

President's Opening Day Address
August 23, 2002
Integrating Knowledge and Performance at BGSU

Let me start by saying welcome to each and every one of you: to the faculty, to the staff, to new faculty members, new students, everyone who is here for the first time and those who are returning for my eighth repeat performance. We're really glad to have you back here. When I say my eighth repeat performance, this is the eighth time that we have had an opening day ceremony, and we actually started back in 1995 in this very room. Subsequently, the Union was shut down, and we moved over to Olscamp, but we're now back in the Union, and it's very gratifying to see as many people here today as we have in the audience. If you have been coming to these regularly or have talked to other people about them, you'll note that today we are changing the format somewhat. We started out with a very low- tech presentation many years ago with me talking about a variety of things and people nodding, listening and sleeping and being involved and not being involved. So a few years ago we changed to a different format-more of a multimedia format-and, with the help of WBGU and Marketing and Communication, we put together some wonderful presentations utilizing all the technology we have here at Bowling Green State University. We did that for a couple of reasons: one, to keep people awake. In addition to keeping people awake, we wanted to demonstrate to the University community the potential of the technology that we have invested in. We have invested very aggressively in technology. As you all know, we have just completed the Supernet Project that was a multimillion-dollar project: desktop computing, wiring the entire campus. We will now have the capabilities of video streaming, and this is something that

has been very intentional and has been something that that Board of Trustees has very ambitiously and aggressively supported so I wanted to utilize that in the Opening Day presentation and the State of The University Address to show that technology can assist teaching, learning and research-and I underscore assist. Technology is never designed to supplant or take the place of the quality of one's ideas or the intellectual inquiry; but what, in fact, it should do is provide another tool to enhance teaching, learning, research, and creative activities so we tried to do it in that mode.

I talked to several people in the last six or eight months and they said, " You know, Sid, you should just talk at this next Opening Day Address. Go back to the format where you just talked to people about what is on your mind" so that is what I am going to do today. There will be a few slides, but there will not be a multimedia presentation. It will be me just talking about what is on my mind. As a result of that, it will go like this because that is how my mind works. For those of you who are from a department where you teach logic or systematic reasoning, you will not be impressed by the linear sequence of my thought. I will talk about what I am thinking about and what I have been thinking for the past year and where I see the University today and where I see us going in the future. So that is basically the format for today.

Before I actually start I would like to ask, just for a second, all of the new faculty members, staff members, and new students-students that are new to Bowling Green State University, just to stand up for a moment so we can recognize you. Let's give a round of applause to all our new community members, new faculty and staff and students. If I were really slick, I would ask each person to say something about themselves and that would be the end of my speech. I could get away without saying much at all-just kind of

go through the whole group, but I am not going to do that. We also have one of our Board of Trustees with us, Mike Wilcox. Mike, would you please stand up so people can see you. Are there any other Board members that are here? Jarrod Hirschfeld, stand up, the dashing Jarrod Hirschfeld. Last night I was in Lima at a send-off event for students from that area: Lima, Wapakoneta, New Bremen, Auglaize County and all other surrounding counties. Jarrod spoke there yesterday evening, and he did an excellent job, a much better job than I did. So, Jarrod, if I start faltering today, you just slide up here, and I will slip you the microphone, and you can take over wherever I leave off.

Before I actually get into what I am going to talk about today, I would like to say how important today is, this welcoming back opportunity for me and for the institution. The Opening Day to me is important for a number of reasons but probably the most important is that it's an opportunity for a new beginning. Often in life, we are so caught up in the demands of the moment-the obligations and commitments we must do and the things that people tell us we should do-that we lose a sense of place and space of what is really important. Every day I get up in the morning, and I am very thankful for another chance to reshuffle the cards, to reorganize my thinking, to recommit myself to things that are important but it is not often that institutions have that opportunity. I think that Opening Day at Bowling Green State University is very significant for that reason. It is another chance to take a look at what we do in the classroom, what we do in our support services, what we do in the President's Office and to say are we doing the best job we can for our University community, for the students, for our faculty, for our staff, for each other. Are we truly a community that is better off because we are a member of it than we would be independent or separate from it? I think that is the challenge for each and

everyone of us. I have said this many times; I started saying it back in 1995. As a result of being part of the Bowling Green State University community, whatever your position might be, whether you're in facilities or if you're in a physics lab, as a result of being here, there should be a fundamental difference in the quality of your life: what you know, what you think, your potential, what you're able to share with your children because collectively, if a community is going to be significant, it must have the potential to ignite the imagination, the excitement and the potential in others. So I don't care if you're an English professor or if you're in sociology, I don't care if you're in student life or in residential facilities, we should, as a result of being here, have an insight, a feeling, a sense of commitment, a sense of a purpose that we didn't have before we came.

