



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Thursday, August 15, 2013, 2:00 p.m.

University Assembly Meeting

Dickinson Auditorium

I. Welcome and call to order

Provost Toro called the assembly to order at 2:00.

Provost Toro welcomed the assembly to the new Academic Year 2013-14.

Provost Toro announced that Laura Smith-Olinde had accepted a position at UAMS as the director of the Teaching and Learning Center, so she could not continue to serve as the President of the UALR Assembly.

II. Review of minutes

Minutes were distributed via email as UALR is going green. Robie Robertson moved and an undetermined member seconded. The motion carried on voice vote.

III. Election of President to Serve the Remainder of President Smith-Olinde's Term

Denise Legrand nominated Andrew Wright from the floor. Andrew has served on Executive Committee and been involved in many of the changes. Andrew has worked on the new core. It would be great to have a president who's been involved in this process. Elizabeth Vaughn Neely seconded.

Past-past-past President Ford rose to support Andrew. As Past-past-past president he is still on executive committee. He hopes that Andrew will stay around long enough so that he can move on.

Nick Jovanovic asked if this is a fresh term or whether the election will fill the remainder of Laura's term? Provost Toro indicated that this election would finish out the remainder of term.

Coskun Bayrak moved to close nominations, which was seconded and carried on voice vote.

Sarah Beth Estes moved acclamation. Judith Faust seconded and the motion carried on voice vote.

President Wright introduced Provost Toro.

IV. Provost's Comments

I'm delighted to be here and welcome you back. It's a real pleasure to be part of UALR. Great experience being here. Great opportunity to say thank you to you all, Chancellor, faculty, staff and remarkable students for the opportunity to serve as Provost. Important to recognize individuals serving as interim deans and those who continue to serve as deans and other in faculty leadership positions. Thanks due also to leadership of Faculty Senate for work last year and participation in summer retreats and planning processes. Look forward to working with Faculty Senators. Would be remiss not to mention great amount of work many of you put into Academic Restructuring. I received 27 page report yesterday. We will make this public as soon as this meeting is over. Thank you to all members for a job well done.

Today I'm talking about the strengths of our institutions and how we capitalize on them. Like all higher education institutions, we are facing challenges we need to overcome.

Today I'm going to clarify my academic vision for UALR. We can become a model for higher education in this country.

We can be the second institute of research in Arkansas in enrollment and prestige. But, UALR can also be one of the top metropolitan institutions in SREB.

This is in line with the mission adopted by Faculty Senate in 1988.

To accomplish this, we need to understand environment and threats.

President Wright thanked Provost Toro for the message of hope for UALR and introduced Chancellor Anderson.

V. Chancellor's Comments

Thank you President Wright. Special welcome to those joining UALR this fall. Really appreciative of the speech I just heard. That was a clarion call, one that is practical, realistic and focused on the challenges we have. It's a vision that has my support and that will enjoy the support of everyone here. I've enjoyed working with new Provost.

Let me give you some evidence. One thing we have to do when out of town is keep each other advised of important stuff going on. Here's a message I sent her when she was out of town in Seattle. I had it up but now I've lost it.

One thing so you can understand. The Provost has been building a house. In the late stages, she had some problems with the contractor. "All of your AVCs got in a fight this morning. Half of your deans resigned. NW corner broke off and fell to ground. House contractor blew bid to replace. Otherwise it's all business as usual." We enjoy working together.

Not going to cover everything I'd like to here at beginning of year. Mention in passing- I've been involved in the Technology Park meetings. You can find the statement I made to the Board Of Visitors that will give you more information.

UALR is undergoing transformation. It's an overused word, but is proper in this case. Unprecedented change is taking place in the university's leadership.

I appreciate Dr. Toro's determination towards the vision. Like the concreteness and focus of the vision. It's a goal that state officials can understand and accept, and has the virtue of setting the stage for UALR to take the next step to move from regional benchmark to national one. All of us, faculty and everyone else, has the responsibility to support this vision.

The challenges are formidable.

Enrollment: In the last four years, enrollment has been on a downward slope. In all UALR's history, we haven't had to recruit students. We offer it, and they will come. But as a result, we don't have institutional culture where everyone feels a responsibility for recruiting and retaining students. We MUST create that culture here where everyone is responsible for student success.

We weren't able to give raises last year because enrollment was down. We don't want that to happen again. If trend continues, we'll have to look at how to cut expenses. We don't want to do that. We are delaying refilling positions in anticipation of future possible losses. We might also have to announce that early retirement program for tenured faculty will have to be discontinued. I'm referring to the stipend for the first and second years after retirement that tenured faculty have been able to get. The UA System has said that we should discontinue them. It definitely affects the budget. If we get to that point, those of you who are getting close to it--we would make every effort to give at least a year's notice of phaseout. But I want to avoid budget cuts. Just want to be aware of reality we're facing.

Also, civility is important. Simply treating others as you would want to be treated has been lost. Hearing about more interpersonal conflict on campus. We're all adults and this is our community--makes sense to make effort to behave in civil and considerate and respectful manner. Be able to disagree w/o being disagreeable. Going to launch an overhaul of grievance and appeals process this fall. The current process is outdated, and we have to clear this up.

