

CHHS State of the College address

Jan. 16, 2009

TRYING TIMES, BUT A BRIGHT FUTURE

Welcome, everyone, and thank you for coming.

You know, in my nearly 10 years as dean at the College of Health and Human Services, I've watched it thrive and grow into the second-largest academic unit on the Ohio University campus. There have been many changes along the way, countless accolades, and a few setbacks. But one constant through the past decade – indeed through this College's past three decades – has been the truly outstanding people whose work ensures its success. That's you, and those who came before you. And it's you who will lead the College into what I'm convinced will be a successful future. And I have absolutely no doubt that it *WILL* be successful. I say this not as an outgoing dean who's trying to make you feel better during uncertain times before I head off to the sunny shores of retirement. No, I say this as an observer who has watched our great College steadily eclipse its phenomenal accomplishments year after year, for 10 years running.

I know you've all heard whispers about what's in our College's future as the University rethinks and remakes its own. I had to chuckle the other day when I heard someone say that they heard a rumor that CHHS will be carved up and folded into other colleges. "This program will be 'here' and that program will be 'there.'" Let me reassure you: I have a role in the discussions about what Ohio University's future will look like, and I can honestly tell you I don't see anything like that happening. Strong-performing units like ours don't get pushed to the sidelines. Rest assured that we'll have a strong voice in OU's future. We've earned that, since we've been a key player in the institution's growth and its high level of excellence.

That's not to say there aren't changes ahead. But that's nothing new. In my 10 years here as dean, I've witnessed many – and most of them, happily, have been positive.

In 2001, I had the distinct pleasure of being the first CHHS dean to see all six of its schools gathered under one roof. We moved from second-hand spaces all over campus into a gleaming, \$24 million facility with a sunny interior that to many, including me is the most beautiful on campus. This move was a new beginning for both our College and for Grover Center, a former gymnasium that had been ravaged early in its life by flooding from the Hocking River. The more things change, the more they stay the same: The ghosts of those 1960s floods revisited us in 2006, but we all pulled together and came through it in wonderful shape, thanks to the efforts of so many.

During the past decade, I've also watched as our College's enrollment took off, growing by more than a third. When you have exceptional programs in growing fields, students want to take part in them. Ten years later, we still have top-notch programs in fields that are expanding, if anything, more rapidly than when I arrived here. To borrow a term from Wall Street, I'm bullish on our future.

I've also witnessed our funding from external contracts – especially research – double during the decade, to the point that we routinely secure \$3 million each year. You don't garner that kind of outside funding unless people believe in what you're doing. Our partners do.

And why is that? Because we have a track record of high-performing and well-prepared students; distinctive and innovative programs; unparalleled community outreach and impact; and, most importantly, we have faculty, staff and alumni whose achievements have set them – and our college – apart from our peers.

For the next few minutes, I'm going to describe to you what you've done during the past year that has made our College so special. Then

maybe you'll see why I'm so deeply proud of you and so confident about your future.

Superior students ensure success

Our outstanding students, I think, are a blend of the raw talent they bring to us and the valuable mentoring and knowledge we give them. If you look around Grover Center, you can see many examples of what I mean. One is the Student Advisory Council, a College-wide group that promotes interaction between students and faculty. This group had a very productive year: They served as OU ambassadors for prospective students; they planned the May Mingle mixer to get faculty and students together; they managed the process for selecting the recipient of last year's Outstanding Teaching Award, **Petra Williams**; they coordinated an American Red Cross Blood Drive; and they helped feed 125 people a spaghetti dinner at the local Good Works shelter.

In the School of Human and Consumer Sciences, led by **Ann Paulins**, seven students participated in the School's honors program, which began five years ago. This program is led by **Margaret Manoogian** and it enables students to present their scholarly work on a national stage.

Two of our dietetics majors won undergraduate research awards from the American Dietetic Association. Six students from the Division of Campus Recreation officiated at national sports tournaments and were named All Americans, distinguishing them as the top college officials in the country. **Mike Knutson**, an exercise-physiology graduate student, was recognized by the American College of Sports Medicine for an outstanding research presentation. **Maria Ivanova**, a doctoral student in speech, hearing and language sciences, won awards from the NIH, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation, and Ohio University – that's a pretty impressive trifecta.

Distinctive, innovative – and growing – programs

The influx of all of these talented students challenged our capacity to teach them. Our College's fall quarter enrollment was 3,675 students, a 4-percent increase over the year before. During the summer, we had more than 2,500 students enrolled in CHHS classes, ranking us among the University's highest summer-section averages.