I was talking to Professor Browne for a moment before our program today on the BG eXperience. We have a group of 125 students that are a part of the program called the BG eXperience. This program is about giving students an opportunity to critically reflect on values and their lives and value conflicts that determine how we make decisions on a daily basis. The first 125 students are part of a pilot project and are here with us today. Part of the program is service learning. It is actually working in the community; it is actually going out and doing things for other people. Some of the things they do are go out to the community and go out to soup kitchens or go help the elderly; they can go do a variety of different things. Professor Browne was talking to me about the experience and the transformative value of that experience, the transformative value that comes from helping other people who cannot necessarily do for or help themselves and what that does for you and to you as an individual. That is the kind of quality that Bowling Green State University should imbue in all that we do. In the laboratories, the computer labs, the

classroom, on the football field, on the basketball field and the gymnastics arena, there should be something happening there that ignites the best in us. So Opening Day to me is particularly important because it is an opportunity to think about that again and think about it from the perspective of a faculty member, a staff member, a student. How can we and what will we make it? The challenges we set for ourselves, the goals that we establish, the things that we accomplish will be determined by the effort that we make and the opportunities that are provided to us. So this is an opportunity to start again and look at a variety of different things that I am going to talk about a little bit later: The academic planning team, a group that has been working throughout the summer to help us develop an academic plan, built upon what we have done in the past with an eye on the future and what we might become as an institution. It is a new beginning, a new direction. So this is a chance, this Opening Day, to actually look at all of these things.

The final thing I would like to say just in beginning is that I am deeply appreciative of the support that I have received the past seven years at Bowling Green State University. Since I came in 1995, I have felt that the university community, although we do not always agree on all issues, has been behind my administration and me. We can do nothing; the President's Office can do nothing without the support of each and every one of you in here. If there is any president that ever tells you that, if I stumble in a moment of madness to say that, quickly check me because that just cannot happen. The success or failure of Bowling Green State University as an institution rests with the people that make up this academic community. I am a member of it, and I will have my voice, and I will have my say, but I am just one member of this academic community. The community is each and every one of you sitting in the audience today so I would like

to thank you very much for your continued support of our administration because in supporting the administration you're really supporting Bowling Green State University and each and every one of the students and the faculty members or staff members that make the community what it is so thank you all very much.

Now I want to get to a few things that I want to share with you today. We have a series of slides we want to look at. These slides tell us where we have been. I want to quickly review where we have been in the past seven years and just share with you some benchmarks, some indicators of what we have been able to achieve in the past five years. I am going to start with a couple of aerial shots of the campus of Bowling Green State University and then an aerial shot of the Firelands Campus to go from the big picture to the more specific. That is Bowling Green State University: 2000 acres and over 200 buildings; that is our physical plant, and you can see there is farmland and there are buildings. We are now in the process of engaging in the master planning initiative that is going to help us figure out how to better utilize this space not only today but ten years from now, twenty years from now, thirty years from now. Many of you have been involved in the master planning process and have talked to the master planning team. This is a critically important initiative for our university. We will not be twenty years from now the same institution that we are today in terms of size, scope, programs, buildings, our need for laboratory space, our need for new residential facilities, and our need for different ways for utilizing the space that we have to make it more accessible. As you note, the city is growing around us, we are being headed off on every front. How do we go about planning for the future so that we can utilize our space effectively to enhance our mission of teaching and research as an institution? The master planning

process is going to be critically important. Where are we going to put the new performing arts complex? What about athletics, the convocation center, what about the labs for the life sciences? How are they best situated to allow us to enhance the capabilities of the campus? That is one thing that we are going to work on this year and next year, and eventually a plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees, which will be a new master plan for the institution. That is the big picture, that is the bricks and the mortar and those are the buildings. I want to take this next slide and look at the Firelands Campus, and I want to say “hello” to our friends at Firelands who are remotely participating in this Opening Day address. Our Firelands campus is a beautiful campus.