Another challenge-campus safety. Our campus is safe by statistical measures. But we want people to feel safe on campus. Several efforts underway--campus safety study committee nearing end of work, and we'll try hard to implement everything they send our way. Also added three additional police officers to campus force, and a new Chief, who is working on new initiatives. We have the GreenDot program, and it's gotten off to a

good start. It has moved well with the on campus population. Need now to determine ways to connect with commuter students.

Challenges are a prime opportunity for positive changes. Use talent and expertise of people here to help us meet these challenges to not just survive but thrive. Want our vessel to be moving strongly and briskly to destination.

Already mentioned new leadership. History and experience is valuable, but can also be blinding. Fresh, unbiased eyes can help us.

You've met and heard from the provost. Also have a new vice chancellor for enrollment management. He has a vision and knows what he's doing but he can't do it alone. Once he gets students to visit here, it's up to all of us to make good on the promise of this institution. Students won't come here or stay if they have bad experiences. Each of us has opportunities to influence student retention. Let's show them how much we want them here.

Take a moment to talk about campus visits of prospective students. Visit is really critical step. Got a chance of closing the deal before they leave. So we need to make the most when there are students here looking at us. For example, if recruiting office calls a department to ask if a student could talk to someone in department, what needs to happen on other end is an attitude of "YOU BET!" When contact is made, show enthusiasm. And then when you have the student with you, introduce them to others in your units. Pleasant interactions. Then on the way home, they'll feel good about us. And if they had reservations, the human dimension can remove those.

Good things that have been going on, that make me optimistic. Enrollment numbers were worse early in the summer, looked really bad. Some concern we were going off the cliff. A bunch of people on campus went into crisis response mode and lots of initiatives were put forth to turn things around. I'm most appreciative of this hard work. We'll be evaluating those initiatives in the fall. But the idea came out of recruitment and retention task force. Will be ongoing and you'll hear more throughout year.

Just to emphasize the importance of the personal by making this example. If just 500 employees in a year tipped a student who was wavering, facing a problem, just one student per employee, can you imagine the impact that would have? If we did that, Dean Kahler would look great in a hurry.

Retention is part of it--takes place right here on campus and we all have a way of positively influencing that.

We're living in a digital world. In terms of this, our students and prospective students have expectations for us. Hired a director of digital strategies, and we've already seen great improvement and results.

Online education-we continue to build in that area. Not dramatic but definite increase. Important part of student population and funding base so need to continue to build and strengthen this. Lots of valid issues about making online education what it ought to be. But online education is not THE future of higher education. It is an important part of the future of higher education. Seen in broader context, then we can go forward on comfortable basis.

Provost presented some information on this to faculty senate last spring. Board of Trustees and state coordinating board approved a major energy conservation program for the campus. A big green project. Over the next year or so, there will be construction sites on campus. Going to save us good deal of energy expenses. Over the life of the bonds, the savings will cover cost of bonds and more. Initiative we can be proud of. Want to get emergency generation back-up to protect us from having to cancel class.

Now, to restructuring. UALR is undergoing academic and administrative restructuring. UALR is a large, complex organization-sometimes need to change this balance. The purpose of restructuring exercise: keep what's working well and fix what we can do better.

Administrative restructuring: not as concentrated/complicated as academic restructuring. For one, because we've been restructuring for three years now, and there's not as much to do. Taking a global look, we're moving ahead. The last phase is underway in July with Direct Report Group. Two models came out of that. Those were submitted to and reviewed by Chancellor's Leadership Group. As a follow up to recent discussions, next week I'll be posting three potential models for your reviews and comments. Will be set up in BlackBoard. Comment period will go until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 13. Appointing small committee led by Bob Denman to hold a series of campus discussions. Time frame: provost submit academic recommendations on Oct. 1. I plan to make decisions on what she submits as well as administrative restructuring by Oct. 15. Important searches on hold until process is completed.

The new structure should be completely in place by July 1, 2014. Likely be parts that can be implemented either right away or soon after decisions are made.

People have got their act together and we're ready for what lies ahead.

One other piece of good news, example of solution to problems we're facing: The Summer Bridge program. Conceptualized by student services, and faculty across campus helped. UALR hasn't always been great about academic and student services working together. Trust, respect, and take each other seriously. Results from the program were simply remarkable. In three weeks, we got 35 out of 38 students who had been placed in developmental programs to pass out of those. Remarkable achievement.

Approach saves students time and money. It's a good thing. All 44 students said they'd recommend the program to friends. And they learned that we care for them.

Last night dinner with residence students and parents. Again and again what I heard from parents was "your people here have been so nice." That's a key. Shout out to two people who were mentioned to me: Nick Steele, coordinator of chancellor's leadership corp. and Nick Jovanovich.

The Chancellor quoted:

"In times of change, learners inherit the earth; while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." - Eric Hoffer

Next fall, I want to put a line graph up here that shows enrollment growth. I know you want that too. To get there, each must recognize that we play a role and determine the role to reach that goal. The work each of you do is laudable. Whatever your role, I'm asking you to move forward, approach it with a spirit of service. Go above and beyond for our students. Challenges are considerable. Offer constructive ideas. Counting on all of you to help our students succeed.

President Write introduces Julien Mirivel

VI. ATLE announcement

Julien gave a brief presentation on the Academy of Teaching and Learning Excellence.

VII. Open Forum

Nick Jovanovic asked if any other Senate officer positions were open?

President Wright responded that the Vice President and Secretary would be elected to fill in the remainder of the terms.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned.