

FALL 2010 OPENING ADDRESS TO SOUTHEASTERN FACULTY AND STAFF THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. Welcome to Montgomery Auditorium as we all begin preparations for the start of the fall semester. Before we begin today's program, I would like to introduce our University Executive Team:

Dr. Doug McMillan – Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs
Ms. Sharon Robinson – Vice President for Student Affairs
Mr. Ross Walkup – Vice President for Business Affairs
Dr. Claire Stubblefield – Special Assistant to the President, Director of Diversity and Affirmative Action Officer
Ms. Liz McCraw – Dean of Enrollment Management
Mr. Dan Moore – Executive Director for Information Technology
Mr. Kyle Stafford – Executive Director for University Advancement
Mr. Keith Baxter – Director of Intercollegiate Athletics
Ms. Michele Campbell – Executive Assistant to the President
Mr. Alan Burton – Director of University Communications
Dr. Ken Chinn – Faculty Senate Chair
Ms. Teriki Hicks – President of Staff Association

And Two Special Guests:

My wife Joan and

State Regent John Massey – Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Please join me in expressing appreciation to this group of individuals for their support.

In addition, I want to acknowledge a very special group of people who have joined us today – a group of **retired faculty members**. It is really special to have you join us.

THE PAST

Over the past couple of years, we have embraced our heritage by celebrating Southeastern Oklahoma State University's centennial.

As an institution, we are blessed to have a wonderful history with traditions that continue to be a big part of this University. We are successful today thanks, in great part, to the academic foundation laid by such esteemed educators as **Paul**

Laird, Tom Houston, Doc Parham, Dr. Allen Shearer and countless others who have contributed so mightily to our history.

I want to briefly acknowledge today one of those educators – the late **Dr. Allen Shearer**. Many of the retired faculty members here this morning will fondly remember Dr. Shearer, who served as Southeastern's 13th president from 1952 to 1967.

A native of Alabama, Dr. Shearer joined Southeastern in 1938 as Dean of the College. Fourteen years later, he was named President.

With a strong background in academics, Dr. Shearer was widely recognized as a specialist in college curriculum and faculty development. As noted by our Emeritus Professor of History David Norris, his accomplishments as President were many, including the approval of a fifth-year program leading to the degree of Master of Teaching, as well as overseeing major capital improvements, including the construction of dorms that allowed Southeastern to compete with other colleges for enrollment.

These accomplishments took place during a critical time in the history of the University, at a time in which its very future was at stake.

It is legacies such as those of President Shearer that we must strive to build upon, because we will continue to move forward as a University only after we fully appreciate our past.

THE PRESENT

Today, as President Shearer did nearly 60 years ago, we face critical times as a University. You might even say that we – and higher education in general – are at a crossroads.

Throughout history, Southeastern has faced many different challenges before and has always successfully met those obstacles.

For example, when President Shearer took office in 1952, the Korean Conflict had a direct impact on the college: In 1949, enrollment stood at 1,893 – by 1953, it had dropped to 1,004. The declining numbers were attributed to departing soldiers as well as potential students who took jobs in industry as a result of the war effort.

This reduced number of students led to a reduction of faculty: In 1949, there were 80 professors at Southeastern State College – by 1952 that number had dropped to below 70.

Predictably, revenues at the college also declined.

A year after Dr. Shearer assumed the presidency, the war ended and the nation enjoyed an economic postwar boom, except in this area of the country, where the struggling agricultural industry forced many residents to leave in search of better opportunities, thus adversely affecting enrollment at the college.

President Shearer was obviously concerned about the future financial condition of the college, but he rolled up his sleeves and went to work, building upon a town and gown relationship in the community that we still benefit from today. In fact, the President worked with community leaders to fund more than 100 scholarships for new students to boost enrollment.

By the fall of 1954, growth had returned, with enrollment up to 1,317. By fall 1956, that number had grown to 1,810 and President Shearer had another problem – traffic jams on a crowded campus lacking parking lots.

Today, we face some familiar -- and some not so familiar -- challenges as a University. (I will note, however, that **Vice President Walkup** has done a good job in alleviating many, if not all, of the traffic and parking lot issues that originated in 1956).

As most of you know, over the past few years, our state appropriations have steadily declined, and we have had to manage our resources diligently.

Federal Stimulus funds were made available for two years to help offset the reduction in state appropriations. For FY 2009-2010, the University received \$1.5 million and in FY2010-2011 we received \$1.3 million. The federal stimulus program does not extend into 2011-2012 for higher education and will require a greater effort on our part to manage our resources.

At the same time, while our funding has declined, the need for our services has increased. The University is continuing to experience impressive growth, with our fall 2009 enrollment having reached a 23-year high. This is a tremendous testament to the job that each and every one of you in this auditorium is doing, and you are to be congratulated.

Today, however, we face some critical decisions, decisions that will impact this institution for several years to come.