If you look at the growth of the campus of Bowling Green State University, there is no intention to grow our undergraduate student population on the main campus anymore. We are right now just about at the point where we need to be. Since 1995, our intention was always to grow to a certain point but not beyond that point; our plan was to get to our enrollment cap for the four residential universities in the state of Ohio: Kent State, Bowling Green, Miami, and Ohio University; There is an enrollment cap for undergraduate enrollment, and our plan was to get to that. It is roughly 20,000 and that is the maximum where we want to be. We are just about at that point now so our intention is not to grow anymore here. The Firelands campus can still grow because there is no enrollment cap, and they have the physical capacity. This new building you are seeing in the upper right hand corner will allow them to accommodate more students. Firelands is now about 1500 students and they could easily go to about 2500 students and serve that region well and that is, in fact, what they are in the process of doing now. The new building is going to be about 30,000 square feet, and it is primarily from money that was

raised from the Sandusky/Huron community. It is an example of how we can as a campus, Bowling Green State University, grow without further growing our enrollment here at our main campus. The reason we do not intend to grow anymore on our main campus is what I have said from the beginning and what I think is very important-that we create an environment that enhances the quality of the learning experience. What I would like and what I have said many times is I'd like to increase the size of the full-time faculty, and we will see a slide about that now: reduce class size, reduce the student faculty ratio to create an environment where teaching and learning is really an important part of what we do and have the support services to make that happen.

If you look at student enrollment from 1997-2001, we were-and this is for the Firelands campus as well as the main campus-slightly under 18,500; and right now we are slightly over 20,000. We have grown in a planned way from 1997-2001. We have been the fastest growing four-year institution in the state of Ohio, growing at an average of about 2.5% per year. That has been planned and has been intentional, and we are where we want to be right now. We want our application pools to become deeper so we can become more selective; we can have more students in the life sciences or the arts or the social sciences, but we really do not want to grow the undergraduate population beyond where we are at now.

Full-time faculty: If you go back to 1997-1998, slightly under 675; and 2001-2002, slightly over 800. We are still not where we want to be in the growth of our full-time faculty. If you go back to those early years, those numbers are an effect of the early retirement program. As those of you who have been here for awhile know, we had an early retirement program, we eliminated that program, we had a large number of people

who chose to retire, and we are just now building back our full-time faculty to the numbers where we would like to see them. We are continuing to grow our faculty, that is something we said we were going to do, and we are right on target in doing that, and it is critically important for our institution. Let me give you a benchmark or point of comparison. If you look at Miami of Ohio, which is a peer institution, we attract students from the same pool; we attract faculty from the same pool. Miami is smaller than Bowling Green in terms of student enrollment, but the size of their full-time faculty is larger than ours. We are trying to continue to grow our faculty to get the student faculty ratio down. In my world, and this is my imaginary world, if we never had another large lecture class that would be fine with me. The idea is to try to get to a point where we have smaller classes, more interaction between faculty and students so that we can have the learning environment that we want. We are moving toward that goal and these numbers show that.

A big issue at Bowling Green State University when I came in 1995 and what continues to be a large issue is compensation for our faculty. The short version is that there are a number of studies that have been done to show that our faculty salaries are behind those of our peer institutions. About four years ago, going on five, our Board of Trustees recognized it, and they said they were going to engage upon a very aggressive plan. They called it the compensation plan, to make our faculty salaries competitive with peer institutions. We selected a group of peer institutions for the last four years. If you look at our salary increases compared to other schools in Ohio, you can see that we either have had the top or tied for the top in faculty salary increases in the state of Ohio. We are still not where we want to be. Given the resources that we have, the Board of Trustees

has aggressively pushed to make faculty salaries competitive. If you look at inflation at the three-year average from 1999-2002, you can see that we are at the top of our peer institutions, but we still have a ways to go. One of the things that I said to the university community when we started the compensation plan was that there are two caveats that we had to consider that will determine how long it takes us to get to our goal, which was the 70th percentile for peer institutions. One was enrollment. We had to maintain our enrollment; as you saw from the earlier slide we have done that. The second thing was the state economy. Right now we are having some problems with the state economy; any of you who read regularly the newspaper can see we're in a lot of trouble in Ohio. Not just in Ohio but throughout the entire nation, we are struggling with a very difficult economy. In spite of that, the Board of Trustees last year authorized raises for faculty and staff that were at the top of peer institutions throughout the state of Ohio, and I think that is a credit to their commitment to our compensation plan. It is important. As I said many years ago, we are going to expect the best out of our faculty and staff. We want the best faculty, we want the best teachers, the best researchers, we want 150% commitment. On the other side, we need to acknowledge that and recognize that with compensation that will be comparable to their achievements and their academic preparation. Our staff and our faculty are critically important, and we're monitoring that very closely.