Enrollment in the School of Public Health Sciences and Professions, which is led by **Mathew Adeyanju**, climbed to more than 400 students, 50-percent higher than five years ago. The School's new online master's in health administration promises to swell those ranks even more. And the School's master's of public health is a model of diversity, with 75 percent of its enrollees coming from under-represented groups.

The School of Recreation and Sport Sciences, led by **Ming Li**, saw graduate student enrollment grow by a third last year to reach 151 students. And with newly implemented articulation agreements with Hocking College, we expect to welcome more recreation-studies majors into Grover during the next few years.

Our College houses three of the four graduate programs at Ohio University that are ranked among the top 50 in their fields nationally, according to last year's *U.S. News and World Report* ratings. These programs reside in our schools of Physical Therapy and Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences. School directors **Tootie Overby** and **Brooke Hallowell** and their faculty and staff members are to be commended for their hard work in distinguishing these programs.

A major indicator of the quality of our programs is the astounding number of cohorts last year that scored 100-percent pass rates the first time they sat for their certification and licensing exams. These included graduates in nutrition, audiology, speech-language pathology, physical therapy, child-life specialists and family nurse practitioners.

Our co-curricular units, those that support and enhance our instructional work, were extraordinarily successful in 2008, as well. The Division of Campus Recreation, thanks to the work of **Doug Franklin** and his staff, exceeded revenue projections in all its facility operations. Its hockey program raised more than \$23,000 in development funding and created the program's third endowed scholarship.

WellWorks, under **Kim Valentour's** leadership, maintained a 100-percent renewal rate for corporate memberships, no small feat in these times of economic distress. WellWorks also completed its Healthy Ohio program, which provided health screenings to nearly 600 OU employees.

Our physical therapy clinic, thanks to **Steve Trotta** and his productive staff, provided services for 753 adult patients last year at sites that included Hudson Health Center, Peden Stadium and Castrop Center. That's a 20-percent increase in patients over the year before. Also staying busy last year were our speech and audiology clinics, which were managed by **Davy Parsons** and recorded more than 2,500 patient visits.

Community outreach and impact

Superior programs and facilities are great, but they're only window-dressing if they don't register a measurable impact on the communities they serve. Ours truly do. I probably don't say this enough, but our teaching labs, clinics, and co-curricular units are the critical pillars on which our community-outreach efforts rest. And service to the community, as we all know, is in our DNA as health and human services professionals. The hearing, speech and language and physical therapy clinics provide badly needed medical services to a medically underserved region – the kind of treatment that, in many cases, simply isn't available elsewhere in Appalachian Ohio.

Closer to home, Campus Recreation and WellWorks have proven to be critical players in cultivating the health and well-being of Ohio University students, faculty and staff. WellWorks, for instance, in addition to its

Healthy Ohio screenings available last year to all OU employees, operates the Risk Reduction Program, which helps participants address conditions such as coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. On the fun side, WellWorks also sponsored a fall-themed PumpkinFest and a Winter Gathering in which families could share in food, fellowship and entertainment.

Speaking of families and fun, the Child Development Center, under **Cathy Waller's** able leadership, had a garden party during the summer to showcase the center's two-year gardening project. Cathy and **Terry Swank** have incorporated the garden into our model curriculum, using it to acquaint the kids with science, math, language and literacy, and to help them develop sensory and motor skills. The center serves as a model for best practices as it cares for about 100 preschoolers each year while providing educational opportunities for 500 OU students majoring in early childhood education and child development and observational opportunities for countless other majors.

The experiential learning that goes on at the Child Development Center and our other facilities is at the core of both our College's mission statement and Vision Ohio. The clinical and work experiences that CHHS students glean from the CDC, Campus Rec, WellWorks and our clinics are an essential component of their education. We are a hands-on institution, we always will be, and we're instilling this ethos into the leaders of tomorrow who spend time in our classrooms, labs and co-curricular facilities.

Our students and staff serve the community in other ways, as well. Last year, three community-health students volunteered 20 hours a week with Americorps in Athens County. Club members in Campus Rec participated in more than 2,700 hours of community service – that's 112 days unselfish service. In December, a group of family studies majors volunteered at a nonprofit resort in Kissimmee, Fla., for children with life-threatening illnesses. Our students helped the children and their families fulfill their wishes of visiting Disney World and other Orlando-area

attractions. **Jenny Chabot**, who led the trip, said the experience was as life-changing for our child-life students as it was for the families they interacted with.