We must continue to make sound decisions based on what is best for this University and its students. During the decision-making process, we must ask ourselves:

- Are students better served by the decisions made?
- Is the environment for teaching, learning, service, and research enhanced by the decisions made?

- Are the institution and its employees better off because of what has been decided?

We must protect our academic core – academic programs and accreditation processes; effective recruitment and retention programs; and student services and academic/institutional/instructional support systems.

THE FUTURE

So where do we, as an institution, and as individuals, go from here?

First of all, we must have hope and faith in the future and we must have hope and faith in each other.

What sets Southeastern apart from others is the human element! This encompasses a deep respect for and celebration of diversity.

We work in sacred space devoted to the full development of people. We have a strong collective belief in the transformation of human life through education.

In 5, 10, and even 15 years from now, our graduates will look back and remember not that great computer lab or that great new building. Instead, they will remember the time that **Dr. Avard** spent with them in the lab explaining a problem, or the inspired lecture by **Dr. Morrison** that made a difference as they began a career in teaching, or they will remember **Dr. Alluisi**, for any of a number of reasons – all good!

As a University, we are entering a transformational era. This will require organizational development and change that will reach into our very existence. It will help shape and mold Southeastern to meet the needs of our students well into the future.

President John F. Kennedy once said, “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

Great people step up and do great things together as a team – not just one person – where change becomes the norm to build flexibility and adaptability into the fabric of an organization.

As a University and as individuals, we must embrace change. Those universities that adapt to change will be successful. Those universities that don’t adapt to change will stagnate, struggle, eventually cease to be relevant, and perhaps not exist in their current form.

Each one of us must ask our ourselves, “what can we do to make Southeastern a better place?” What are the end results and outcomes we desire? We must work

backward from that in aligning strategy, planning and execution, in light of the magnitude and velocity of change.

We cannot accomplish this transformation alone – not Southeastern, not the state of Oklahoma, not the United States. The call is for a fundamental reframing of our local, national, and global structures, our processes and systems, and our mindset.

It is time for unprecedented integration and collaboration, and we must find common ground because we are entering into a transformative phase in our history together. Much like President Shearer was in 1952, today, in 2010 we are at a very crucial time in the history of the University.

Crucial, but at the same time, exciting. Exciting because we have the opportunity to renew, revitalize, and reinvigorate Southeastern as we move forward together.

As Pauline Kezer, a former teacher and state legislator in Connecticut once observed: “Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.”

President Shearer’s tenure was described by those on campus with pride, optimism, and a renewed sense of dedication. Southeastern had grown its physical plant, financial resources, and student population, and felt confident and enthusiastic about the academic environment. There was also great satisfaction from the many accomplishments of Southeastern’s professors in advancing the teaching and scholarly reputation of the college.

We stand together today embarking on a journey of which I think President Shearer would be proud – a journey devoted to the development of our next generation of leaders to sustain us through the next 10-15 years and longer. I truly believe that our best days are ahead of us.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I mentioned earlier the importance of our history in terms of where we are now and where we are going. It is amazing to me, when you reflect upon the last academic year, just how much was achieved by our students, faculty, and staff. In the interest of time, I am going to offer a very abbreviated list of accomplishments:

STUDENTS

We had a number of students who accomplished a great deal during the 2009-10 academic year.

-- For the second year in a row, a Southeastern student -- **Echo Adcock** --

was selected to participate in the Brad Henry International Scholars program. A graduate of Coalgate High School, Echo is a biology-chemistry double major. She spent the spring 2010 semester participating in an international study and internship program at Swansea University in Wales.

-- **Trent Castleberry** was a recipient of the George and Donna Nigh Public Service Scholarship for his exceptional leadership skills and his public service interests. Trent, a graduate of Savanna (Oklahoma) High School, received a \$1,000 scholarship for the spring 2010 semester. The former Student Government Association president graduated this summer.

Matt Heggy was sworn in to serve another term as a member of the Student Advisory Board to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Matt recently completed a term as the Chairman of the Student Advisory Board and serves as SE Student Government President.

FACULTY-STAFF

Our faculty and staff also accomplished a great deal during the 2009-10 academic year. Again, in the interest of time, I will cite just a few examples:

Professor Gleny Beach received the prestigious Governor's Arts Award, an award that recognizes individuals for longtime leadership and significant contributions to the arts across Oklahoma. She was honored by Governor Brad Henry at the 34th Annual Governor's Arts Awards ceremony, held October 20 at the State Capitol.

History professor **J. Brooks Flippen** moderated a panel discussion at the Richard Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, Calif., this spring. The forum was entitled "Richard Nixon and the Rise of the Environment."

Dr. Lisa L. Coleman, Professor of English and Director of the Southeastern Honors Program, co-edited "Setting the Table for Diversity," a monograph published by the National Collegiate Honors Council.