In the midst of all of this, and this is important, state subsidies are down. If you look at state share of instruction, what we call state subsidies, where we were from 1990-2002 we did receive around 58% of our support from the state. That number is now down to 46% of our support from the state- so less than half of our support.

If you go to the next slide, instructional fees, as you see, were 41% of the cost, now they are 53%. As support from the state has gone down, tuition has gone up. So when you read articles about the escalating tuition at state universities, there is a reason for that. You cannot accommodate more students-we're teaching more students than we ever have at Bowling Green State University. We need faculty and staff to provide the instruction and support for those students and run on less money. It isn't voodoo economics, there's no magic; if you're going to teach more students, you're going to need more faculty and you're going to need more staff. If you're going to add more technology and more access to the web and create the kind of learning environment that you need for students, you need more money. That is in fact why tuition is going up. We have been lobbying aggressively, all of the university presidents and Larry Weiss, to try to get the legislature, the assembly, and the Governor when the budget straightens out to give greater support for our colleges and our universities. If you look at our peer states, if you look at Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, and you look at their investment in higher education, we are about four or five percent lower in the state's share of instruction for higher education, four or five percent behind all of our peer states. State share of instruction is down and instructional fees have gone up; we are aware of that, and we are continuing to work with that.

In the midst of all of this-teaching more students and getting less money from the state-another indicator of our success is external grants and contracts. If you look from 1997-2002 we have gone from slightly over six million to over seventeen million dollars for this year. So we are continuing to do well, our faculty and staff are continuing to be successful in bringing external resources to the institution.

The last slide shows our private giving to the institution from 1997-02. We have gone from roughly over five million to over ten million dollars in total giving annually to the institution, which is a real credit to the alumni and our friends and what we're doing at Bowling Green State University, and that is something that we are very proud of.

What I want to do now is talk about where we go from this point. I will do this in a very condensed way. We started back in 1995-96 with something that was called the Community Building Initiative. This was an initiative where the Faculty Senate and the administration came together and asked what we could do to create a different kind of future for the institution. What can we do to provide a platform that will allow us to plan academically and programmatically for the university that we want to have in the future? All of these things that you have seen in these bar graphs didn't just happen, they happened as a result of activities that took place in a very intentional way. When you see those numbers, you see the enrollment growth, you see the support of private giving, you see the contract and grant dollars going up. There are a number of programs that really made that happen, and I just want to mention a few of them: The Chapman Learning Community, The Health Sciences Residential Community, The President's Leadership Academy, The Springboard Program, Service Learning Opportunities, Literacy Serve and Learn, America Reads, Music Plus, University Program for Academic Success, The Impact Program, The AIMS program, Partnerships For Community Action. All of these programs really made these numbers happen, and all these programs were part of a plan to try to create new initiatives, to create a new kind of momentum for the institution. It worked as illustrated by the growth and the investment in the university-everything from the federal support for the university to private giving to the university. It all started with

a plan, and that plan said that first and foremost are our people. Those of you who were here for the Community Building Initiative, that was started by the Faculty Senate and the university administration, what we found from those deliberations from over hundreds of focus groups as well as private conversations with people was that Bowling Green State University's greatest asset or strength is its people, its staff members, and its faculty members, and we needed to invest in our faculty and staff. As we're investing in our faculty and staff, we created learning communities, we created programs that allowed our faculty and staff to support students in a way that took a large university and created a small college feel, whether it's interaction among faculty and staff; whether it's learning that took place outside of the classroom. All of those things work very well, and as a result of that, it created a mission statement for the institution.

This came out of the early planning process in the community-building project. I want you to take a moment to look at this, BGSU's Vision Statement, and I want to refer to it and use it as a platform to talk about where we are going from this point. There are a couple of words that I think are particularly important. One is learning community. The others are intellectual discovery, rational discourse, and civility. What the campus community said back in 1995 was what they felt was missing. BGSU was a good university prior to 1995, which was a university with nationally recognized programs. The faculty, the staff and the students said to the focus groups they didn't feel a sense of connectedness or a sense of belongingness, that is, a sense of community throughout this entire university. While we had good programs in Arts & Sciences, we had strong programs in student life, while we had development in the university relations area, those things did come together for a common purpose, for a common set of objectives and for

common outcomes. What they wanted was to create an interdependent entity that enhanced all the qualities of every unit within the university. So that speaks to the idea of the sense of community.

