU’s unique educational mission. I recognize that it is fairly easy for institutions to trot out a qualifier like “unique” when describing their profile. However, as I have surveyed the landscape of higher education across the nation, and as I burrow into the data provided by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, the more I realize just how truly unique we are. First the landscape.

If one considers the full spectrum of institutions of higher education in this country, we have chosen to no longer be a fully dedicated Community College whose target is only 1-2 year programs and is primarily focused on access issues. On the other hand, we are not a Research One institution with a full array of doctoral programs and a hyper-ambitious peer reviewed research agenda. We are no longer a state college but nor are we even a regional comprehensive university with a broad selection of Ph.D. programs. What we are is a regional TEACHING university with a broad array of Bachelor’s degree’s and a few selected Master’s degrees whose primary aim is student success. That, in and of itself is a fairly targeted mission, and one I am very proud to be a part of. Here I will note that the important of our teaching mission is not lost on the senior administration as virtually every member of the presidential cabinet now teaches roughly once a year.

Last year, I thoroughly enjoyed team-teaching an Honors Section of Ethics and Values with Elaine Englehardt. This year I look forward to team teaching a senior seminar in American political thought with another colleague, spring semester. That said, let’s see how our niche is narrowed even further.

Unlike a number of regional comprehensive universities, we have remained open admissions and committed to developing and promoting 1-2 year programs. But, among those open admissions institutions, we then add a distinctive layer of seriousness with the implementation of our Structured Enrollment program (which directs students within the institution according to their varying levels of preparation) and the build out of high quality bachelor’s and master’s degrees. And, we do all of this in a way that is focused on Engaged Learning as broad pedagogical approach across the curriculum. If that mission were not narrow enough, perhaps this last point will drive home our uniqueness. We are accomplishing all of this on a scale that is second to none.

---

Let me illustrate this even further. Here is a map of the United States with all of the institutions of higher education represented by circles. The larger the circle, the larger the enrollment. The color breakdown is according to offerings: green for Associate’s degree offerings, orange for Bachelor’s offerings, and yellow for Master’s degrees. You’ll notice on the left that there are nearly 4,500 institutions of higher education. Now, if we take enrollment to at least 10,000 headcount, look what immediately happens to the total number on the lower left. We drop to 600 institutions out of 4,500. Next, if we count those that are public institutions we drop down to 500 institutions. If we look for those that are open admissions, our numbers are cut in half to 250. Look at how much green fills the screen…thus signaling those that are remaining are primarily Community Colleges offering two-year degrees. Now, if we look at those institutions that have at least 10% of the offerings as Associate’s degrees and 10% as Bachelor’s degrees, the number shoots all the way down to … 10. If we take that to 20% Bachelors and Associates, where in actuality we are at 50/50, … we go down to five institutions. And if we bump up the enrollment to 30,000+, we stand as the only institution in the nation with that profile. This suggests one of two things. Either we are completely crazy, or, we are pioneering an innovative model on scale that may lead the way for many other institutions across the nation. I believe it is the latter. And let me tell you why. Many institutions and systems of higher education across the nation are also trying to solve their version of the serious-inclusive riddle. That is, they too are working to promote an increase in rigor, quality, and educational sophistication, while still providing access, support and programmatic options for students who are not prepared for, or fully interested in, seeking a highly rigorous, four year degree. But our unique model is doing just that, and on a remarkable scale. What the state and our students get with UVU is effectively two institutions in one with all the efficiencies of one set of faculty, staff, and administrators and a rare, smooth laddering opportunity for so many students who enter believing they are only meant for a 1 or 2-year degree, only to find the confidence they need to pursue a 4-year or even Master’s program. Other states are just now waking to the virtues of our model. Institutions in Washington and Florida have recently started to allow their Community Colleges to award Bachelor’s degrees. And, as recently as a fundraising trip to New York, I saw an example of another growing phenomenon, a Research 1 University adopting or housing a neighboring community college to expand access and provide seamless transitions. We are already doing this, and by 10’s of thousands of students a semester. We are unique. And, I have all of you to thank for it—making it work on a daily basis, with all of the inevitable tensions and trade-offs inherent in such an effort. Your commitment to this dual mission is what makes our work so successful and exciting.

