

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
2006 CONVOCATION ADDRESS
INTERIM CHANCELLOR JOHN E. CHRISTENSEN

"A SNAPSHOT IN TIME: THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY, OCTOBER 2006"
OCTOBER 11, 2006

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Since my appointment as interim chancellor, one month ago, I have sought out citizens and leaders across this community and the region for their advice. I have heard the disappointment, frustration and concern in their voices. Clearly, UNO is this community's university and many felt somewhat betrayed.

But I have also heard genuine and unwavering support for UNO, and countless offers of help to set us sailing into a bright future.

I am here today to tell you that the UNO we love, serve and care about remains strong and vital. The university that so many have dedicated their lives to build has never wavered in its commitment to students, the community it serves, or expanding the boundaries of knowledge and scholarship. It is important to recognize that what has happened is in no way pervasive or reflective of the campus culture or values.

Our commitment to UNO's Strategic Planning remains unchanged. And, I'm excited about UNO's future opportunities including:

- the development of the Pacific and Center Street campuses as part opportunities including:



with support provided by redesigned orientation, First Year Experience, Writing and Speech Centers offering individualized tutorial service, the soon-to-be established Math and Science Learning Center, and a faculty and staff that is genuinely dedicated to their success.

Additionally, the Goodrich Program, Project Achieve, Multicultural Affairs, and a broad array of student organizations all make significant contributions to sharpening the student focus. Finally, as we dedicate the University Library addition immediately following Convocation, you'll see how new innovations, expanded hours of operation, and student-centered designs are changing the way students use this modern learning facility.

Special commendation to Steve Shorb and all the faculty and staff for the fine work they have done in bringing the addition on line. Media coverage this morning was spectacular.

Academic excellence, UNO's second strategic goal, was reflected in variety of campus activities and UNO's inclusion in highly visible national rankings:

For the first time in its history, UNO moved into the top



faculty and student portfolios, and innovative independent and collaborative on-line academic programs.

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monitoring of the budget situation, as will monthly oversight by the Chancellor's Cabinet.

2. Athletics will hire a permanent Business Manager who will work with the Office of Budget and Finance, the Athletic Director, coaches, their programs and booster clubs to provide budget development and on-going compliance and management.
3. The Athletic director and coaches will participate in budget planning and their annual evaluations will include both team and budget performance indicators. I'll continue to meet with head coaches and department heads as needed.
4. The department will engage in a five-year budget development process that will provide the stability necessary to plan, implement, and make mid-course corrections. We currently have a deficit in Athletics and we will put in place a three year plan to balance the budget. Moreover, the plan will address the need for new and reallocated resources to reconcile the problem.
5. The Karnes report recommended and we concur that, given our current and foreseeable Athletic budget situation, remaining in Division II, is our most prudent course of action and the right place to be at this point in our history.
6. As the NCC's future remains cloudy, exploring conference options is also appropriate. Preliminary discussions have taken place with the Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletic Association, (MIAA) whose member institutions are a 'good fit' with UNO's athletic program.
7. Booster club accounts have been reviewed, with access and authorization policies to be implemented to ensure accountability. I will also continue to meet with Booster Club presidents as needed.
8. Accountability begins at the top. Therefore, the Chancellor's discretionary expenditures will require approval of the campus Chief Financial Officer and the Director of Finance. Expenditures will be reported to President Milliken monthly.
9. Review of fiscal oversight for all campus expenditures is on-going and the business office will publish these guidelines in the very near future. I'm also happy to report, the UNO Alumni Association has also instituted new control measures to ensure that funds are used and disbursed properly.
10. Among the new financial reporting mechanisms:
 - a. monthly reports of discretionary spending at department and college levels approved by supervisors;
 - b. quarterly Athletic budget reports to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee; and
 - c. to the Dean's Forum.

Taken together, these action steps will achieve a three-fold purpose:

- First, that oversight for administrative expenditures will be scrutinized and approved by several individuals. Reimbursements will require the necessary receipts and documentation and will be for legitimate university purposes.
- Second, the athletic department will manage its budget, as we require of all university departments. Booster accounts will have appropriate oversight by the

boosters and the university and no funds will be expended without proper authorization.

- And finally, that we assure our stakeholders, donors, and the community that we take very seriously our stewardship of both public and private resources. We are accountable for the monies placed in our trust, and our use of these funds should reflect the highest levels of integrity and service.

Ninety-eight years ago, UNO was dedicated to the education of its students, so that they might "earn a living and live a cultured life, not as two processes but as one." As members of the UNO family, I call upon each of us to rededicate our energies to this important task.

As we look at our progress, we realize that in great measure, good things have happened at UNO as a result of the public confidence and trust placed in us. The maturation of the Dodge campus, the development of the Peter Kiewit

Institute and the Pacific campus and soon, the Center Street campus, all reflect the investment of taxpayers, donors and the community at large. We will do everything in