



**State of the University - August 24, 2006**

Good afternoon - This has been an interesting day. It is good to be back together again. I hope you had an interesting and productive summer! I always enjoy the opportunity summer provides to explore and learn new things.

Chris and I visited Israel in June - before the current turmoil began. It was our first trip there and we saw and learned a great deal. Our other adventures were white-water rafting and, equally exciting, moving into our new home.

It feels good to have the students enrolled and going to class. This year our enrollment situation is more positive than last year.

When the data is finalized, we expect the size of the entering class to be about 6,700, which is about 500 fewer than last year. That is a significant accomplishment by the Provost's Office and it offers some relief in the difficult area of class scheduling. This is the freshman class size of 3-4 years ago and is what UF can sustain. When we get final enrollment numbers I will update you.

Another piece of good news is that our summer credit hour production is on-budget and actually ahead of last year. You may recall this is part of the budget cycle for this year and impacts our state appropriation.

An area of major concern has been our minority enrollment. Last year there was a troubling decrease in African-American students enrolled.

One step we took to address this issue is the establishment of the "Florida Opportunity Scholars" program. It targets students who are the first generation in their family to attend a 4-year institution of higher education and is available when family income is less than \$40,000. We offer admitted students full tuition and room-and-board scholarships.

This is funded by \$1.1 million in state support which is matched by the University. We expect a little over 400 new students as a result of this scholarship. It is proving to be very successful and due, in part, to this program our minority enrollment has shown a significant turnaround.

When the final numbers are in for this new freshman class, it appears our enrollment of African-Americans will have increased from 9% last year to over 13%. That one-year turnaround is encouraging if we can sustain and add to it in future years.

I want to give special recognition to the donor that provided the University's matching funds. The University Athletic Association was most generous and donated the entire \$1.1 million.

We are lucky to have an athletics department that supports the University in this way.

### **Research**

The overall productivity of the faculty continues to set records. Last year, our faculty received \$518.8M in new Research awards. It is an impressive accomplishment attributable to the excellence and hard work of the faculty.

Over the summer, we occupied the new Cancer and Genetics building and last week the Nanoscale Research Facility had its groundbreaking.

Our commitment to research infrastructure continues with planning for the biomedical sciences and pathogens research buildings.

The Water Institute completed its first year under Director, Wendy Graham. Dr. Marco Pahor was successful in securing a federally-funded Claude Pepper Center for Geriatric Research. And, the legislature approved funding for a new initiative in emerging pathogens.

Yesterday, we announced that the University of Florida will collaborate with the Burnham Institute when it locates in Orlando. This project offers new opportunities for us through joint research initiatives.

As I have learned, Burnham is a Research institute of the highest quality and they approached the University of Florida about collaboration because of our own reputation and record of performance. There will be more on this in the coming months.

### **Fundraising**

In the area of fundraising, we have some positive results. The Faculty Challenge Initiative was launched at this faculty meeting two years ago to provide new support for faculty and graduate students.

We just passed \$125 million in new funding. We will be posting on the President's home page the list of these donations so you can see where the new resources are being deployed.

Our original goal was to raise \$150 million in five years. Happily, we will need to reassess that goal.

The final figures are not in but it is estimated our University endowment now stands at \$996 million. That is an increase in the last three years of 70%. It is the result of new funds from fundraising, the state matching-gifts program, and the success of our own endowment investment company (UFICO).

This was the first year in a seven-year fundraising effort which will officially kick off in 12-18 months. Our initial year was successful and gives me confidence as we look at a future campaign goal of over a billion dollars.

Two other construction projects that will begin in the coming year are Pugh Hall and the Steinbrenner Band building. Both are made possible by private gifts and they will benefit the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Music.

### **Shared Faculty Governance**

Danaya Wright has a busy agenda this year and we are working well together. I sense the Senate is taking hold of its duties and responsibilities and the University will be the beneficiary of this increased activity.

We need to keep in mind that the word is "SHARED" which means the faculty and administration have separate - but overlapping - roles.