Now, as unique as we are, I am still suggesting that we need to come out of this year’s strategic planning process with even further refinements to the nature and uniqueness of the institution—identifying strategic areas of investment and effort that will maximize our impact and ability to deliver on our responsibility as the higher education service provider for this region. Let me say a word now about some of those university-level initiatives and directions that I see being something of a focus for the next several years as we build toward our 75th anniversary.

Administrative Imperatives

One of the marks of the success of our university strategy is that students are voting with their feet. They are coming to UVU in droves and staying. Well, maybe not this year, but I think we all trust that the next year or two is an anomaly. In any case, our setting and particular approach has made us very popular, and we face a variety of administrative imperatives as a result. Underneath this heading, we have identified three key activities: Managing Growth, Operating Effectively, and Securing Resources. Right up at the top of any effort to manage growth sits the need to continue our aggressive physical build out of the campus.

Having built over the last three years a new Facilities building, Business Resource Center and spectacular Science building, in September, we will cut the ribbon on a brand new Wee Care Center on 400 West. This new building will quadruple, if not quintuple, the number of students—typically lower income, female students with children—who can be served in a safe and caring environment. In addition, there will be a certain percentage of spots allocated for children of faculty and staff who may also benefit from an on-campus day care service in order to focus on fulfilling their professional responsibilities. In the coming months, more information will be provided to you about how you may access this tremendous service.
We are also in full swing on two additional buildings in the heart of our campus. The Student Life and Wellness Building is scheduled to be completed this coming March and will transform our ability to deliver on a university environment that successfully cultivates the mind, body, and spirit of our students. We also just broke ground on a new $55 million, 244,000 square foot which, when completed in November of 2014, will contain 3,000 new classroom seats, a 1,000-seat auditorium, 20 new study areas, and over 200 new faculty and staff offices. While construction on this new facility has already cut into a good portion of parking on this north side of campus, I am pleased that our four-story paid-parking structure will be open for use beginning next Monday. Stay tuned for more information about the use of this new parking facility.

With the addition of these new buildings, I believe we are close to building out the footprint our main campus. I say we are close because there is at least one more building that I believe we vitally need to complete the basic structure of a university campus. In the coming year, you will see a number of events and materials as part of a targeted campaign to raise money and secure legislative support for our top facilities request, a new Building for the Arts. As it stands, our current facilities simply do not come even close to aligning with the caliber of our faculty and students. From a pedagogical standpoint alone, we have no greater capital facility need on campus. And so, finding both the private and public resources that it will take to build this—most likely a multi-year project—jumps right up to the top of my list of priorities over the next few years.

This is not to say we do not have other things in mind for the future. We do. From expanding our Heber operation, to refurbishing Canyon Park Culinary, to establishing a physical presence in downtown Provo, to expanding the front of campus for more administrative space and an extension of WSB, the state’s largest business school, to developing our Thanksgiving Point property, to establishing small outposts in the southern and western parts of the county, our plans are not small. We also have a stunning stained glass project, which depicts the History of Knowledge. We anticipate that this piece will go in the library, making the library a destination site for visitors from all over the state. Our target to install and unveil this project will be during our 75th Anniversary celebration.

Finally, we have secured 100 acres at Vineyard, or what many of you know as the old Geneva property. Right now, this acreage has been built out into intramural fields but the purchase is part of a larger investment in additional land to expand UVU’s footprint. We are looking to secure an additional 125 acres at a time when prices are low in what I like to call our “Wilson Sorenson” moment. This is in reference to our institution’s second President who, with great vision and against the wishes of skeptics, decided to purchase 180 acres on an old gravel and sand hill in Orem. Well, we can see how that decision has turned out. And here we are bursting at the seams. We have to be just as good to the next generation as Wilson Sorenson was to us.