Another thing that is important is intellectual discovery. We are a university, we are an organization, we are a business, we have a bottom line, our budgets have to balance, but we are a university. What we do is different than what Microsoft does. We are different than other large organizations. Teaching, learning and intellectual discovery, the discovery of new ideas, new ways of thinking, new ways of behaving, solutions to societal problems-it could be anything from medical science to the social sciences to the human sciences-that is what we do as a university.

I was testifying before a House committee two weeks ago about higher education because they want to change the funding formulas and do some other things. All they wanted to talk about was how many hours our faculty members are actually in the classroom. They wanted to talk about how do you manage to the bottom line. I said to them that we do all of those things and I am very confident that the faculty members that are in the classroom are doing research that required them to work 70 hours a week. I have no problem saying that and justifying that, but what I also said was that you have to understand managing the bottom line for us is not the same as for Chrysler or for Owens Illinois or Owens Corning. What we do is create knowledge that Chrysler or Owens Corning will use in their businesses tomorrow and the next day and ten years from now. What we do is understand human behavior so that people can operate in family units and in communities in a way that is civil so that we don't destroy our environment and each other but create an inhabitable planet where everybody can thrive and grow. What we're

doing, as well as being grounded in the future and teaching students calculus, is creating the next calculus of the future, the next generation of math, the next generation of science, and that is something that is different, something that is visionary and something that is very important because the knowledge we are teaching today was created by an academic community of yesterday. You need to understand that is being part of what a university does, and the business of the university is intellectual discovery, and it is critically important to our mission.

The last thing, rational discourse and civility, I think are the hallmarks of any kind of organized society. We can agree, we can disagree, but we need to deal within the confines of civility. If I agree with David about something that has to do with community life here at BGSU, we should let the weight and the quality of the arguments and ideas determine the outcome not my need to be right or his need to have his organization dominate mine. We need to get beyond the facade of who wins and who loses to what is important to achieve or what is important for us to accomplish, and that is where we are trying to get with rational discourse and civility: our undergraduate programs, our master's degree programs, our doctoral programs, teaching connected to research and public service.

Recently, I was sitting around thinking about where we are going as an institution fully aware of all the numbers I have shared with you in the graphs; we're doing well. We're doing well in the eyes of the Board of Regents and everyone else. We have numbers, we have data, and we have metrics to prove that. I could go from the intercollegiate athletics program to sponsored research; from student enrollment to student retention. Our four-year graduation rates have increased 4% in the last year.

Every benchmark I could mention, we're doing better, but that does not ensure our future. I was sitting around thinking and then I had a discussion with John Folkins, our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and we were bouncing around some ideas; and I said, "John, in order to build upon our successes of the past, what we really need to do is look at our academic programs and look at what the University Planning Council has done. They have done a wonderful job initiating a strategic planning process that goes from the unit level all the way to the university level. We should look at where we were with planning before that and think about where we want to go in the future. We need an academic plan that takes us 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, and 30 years into the future." So I said, "let's get together a group of faculty members and give them all the documentation that we have accumulated in the last number of years, all the plans, the strategic planning documents, the studies that institutional research does on student satisfaction. Let's look at all of that and see if they can come up with a sense of direction, some themes for our academic programs as we move into the future. If you're going to come up with good ideas, you need to get smart people together, give them a charge and let them do their work." Let me quickly read to you the charge that I gave to this group.

Bowling Green State University's aspiration to become the premier learning community in Ohio and one of the best of the nation carries the high expectation that we will unite in a common sustainable vision for the university, a vision that will identify and direct us towards real distinction. To chart the way towards this aspiration, I am happy to announce the appointment of the Academic Planning Team. Comprehensive planning has become an integral component of BGSU in the past and in our ongoing efforts to achieve excellence. This team will look at the university's existing

documentation and look at where we might go in the next 10, 15, 20, 25 years. They will lay the groundwork for making choices among the many possible strategic initiatives.

With the knowledge gained through this process, the team's charge will be to update us and help us determine the areas in which we invest our scarce resources. The product of the Academic Planning Team will be on the web as of today. This is not a final version of what will be submitted in December when they will have a final version. The entire university will be engaged in the discussion about this document. They have, in fact, begun a very important initiative for the university. What you will see in this document are the hallmarks of a premier university. People have asked me about vision; this is fine, but what do you do and what does it look like, what are the nuts and bolts of it, the characteristics of it? First is a university learning environment that encourages and nurtures personal and professional transformations among students, faculty and staff. It is not the transmission of knowledge and taking multiple choice tests, but knowledge that should make a difference. To know it and not to be able to do it only takes you halfway. Intellectual engagement and active participation are the foundations of academic and civic performance. We should be actively engaged in utilizing what we know and doing what we know makes a difference to our society. Students, faculty, and staff have clear expectations regarding the purposes of education and the level of performance necessary to be successful at the university and in contemporary society. We should have standards. Just to get admitted to a university and to sit in x amount of classes doesn't mean that you are an educated person. Hopefully, as a result of that, there are clear expectations and there are things that you should know and be able to do. You should be able to write at a certain level, you should be able to critically think about your values and what they mean