We can have a successful system of governance and administration while working from different perspectives and even while having areas or issues where we disagree. The key is communication and mutual respect.

The Board of Trustees has the final authority and they rely on shared governance to inform and guide their decisions. So far, this is working well.

This summer I worked closely with representatives of the Senate to produce another draft of the strategic work plan. It was a pleasure working with Barry Ache, Jaquie Resnick, and Kirk Ludwig. You can access the document and I commend it to you for review. Today's discussion was helpful. The Board of Trustees will look at it in a few weeks and I am optimistic we have a document that will guide the University in the coming years.

There are 51 stated goals in the work plan which, if achieved, will ensure we accomplish what the Board of Trustees wants and what we all desire - which is to become a premier academic institution.

We have seen the new rankings and I have already commented about them in the press. They are what they are. People do look at them. We recognize the issues inherent in these rankings, both positive and negative. It is most important that we not lose sight of the work plan. The goals of that document provide the path to true academic excellence.

### **Students**

We are fortunate this year to have a first-rate student body president. John Boyles has a serious agenda and has already demonstrated his leadership skill.

I continue to hope the students will join the administration and faculty in pursuit of the kind of funding necessary to achieve our mutual goal of academic excellence.

This means the students need to become advocates for increasing tuition in order to hire more faculty, hire more academic counselors, and make available more need-based financial aid. It's all about the students. It's all for the students.

They are not getting all they need and deserve and it is time for them to step up and help improve their situation.

Another aspect of undergraduate education that has our attention is the course loads and graduation rate. Our students don't take enough credits each semester to graduate in four years. This new freshman class has registered 13.9 credit hours. This is more than last year, but it is not enough. Why does this occur? They are certainly capable of increased workloads. We have some work to do in course availability and even in academic counseling. But together we should be able to graduate more students in four years or less. We need the average course load to be at least 15 credit hours per semester.

A related issue that I encourage the faculty to engage is whether our undergraduate education offerings are rigorous enough. Kim Tanzer began that conversation last year and I think it needs more attention. We have the best and brightest students. Are we challenging them? Are we giving them all they need to be successful in the world they will face? Some are saying no. We should look into this.

On another front, our effort to curb underage and excessive alcohol consumption is continuing. We are getting support from some of the local merchants, which is encouraging.

We have increased our effort to educate students about the dangers of excess alcohol consumption. And, we will be initiating new steps to improve fan safety in conjunction with the Florida-Georgia football game in Jacksonville.

One particularly pleasant initiative for UF is our commitment to sustainability. Launched last year, from the efforts of students, staff, and faculty, this project has gained significant momentum which will continue this year.

We are being recognized in sustainability at the local, state, and national level. This is an initiative where the university community can make a real difference!

Compensation for our employees continues to be a priority. This year there will be a 4 percent increase for both faculty and staff. There will be no increased costs to employees for health insurance. This is the third consecutive year of providing a campus-wide compensation program.

Our major new initiative for graduate students is GatorGradCare Health Insurance. This is something that was badly needed for this essential component of our academic community. Hopefully, it will make being a graduate student at UF a more satisfying experience.

As we enter the new year, there are a number of new deans:

- Lucinda Lavelli, Fine Arts
- Steve Dorman, Health & Human Performance
- Christopher Silver, Design, Construction & Planning
- Glen Hoffsis, Veterinary Medicine

Joining us in October is Jamie Keith as Vice President and General Counsel. She comes from Boston where she served as the General Counsel at M.I.T.

In the Office of the Provost, there are two new Assistant Provosts:

- Zina Evans, Director of Admissions
- Marie Zeglen, Director of Institutional Planning and Research

Welcome to these new colleagues. We look forward to working with you.

And, finally, I note this year is the 100th anniversary of the University of Florida's presence in Gainesville. It is also the 100th year of college football at UF. We will be celebrating those milestones during the year.

I am excited about the year ahead. We have a lot going on. We are doing wonderful things in service to the people of the state & nation, and the world. We need to keep it up because we are living in very difficult times. The world can use some help right now! Thank you for being a part of the University of Florida. GO GATORS!!