With the acquisition of the land at Vineyard, with our current acreage at Thanksgiving Point, and with additional possibilities for sites in Provo and in Payson, UVU is in a prime spot to develop our satellite campus strategy. As you can see, these sites also align with the current and proposed Frontrunner train with stops at each of our targeted site locations. In the coming months, we will continue the development of our strategic plan for satellite campuses and invite your input.

In terms of operating efficiently, it must be recognized that technology is transforming higher education. All across the world, leaders and educators are exploring ways to improve the delivery of content to respond to the changing learning styles and circumstances of today’s students. At UVU we are making significant progress in the scope and breadth of the courses we are offering via the internet and through live-interactive broadcast. Many of you have developed hot-bunked hybrid courses. These efforts must continue with even greater energy and focus, for, as ambitious as our building plans are, they will still not be enough to accommodate the raft of students headed our way. This is to say nothing of what the demand for, and face of, education is likely to look like in a few years as the first truly digital generation comes of age right along with an ever more dazzling set of technological tools. That said, our efforts in distance education must resist getting caught up in fleeting fads, and be thoughtful about how to maintain quality standards and best support our key educational aims. To this end I am asking Ian to organize a first committee of knowledgeable individuals to review the current state of our technology developed courses/programs/support structures and propose ways to expand and enhance this important mode of delivering education to our resident students and perhaps those beyond our service region. It is important that we move with
dispatch as the application of technology in education is progressing rapidly. I hope to see an initial report by the end of the fall semester.

Even as UVU focuses on developing the people, programs and infrastructure required to succeed in its new role as a university, similar planning and investment has been required to establish a more robust fund raising enterprise, which is increasingly capable of supporting our overarching mission of student success by generating private support for scholarships, facilities, programs, and faculty.

By thoughtfully investing in personnel and programs, and committing at least a quarter of my time, or more, we have systematically strengthened our staff and our volunteer boards, undertaken successful fund drives and mini-campaigns, and begun attracting new donors to UVU among individuals, corporations, and foundations, at record levels, both here in our community and even out of state. The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, or CASE, is the nation’s foremost resource for and authority on quality collegiate fund raising. Recently, CASE assessed the last three years of fund raising data for nearly 1000 higher education development enterprises and, I am pleased and proud to say, has named UVU’s fund raising program the most improved in the nation among four-year liberal arts institutions. In the years ahead, we will continue this relentless effort to expand and improve our fundraising ability, increasingly calling upon our deans to engage in active solicitation of private money to support vital on campus programs.

In addition to seeking substantial private funds, our work continues apace to seek sorely needed state monies. Over the past 10 years, UVU has not received additional growth money, even as we grew faster than every other institution, increasing by nearly 10,000 our student headcount during that time. During the last two legislative sessions, however, we have been somewhat successful in receiving some much needed “equity” money to compensate for the inequitable decrease in the percentage of state tax fund support we have received over the years. All I can tell you now is that right now, a good five months before the legislative session begins, we are hard at work making our case for an even more substantial amount of equity funding than that received last year. Along with securing support for the arts building, this is my top priority moving forward.

**Inclusive**

At this point I would like to point to progress achieved and planned for our core theme of establishing a more inclusive institution of higher education. We have led the state on research, conferences, dialogues, and initiatives on Women in Education. From the statewide research and convening effort led alternatively by Susan Madsen, Cheryl Hanowicz, Susan Thackeray and Kathie Debenham, to the establishment of our Women’s Success Center with Director, Anne Wairepo, to the building of the new Wee Care Center, we have been aggressively addressing the problem of low participation in Utah higher education among women. Concomitant with that, we have also focused internally on an expansion of opportunities for women in leadership and career development. Michelle Taylor and Linda Makin were both elevated to Vice Presidents. And, our internal leadership development program—UVSELF—has consistently increased participation of women providing the platform for greater discussions about what women face professionally at UVU and in Utah.