and how those things apply to our society and our world. You should have quantitative skills that allow you to solve problems. There are certain things that we should be able to do and say that every student who graduates from Bowling Green State University could demonstrate those outcome objectives.

Outcome driven learning, research, and leadership is teaching and learning. These and critical thinking about values are all initiatives where we have begun to amass data and have initiated programs that are helping us move towards our goals. There is a committee under the direction of Mark Gromko, that has worked on learning outcomes from each of the majors from our entire curriculum. I could go through every department in the university and share with you accomplishments of faculty members in the areas of research. We have one of the largest teacher preparation programs in the state of Ohio. We don't have a doctorate program in teaching and learning but that, in fact, is something that we are going to look at.

Finally, critically thinking about values. I mentioned this earlier, the BG eX students. This is something critically important to our institution. I was recently speaking to a group of business leaders in Cincinnati, and they were talking about Enron and WorldCom and all the things that are happening in the business community. Why should we have to do this? Why is this important? Well, I think that the nation, the President of the United States and Congress are saying that you have violated the public trust because your behavior has not been ethical, and therefore, we're going to hold you to a standard of accountability that we will, in fact, monitor. When you go back to the beginning, most of these individuals were educated in colleges and universities. We have a responsibility to ensure that every student that graduates from Bowling Green State University, starting

with the BG eXperience, has an opportunity to understand that values do govern their behavior. They need to be able to critically reflect and think about those things and what they mean. They need to understand that values will come in conflict because we are different human beings and be able to sort that out in a meaningful way that makes a difference for them.

When we started the values initiative and the core values of the institution, those were things that the university community said would be standards that the university would use to conduct its business. In order for a large organization to work effectively, we should do those things. There was never the intention to teach those things or evaluate people based on those things. These are things that would be nice for any organization to have to allow it to be effective and accomplish the business of that organization. What we did want was for students to understand in a critical and reflective way that they have values and that they need to sort out where they come from, how they influence their behavior, how they effect, how they influence their ethical behavior in their disciplines. So what we're saying with the BG eXperience and its focus on values, isn't that anyone should have anyone else's values but you better know and better be able to use your intellectual and cognitive skills to figure out what, in fact, your values are and how, in fact, they govern your behavior. Critical thinking about values is not about teaching any values but the recognition that values are part of how we make decisions in our world. If we recognize them or not, they still are determining factors in how we function. So we are always using values, and critical thinking about values is to get people to think about them in the context of their academic major or discipline.

In closing, I would leave with you a couple thoughts. Significant change doesn't take place in a sensational way. I think in America we are prone to a news media analysis of what makes a difference. What is the headline of the day? What is the activity of the moment? America is not going to be great because we invade another country. America will be great because of the power of our democracy to release the potential of every human being to participate and to make a difference in our country. Anything that we do at Bowling Green State University that is significant will be evolutionary, not sensational. We'll get smart people together; we'll plan, we'll sort it out, we'll take two steps forward and ten steps back, and through that process we will create the foundation and the discipline to be a great institution. It requires focus, intelligence, people who care, people who are willing invest of themselves, who have passion and commitment; and most of all it requires leadership. If BGSU becomes Sidney Ribeau, then it isn't a great institution. You can have leadership that is significant; but, if a unit is going to be strong, it is because of the systems and the plans and the discipline to stay on task and do it. We are poised to take a step to allow us to be one of the best universities of our kind not only in the Midwest but also in the nation. It is only going to happen if we engage our students, our faculty, our staff, our intellectual resources and our will to make it happen. The choice of whether or not we do that is not up to me; it isn't even up to you in thought but rather in deed. Given what we have done in the past seven years, I'm encouraged that we will take these steps, make the hard choices, and, as a result, BGSU will be the premier learning community in Ohio and one of the best in the nation. One of the things I will say finally is "thank you" so much for being here today. I am gratified by the attendance of

each and every one of you. There will be some very interesting initiatives. We look forward to an exciting and challenging year. Thank you very much.