One of the most meaningful ways we help our local community is through Kids on Campus, with **Leslie Moss** at the helm. KOC provided afterschool homework help, academic intervention services, nutritional snacks, and enrichment activities to more than 400 academically-at-risk students in Athens County during the academic year. Seventy percent of the kids who attended KOC's afterschool program improved their math skills with the help of new LeapTrack software that KOC implemented last year. Another 225 children attended KOC's summer program, which helped them keep their reading skills sharp while introducing them to a major college campus.

Our faculty and staff set us apart

We wouldn't have the kind of impact on our local and global communities without the hard work and talent of our faculty and staff. I'll go into more detail about these talented people later when I recognize some of their achievements individually, but I want to mention a few examples here to demonstrate my point.

In the School of Public Health Sciences and Professions, **Tim Ryan** was appointed by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to chair a panel that recommends how federal research dollars are allocated for health concerns such as asthma, lead poisoning and sanitation. Tim's selection, I think, demonstrates the high level of expertise in our College.

Here are some other examples:

David Holben was elected to a three-year term on the Commission on Dietetic Registration, the credentialing body for registered dietitians.

Ming Li is serving as president of the North American Society for Sport Management, the major professional body in his field.

Francie Astrom was appointed by the governor to a five-year term on the Ohio Board of Dietetics.

Tom Murray was honored as the Clinical Exercise Professional of the Year by the Midwest chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine.

And receiving an honor a little closer to home but equally as meaningful, I think, was **Sally Marinellie**, who was named Ohio University's Outstanding Student Organization Advisor by the Department of Campus Life. This award recognizes those of you who spend untold hours outside your teaching to guide students in OU's registered student organizations. Sally was recognized for her passion and dedication to the School of Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences' Undergraduate Research Club.

I continue to marvel at the amount of scholarship and creative activity our faculty members engage in on top of their teaching loads. For example, faculty and students in Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences published 42 refereed journal articles last year and gave 58 presentations at conferences around the globe. That's a tremendous amount of scholarship. And in the School of Physical Therapy, all seven Group I faculty members served as reviewers for anywhere from two to 13 scientific journals.

Our alumni excel in their fields

Our alumni are equally as distinguished. At September's Homecoming Gala alone, seven members of the CHHS family were honored by the Ohio University Alumni Association:

Jeremy Foley, a 1976 graduate of our sports-administration program and director of athletics at the University of Florida, received a Distinguished Alumnus Award. He is the only athletic director in NCAA

Division I history to have supervised a program that won national titles in football and men's basketball.

The husband and wife team of **Jeanne** and **Sedat Gokcen** also received Distinguished Alumnus Awards. Jeanne, a licensed speech-language pathologist, once taught in CHHS and is now president of the company FutureCom Technologies. Sedat, who also had considerable graduate coursework in speech science at Ohio University, is chief technology officer of the firm and a developer of speech and signal-processing software.

Also receiving a Distinguished Alumnus Award was **Larry Starr**, a well-known lecturer in sports medicine and athletic training. He began his career as an assistant athletic trainer and instructor at Ohio University in 1968. He also worked with Major League Baseball's Cincinnati Reds and Florida Marlins during those teams' march to three World Series titles.

Also at the awards ceremony, three CHHS alumni were inducted into the Kermit Blosser Ohio Athletics Hall of Fame. They were:

Jacqueline Conrad Visscher, a 2001 dietetics graduate and three-time All-American award recipient, who was a cross-country athlete.

Geno Ford Jr., who received a master's in physical education in 1999, and as an OU basketball athlete accounted for 202 three-pointers and 1,752 career points.

Jennifer Morris, a sport-management and sports-administration major in the late 1990s who set several OU records as a softball player, including one for a career batting average of .367.

Other prestigious alums who weren't honored at Homecoming include sports-administration alumnus **Derrick Hall**, who is president and CEO of Major League Baseball's Arizona Diamondbacks. Fellow alum **Andy Dolich** is COO of the NFL's San Francisco 49ers. And thirty-two sitting athletic directors are sports-ad alums.

Of course, sports ad doesn't have a monopoly on our great alumni accomplishments. A number of hearing, speech and language science alumni are at the tops of their fields in the academic world, such as **John Locke** at City University of New York and **Michael Crary** at the University Florida. **Ellen Goldsberry**, a Human and Consumer Sciences alumna, led the retail merchandising program at the University of Arizona. And **Giuseppe Lancia Jr.**, a School of Public Health Sciences and Professions alumnus, has developed a growing network of long-term care facilities. I could go on and on if only time permitted, but suffice it to say that the accomplishments of our alumni in all of our schools are a reflection of the impact of your work as their professors, mentors and supervisors.