There is so much more here we could discuss in detail, like the continued expansion of our highly successful Latino Initiative, our nascent Native American initiative which is already expanding opportunities for nearly 350 Native American students at UVU from 30 tribes and nations, our global spotlight program now in its fourth year, our establishing of family bathrooms and changed policies on anti-discrimination to cover gender and sexual orientation, our numerous conversations on interreligious understanding and appreciation.

Yes, we have done much. Yet we can still do more. That is why I am asking my Assistant, Kyle Reyes, to coordinate the development of a dedicated 4-5-year strategic Inclusion Plan for the university. Dr. Reyes has spent the last three years consulting with institutions throughout the state on ways they can improve on issues of inclusivity and diversity. Frankly, his expertise in these areas is one of the reasons I hired him in the first place. I invite you to contact him with your ideas and recommendations on ways UVU can continue to deliver on our commitment to Inclusivity.
Engaged

For the past six years, engaged learning has been a vital component of our identity and mission as an institution. Our collective commitment to offering students opportunities for growth and professional development has made an enormous impact over these short five years since the Carnegie Foundation designated us a community engaged institution. It has been particularly gratifying to listen to students tell their stories of how they were able to leverage their UVU experience in building their resume.

As we look ahead as an institution, we are redoubling our efforts to cultivate and build even more engaged learning opportunities for our students. Our aim is for every student to have opportunities for rich meaningful connections with faculty, their peers, and their surrounding community and to have that documented as part of their educational experience. Toward this end, we are pleased to announce the launch of the Engaged Learning University Distinction. This program offers students the choice to pursue activities in the areas of leadership, service learning, or professional engagement. The Office of Engaged Learning will facilitate this program in partnership with the Volunteer & Service Learning Center, the Center for the Advancement of Leadership, and the Institute for Professional Engagement. Graduating students with both diplomas and resumes is not just a marketing slogan; it is our way of doing business.

To you faculty, I would stress that, as I have said before, engaged learning does not mean one thing, or apply only to a handful of disciplines. And, it is not one more set of activities to add to your basic responsibilities as a faculty member. Rather, it is an orientation toward your still core responsibilities of teaching, scholarship and service. What distinguishes UVU in engaged learning is not so much the kinds of activities we do, but the way in which we integrate them in constructing a more active and holistic student experience. We are committed to do all we can to provide you the resources and support for projects and activities that cultivate the character and experience necessary for students to pursue their professions and meaningfully participate in their communities and nations.

In the coming year, we will have the opportunity to apply for renewal of our Carnegie classification as a “community engaged institution.” This will provide the occasion to build upon a solid foundation and allow us to take engaged learning to new heights as an institution. To take engaged learning to the next level, we need the commitment and effort and each division on campus. As we move forward, we will look to hire faculty and staff who demonstrate commitment to our institutional profile. Our rank and tenure policies and budget practices in particular will need to increasingly reflect our commitment to student success through inclusion and engagement. Giving this careful thought in your four year planning efforts will be vital. I am deeply appreciative of all of you who commit yourselves each day to the success of our students through effective use of this pedagogical and scholarly stance.

Serious

With respect to our commitment as a serious institution of higher learning, there are literally hundreds of examples I could share, and in fact do share, when I am out on the road, about what you are each doing individually to enhance the rigor, sophistication, and quality of a UVU education. But here let me just focus for a moment on the institution wide effort we have made to transform fundamentally the start of the school year. By simultaneously implementing an admissions deadline and purge of non-paying students before the semester begins, we now start the school year with more available for those students most serious about coming and completing the semester. Just two years ago, before these policies were instituted, we turned away 1200 students who tried to register for classes held by students who never paid tuition and probably never showed up for class.