Professor Dell McLain, Chair of the Department of Art, Communication & Theatre, was a recipient of the 2010 Oklahoma Higher Education Conference Excellence in Teaching Award.

Dr. Reba J. Criswell, Assistant Professor and School Counseling Program Coordinator in the Department of Behavioral Sciences, is the author of a new book, entitled, "School Counselors With and Without Teaching Experience: A Comprehensive Overview and Comparative Analysis."

Kathryn Plunkett, Assistant Professor and Digital Information Literacy Librarian, was honored as the Oklahoma Library Association's Outstanding New Librarian

for 2010 at the Mountain Plains Library Association/OLA Annual Conference banquet.

Teriki Hicks was named co-chair of the TRiO Southwest Association of Student Assistance Programs Emerging Leaders Institute for 2010.

Kathy Hendrick, director of the Southeastern Center for Regional Economic Development, was named to the Oklahoma Main Street Center Advisory Board. The Oklahoma Main Street Center is governed by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

Let's congratulate these outstanding representatives of Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

FACULTY-PROMOTION/TENURE

A number of our faculty members received promotions and/or tenure during the past year and are to be congratulated. The following faculty members were promoted:

From Associate Professor to Professor

Dr. Daniel Althoff, Department of English, Humanities and Languages

Dr. Wayne Jones, Department of Occupational Safety and Health

Dr. John Topuz, Department of Accounting and Finance

Dr. Marc White, Department of Music

The following faculty members were promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor and received tenure:

Dr. Aaron Adair, Department of Art, Communication and Theatre

Dr. Margaret Cotter-Lynch, Department of English, Humanities and Languages

Dr. Karl Frinkle, Department of Mathematics

Dr. Charles Marshall, Department of Aerospace

Mr. Jack Ousey, Department of Art, Communication and Theatre

Ms. Susan Webb, Henry G. Bennett Memorial Library

Let's offer a round of applause to all of these faculty members for their hard work and dedication.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE ACHIEVEMENTS

The University as a whole had a number of significant accomplishments during the past academic year:

- Our fall enrollment was 4,229 – the highest fall enrollment figure at the University in 23 years.
- Enrollment for the spring 2010 semester was 3,903 students – an increase of 7.5% over the previous spring. It also marked the largest number of students enrolled in a spring semester at Southeastern in 16 years.
- The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs reaffirmed the accreditation of Southeastern Oklahoma State University for its John Massey School of Business. The University and the John Massey School of Business also hold accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business – International. We are one of only six business programs world-wide accredited by both organizations.
- The University once again earned high marks from "Diverse Issues in Higher Education" magazine. According to the publication, Southeastern ranks seventh in the nation in awarding undergraduate degrees to Native American graduates in all disciplines combined.
- Thanks to a generous gift from the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma, the "Masonic Institute for Professional Development and Lectureship Series" has been established at Southeastern. Formal announcement of the \$100,000 gift was made at a ceremony in the Glen D. Johnson Student Union on the Southeastern campus. This Institute and Lectureship Series is to be funded from the endowment and facilitated by the faculty and staff of the Southeastern Department of Education.
- Southeastern was named to the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.

All of these outstanding accomplishments should be shared and celebrated by each person in this room. Let's once again recognize all of these achievements.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

This fiscal year, Southeastern's Educational and General I (E&GI) budget is \$43.4 million. This represents an increase of \$1.9 million over last year's revised budget. State appropriations represent a decrease of \$354,481 compared to last year, dropping to 45.1% of total budget revenue. The percent of state appropriations has declined over the past 5 years from 52.5% in FY 2006-2007 to the present rate of 45.1%.

As mentioned previously, the federal stimulus funds were made available for two years to offset the reduction in state appropriations. This year is the last year of the federal stimulus program and if the \$1.3 million had not been made available the present rate would have been 43.3%.

Major E&G I budget increases include:

- mandatory costs (employee health care, debt service payments, energy costs)
- -- scholarships
- -- increase to reserves
- -- faculty positions

Our budget philosophy continues to be planned around our University mission and strategic plan, with an emphasis on increasing our reserve balance.

Our total projected expenditures for FY2010-2011 is \$43.4 million.

Academics and student services continue to receive primary emphasis (62.1%), reflecting support for the teaching and learning environment. In our continuing effort to maximize funds devoted to instructional/academic support services, our administrative costs percentage dropped to 7.6%, remaining well below the 16% cap requirement of the State Regents.

To help offset the decrease in funding, we made the difficult decision to raise tuition 5.5% this year.

We continue to assist our students, however, with our numerous scholarship programs. Also, for the third year in a row, we are offering a Textbook Reserve program –which continues to expand on the main campus and has been extended to Ardmore this year—to assist our students in holding down costs.

CONCLUSION

In concluding my remarks this morning, I want to express my thanks for your support. Joan and I are honored to be a part of the Southeastern family. It is truly a privilege for me to serve as the 19th President of Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Thank you, and let's have a great year together!