Resources are an ingredient of our success

I like to think that one reason our students do so well is that we provide them with the resources in Grover Center they need to succeed.

Our Office of Graduate Studies, with **Jennifer Horner** at the helm, disbursed more than \$1.7 million in stipends and tuition scholarships last year and distributed 21 CHHS travel awards that enabled students to present their research nationwide.

Our top-notch Student Services staff, led by **Becky Zuspan**, welcomed and advised more than 400 new CHHS students last year. They also processed 457 course substitutions; 140 transient course petitions; and 50 transfer credit re-evaluations. That's a lot of thankless paperwork, but each piece was critical to the academic career of a student. With the energy that Becky and her staff had left over, they coordinated a Student Awards and Recognition Reception that I'm sure each student participant will look back on fondly for years to come.

Another key player in providing our students with the resources for success is **Cecil Walters**, our coordinator for recruitment and retention. At the beginning of fall quarter, he launched a peer-mentoring program in which established CHHS students help new ones get oriented to the

College and University. These mentor/mentee pairs developed specific action plans together and met regularly to follow up on progress. Though it's a new program, early indicators are that it will be a resounding success. During 2008, CHHS also continued its campus leadership in promoting Residential Learning Communities. These academic communities are a critical tool in increasing freshman retention rates, and developing more of them has been a top goal of mine. Last year's were filled to capacity with nearly 140 students. We now have learning communities for Pre-Interior Architecture/Pre-Retail Merchandising, Food for Thought, Pre-Early Childhood, Pre-Sport Management and Pre-Exercise Physiology.

We also provided valuable resources for our faculty and staff last year, creating several interdisciplinary research labs on the second floor of Grover Center and installing 70 new computers and assorted other technology through the hard work of **Gerard Akindes** and his staff. And **Jody Grenert** spearheaded a redesign of our College and School Web sites, and the installation of an online system for cataloging your professional activities.

Fundraising and grants

A critical stream of our resources comes through external grants and contracts, and we continued to perform strongly on that front in 2008. **Jennifer Horner** and **Keely Trisel-Stockwell** helped us secure nearly \$3 million – funding that has become even more critical in a period of leaner and leaner budgets.

The School of Nursing was especially successful in obtaining grant funding last year. **Kathleen Rose-Grippa** secured a federal grant for more than \$780,000 that will be used to develop an acute-care nurse practitioner option for the master's program. **Deborah Henderson** and **Julie McAfoes** will participate in a \$1.5 million project to integrate information-gathering processes into nursing curricula. **Sharon Denham** received \$60,000 for her project to develop a diabetes community education kit for

rural Appalachia. And, through the help of **Robin Mittelstaedt**, we recently received a significant endowment to assist with the study and promotion of women in outdoor and wilderness activities.

Helping us keep track of these revenue streams is our new budget officer, **Tia Barrett**, who's been an invaluable aid to me as I grapple with a budget that proves more and more challenging as time goes by.

On a bittersweet note, last year we said goodbye and happy retirement to a woman whose three decades of service established her as a pillar of our College: **Lee Cibrowski**. But Lee will always be a part of the College of Health and Human Services, because beginning this May, we'll bestow an award named after her to a faculty member who exemplifies the dedication and mentoring that Lee showed during the years she worked with us. Many thanks to our development director, **Joe Foley**, for helping to secure the endowment for this award. And though, as I've said many times, we'll never be able to replace Lee, this past summer **Randy Leite** stepped into the void she left and has shown himself more than capable of helping to lead us toward a collaborative, innovative and fruitful future.

Looking Ahead

And I fully expect our future as a college – your future – to be a bright one. We have three solid decades of success catapulting us into that promising future. But you won't be resting on your laurels. There are plenty of exciting initiatives on your horizon.

One of the biggest is a long-awaited nursing baccalaureate, which, under the leadership of new school director **Mary Bowen**, is set to launch in fall 2009 and will bring 100 additional students into the College. And Physical Therapy, along with Recreation and Sport Sciences, is developing a proposal for a doctoral degree in biomechanics and human movement science. Recreation and Sport Sciences hopes to launch an honors program in sport management, and a collaborative graduate program in sports administration in Hong Kong.

So you see, we won't be slowing down. I'd expect nothing less from a college that I've helped nurture during the last decade of my career. You and this College will continue to thrive, grow and succeed. I have no doubts about that, and now I hope you don't either.

Before I open the floor to questions, I'd like to give you all my heartfelt thanks for your exemplary work during the past year – and the past decade – that I've served as your dean. Because it is you, your talents and your energy that are the source of the successes I've just described. It has been my honor and privilege to serve you and this College.

Thank you all.