Last year, we launched a Freshman Convocation with over 900 freshmen and 2,000 family members guests in the UCCU Center. This inaugural event set a wonderful university tone. To my mind, the most important signal sent that evening came from the overwhelming number of you faculty who showed up in your academic regalia. I plead with you to do that again. And yes you will have to sit through another Matt and Dan Fairbanks show of sculpting and history, but please do it for the students. For them to see you there in your robes, adding to the gravitas of what it means to pursue a university education, sets just the right atmosphere to challenge the students, as we do, to sign an “I commit” card, effectively committing themselves to complete a degree at UVU. The response from students and parents alike was overwhelming.
Thank you making that effort, and please join us in the effective tactic to foster a greater culture of completion here at UVU.

And, last year, we implemented Structured Enrollment. For those who are new or may not have been aware of the details of this new enrollment policy, let me review. If students do not meet certain enrollment benchmarks, they are still admitted to UVU but their university experience becomes much more structured. This allows UVU to be inclusive on entrance but signals to K-12 students that if they want to truly be prepared for a UVU education, they must meet certain enrollment benchmarks. Such changes have been met with great enthusiasm from our K-12 partners including all of the superintendents in our K-16 Alliance. And...the new policies are already showing some signs of success.

Some of you may have already seen this at my State of the University address but let me revisit the data as it is significant. What you’ll notice first is a fairly typical trend for most institutions. We measure student enrollment at third week and again at the end of the semester. Historically, we have had quite a few students, many of whom were those who were registering late into the semester and not paying, drop out after the third week count. Now let me show you what happened the first year of structured enrollment. Your first reaction to the dip in enrollment overall might suggest that the new policy may not have been such a good idea. But there are many reasons for the decline in enrollments last year. Some of the dip was due, no doubt to the admissions changes but that doesn’t explain all of it. The economy started to pick back up with a number of students indicating that they returned to work. And we limited our concurrent enrollment delivery to focus on our service region rather than effectively being the provider of concurrent enrollment for the state. But here is the significant part. For the first time, we went up by the end of term. What this means is that we not only kept virtually all of our students but we picked up a few more on the second block. This increase in retention will no doubt translate to an increase in graduation rates if we stay strong in supporting these students and in supporting these policies during a tough and unusual period of enrollment decline.

A final, if somewhat extended word on serious, here as we close. As noted previously, any good organizational strategy must have an informed sense of the environment in which it operates. On a national scale, one message could not be clearer, institutions of higher education must be responsive to the growing need for education in science, technology, engineering and math. According to a noted study by Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce, by 2020 the economy will face a shortage of 5,000,000 workers adequately trained and educated for service in STEM related fields. Similar studies from the Federal Government’s Bureau of Labor Statistics and coming out of the private sector by Macroeconomic Advisors confirm the same basic point: jobs are coming to the economy, they will require a certain kind of post-secondary training in STEM related areas, and if universities fail to respond to this, they do so at great peril. Now that I have excitement of at least two or three colleges, with the rest of you rolling your eyes saying enough is enough, I would ask all of you to hear me out in full.

To put a more positive gloss on looking at this situation, according to the folks at Change the Equation, a non-profit, non-partisan operation looking at STEM education in the US, spawned largely by President Obama’s “Educate to Innovate” initiative, our stubborn unemployment rates sit at 8.2%, but the picture looks much better for our STEM trained citizens. In short, if you were unemployed in the last three years, the overall ratio of unemployed workers to job postings was 3.6 to 1. In the STEM occupations, however, job postings, on average, outnumbered unemployed people nearly 2 (1.9) to 1. Now, I’ve studied enough statistics to know how misleading average figures like that can be when it comes to individual situations and industries. But, what I am willing to stand by is the larger point that meaningful, high-wage employment is growing rapidly in STEM related fields and an institution that puts student success at its heart would be doing students a great disservice if it not give some deliberate, energetic consideration to developing certificates, programs, messages and incentives to draw students in these directions.

In addition to the sweeping research and analysis at the national level pointing in this direction, there is also the overwhelming input of our local business leaders. As you may know, UVU is nested in an

---

increasingly famous cluster of information technology and software development firms that are exploding along the Wasatch Front. Both in and out of the state, the area is becoming more and more known as Silicon Slopes, drawing from the image of a Silicon Valley like dynamic set up against the base of the Rocky Mountains. As of today, more than 5,200 high-tech companies—from start-ups, to nearly-household-name firms like Intel/Micron and Adobe—have located themselves in this fair state of ours, employing roughly 66,000 people, and paying salaries 58 percent higher, on average, than the statewide annual nonagricultural wage.\(^4\) And while the lion’s share of these firms are information technology and software related, the life sciences and bio-tech fields come in as a strong second rung. Finally, what all of these firms come with, is not just a penchant of technological innovation and creativity, but a keen sense of entrepreneurialism, and shrewd marketing, management and financial practices.

It is difficult for me to convey just how thirsty, no, down-right parched, these firms are for a talented work force, with advanced training in relevant fields. I hear it again, again, and again: what can UVU do to produce more graduates who are ready and equipped to fill jobs that currently go to out of state folks, or worse yet, go unfilled. One thing that is interesting about this is that the requests are coming in for technically trained certificate and two year degree holders for certain jobs, almost as much as are requests for bachelor’s and master’s degree holders for other jobs.

With our dual mission in place, UVU is uniquely situated to respond to these demands like no other school in the country, as I have shown. Given our existing capacity, our potential, our local need, and the wealth of student opportunity, we would be most unwise not to capitalize on this as something of a focus moving forward. The precise way and level of doing this will have to be worked out over the next few months and years, not the next few weeks. But, it will have to be worked out as we build our long-range plans moving forward.

Now, to my friends and colleagues in other disciplines, let me just a few things. First, keep in mind that strategic linkages between the tech community and Stanford University has not exactly been a bad thing for Stanford’s English Department, whose 34 faculty now constitute one of the best programs in the country, currently sitting at #2 in the US News Rankings. My point here is that some focused investments in STEM education with an eye toward entrepreneurialism do not mean that everything else goes on hold. Certainly such investments will not define all of my primary activities over the next four years, or so. As I have already noted, my highest capital facilities project, which will require a substantial amount of presidential fundraising and politicking, is an arts building.

Let me elaborate here to say that this is such a priority only partly due to the fact of the patently inadequate facilities we have given the quality of our programs. It is also a reflection of my own broader philosophical viewpoint about the purposes of a genuine university education. I think as you know, I, myself, pursued with anything but regret an active double major in English and political philosophy—neither discipline sitting at the top of any list of growth industries the last time I checked. My position was then, as it is now—only now it is informed by years of additional observation and confirmation—that perhaps the most critical elements of a university education cannot be confined to, or provided by, instruction exclusively aimed at producing the immediately and narrowly employability as may be defined by markets, managers, and policy makers.

Even if such were the chief aim of a university education, it would not be achieved, frankly, by a curriculum and pedagogy that proceed with an aridly “efficient” and undeviating focus on entry-level, industry-specific job training. If we are going to cite the Georgetown study on employment and workforce needs, we must also look at the recent findings of a recent major study on employer priorities for college learning conducted for the Association of American Colleges and Universities published in one of the few national educational journals I regularly read called “Liberal Education.” This survey, conducted with hundreds of employers across the nation who typically hire 2-to-4 year degree holders elicited eleven key findings. I will not share them all, but the first I will read verbatim.

“Employers are highly focused on innovation as critical to the success of their companies, and they report that the challenges their employees face today are more complex and require a broader skill set than in the past. Notably, employers indicate that they prioritize critical thinking, communication, and complex problem-

solving skills over a job candidate’s major field of study when making hiring decisions.”

Even when employability is put at the top of the list of educational considerations, one can see that true, long-term and prosperous employability depends upon an array of skills that go well beyond what might most immediately be seen as the controlling qualification for ground-level success in even the more scientifically and technologically advanced sectors of our economy.

Beyond all of those listed in the first finding (like innovation, critical thinking, communication, and complex problem-solving skills), the study also goes on to explain that employers place great premium on ethics, intercultural skills, civic capacity, and, yes I will say it, because the study says it, various forms of engaged learning.

While we might explore each of those skills and their connectedness to various schools of learning, let’s just take the first one, innovation. Just this last year, we had two brilliant guests as part of the Presidential Lecture Series (which, by the way, too many of you missed) who came from quite different worlds but effectively shared the same message. Sir Ken Robinson, a world-renowned innovation expert and scholar of theatre education, and Mark Ptashne, internationally acclaimed molecular biologist and world class violinist, both argued with sparkling wit and intelligence that creativity is not the sole domain of any one discipline, it is in fact needed in all disciplines, but the arts and humanities are particularly well suited to foster such.

Of course, we need not look exclusively to academic minds and publications to make this argument. We might look at individual leaders themselves. One of the most dramatic moments came years ago when Steve Jobs came out on stage in his signature blue jeans and black faux turtleneck and stood beneath a gigantic set of sign posts signaling the intersection of technology and the liberal arts in order to explain that such an intersection was built into their corporate DNA and stood as the secret sauce of Apple’s truly historic success as one of the most innovative companies of all time.

Though I believe all of this is true, I want to make even a deeper point about the nature and purposes of education. That which is being made at the university is not, in the final analysis, simply a talented work force. To quote Wendell Berry, America’s agrarian poet laureate, “the thing being made in a university is humanity.” To my mind the most critical justification for ensuring that any university campus has a vibrant commitment to the performing and visual arts, humanities, and social sciences, in addition to STEM fields, is not finally because they too make students more employable but because they bring our students to a fuller, richer, more nuanced and wiser understanding of themselves, of their fellow human beings and the beauties of the world around them found in art, music, literature and the very earth around them.

So where does that leave us? Perhaps I can answer that with a short story from Norse mythology. 

“It was said in the old days that every year Thor made a circle around Middle-earth, beating back the enemies of order. Thor got older every year, and the circle occupied by the gods and men grew smaller. The wisdom god, Woden, went out to the king of trolls, got him in an arm lock, and demanded to know of him how order might triumph over chaos. “Give me your left eye,” said the king of the trolls, “and I’ll tell you.” Without hesitation Woden gave up his left eye. “Now tell me.” The troll said, “the secret is, watch with both eyes!”

To beat back the enemies of disorder and forge a genuine, free and humane life, we need, and our students need, both STEM and the Liberal Arts. Instilling in our students an eye for both is critical whichever area they may choose to focus. And so, even as we may, out of prudence and responsibility, make more investments in STEM training and options for our students in the near future, we must coordinately invigorate our attention to the design, expectation, and operation of our general education offerings—a project already underway, but one that must continue with renewed energy and attention in the time ahead. Beyond that, faculty from each eye, if you will, might determine how to design and market courses, or encourage activities to students from the other eye.

6 Need citation
Like other things at UVU we have discussed today (where excellence meets access, and where solitary scholarship meets practical application), this will require what contemporary experts call “integrative thinking.” This is actually new language for an idea as old as Aristotle, and practiced brilliantly in the statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln. Integrative thinking is “the ability to constructively face the tensions of opposing models, and instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generating a creative solution of the tension in the form of a new model that contains elements of the individual models, but is superior to each.”

This is precisely what we are doing with our dual mission, and the same lessons of creativity and patience and ongoing dialogue will apply to our ability to navigate what has become in too many quarters a simple place of battle lines between the two eyes of STEM and the liberal arts. And, I stand utterly confident that just as we are refusing to buckle from the tensions that sometimes surface in the pursuit of our dual mission but rather channel those tensions into something unique and path breaking, so too we will find an intelligent and innovative way to invest in STEM while preserving and encouraging the dynamic power of the arts, humanities and social sciences.

And, as always, let us never forget why we must do this, not so much for the Steve Jobs vision of creating the most innovative company on the planet, but to foster the full lives of potential and beauty that walk into our classrooms every day of school.

**Student Success**

In that spirit, let me invite to the stage three very beautiful human beings you all have all so helped to cultivate and shape.

First, we have Paola Rondón. Paola is a native of Venezuela and is currently the Vice President of our International Student Council. She also seems to be on the presidential detail for dining services, which means I’ve eaten dinner with her as much as my own family these last few years. In personal note to me, Paola noted that she came from a country where “justice is not an option and freedom of speech is not a choice” so to her, UVU has become a true home, giving her opportunities to grow personally and professionally in ways she never dreamed of earlier. She thanks all who served as friend and mentor but, especially to Chad Luke, Maddeline Scott, Nancy Turley, Jim Peterson, Lisa Williamson, Suhyen Perez, Steve Crook, Lester Hellewell, Angie Carter, Brian Jensen, Anthony Terry, Barry Bartlett, Maren Miyasaki

Next, we have the smooth and dashing Richard Branscombe. Richard, is a dual English and Philosophy major and is whip smart yet he is very quick to credit much of his success to a number of faculty and staff who have supported him. From the Honors program, Kate McPherson, Mike Shaw, Allen Hill, and Tiffany Nez; from the English Department, Mark Pepper, Deb Thornton, Brian Whaley, Karin Anderson, and John Goshert; from the Philosophy department, Shannon Mussett from the Philosophy; and from the French Department, Gloria Thomas Gilmore and Tammy Christensen. Richard says that this list is not exhaustive but that it represents those who have had influenced and motivated him academically. In addition to this academic support, Richard has found support from over 20 staff departments on campus including TRIO Student Support Services where he currently works as a tutor. UVU has also impacted Richard’s personal life as he met and married his wife, Sierra, who is also an Honor’s student. Sierra is an English major who is applying for UVU’s Nursing program this semester. Please help me congratulate Richard on his success.

Finally, we have Adonica Limón. Adonica is a double major in accounting and nursing. She has worked I think in virtually every office on campus except recycling, including in my office as my intern. Currently she is accepted to a dual PhD. Program in Nurse Practitioner and Pharmacy. Of course, if you know Adonica, you know that life has not always been so rosy for her. If I may, I will read a short passage from a letter she wrote me “As a newly divorced mother of three sons, the thought of returning to school literally scared the “bajeebies” out of me! Going on a wing and a prayer, and let’s face it….an enormous leap of faith, I stepped foot onto the campus of UVU (it was then UVSC) with no idea of where to even begin.

---

8 See Roger Martin, Definition of Integrative Thinking, Rotman School of Management Website, University of Toronto
After meeting several “angels from student services”, I was admitted and enrolled in classes – I was officially a college student!!!

Pursuing two degrees (accounting and nursing) proved to be no small feat! Along my journey, I had MANY professors and faculty members who were critical for my growth, both professionally and personally. Some of my most memorable professors include:

Stephen Fullmer (English), Renee Van Buren (Biology), Judge Anthony Terry (American Heritage), Michael Snapp (Public Speaking), Matthew Horn (Chemistry), Eric Heiny (Statistics), Michael Shively and Don Homan (Anatomy), Olga Kopp and Paul Bybee (Biology), Bernd Kupka (Organizational Behavior), Steve Teeter (Accounting), Jim Bailey (Accounting), Justin Jacobs (Chemistry), Jordan Doman (Career Prep), and The Smith’s – that’s Kevin, Sheldon, & Lynn in Accounting, as opposed to the alternative rock band formed in Manchester England in the mid-80’s.

Ladies and gentlemen, what you see before you are three of the best reasons I know for doing what we do. Thank you for the countless hours you have spent teaching, engaging, and supporting these and thousands of others like them. Thank you for dedicating yourselves to a career focused on the development of others. Thank you for being at UVU and for lives you will change this semester and many more. Have a spectacular year.