

Opening Day Speech

August 29, 2001

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Good morning and welcome to the 130th school year at Ohio Northern University. □oby and I hope you have had an enjoyable, productive, and relaxing summer and we are very pleased to see so many of you on this beautiful morning in this superb auditorium.

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Last year was, I hope you will agree, an incredible one for ONU. □A \$4 million gift, the largest in the University's history; exciting new programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels; a new university coffee house and a remodeled bookstore; a brand new facility at our Nature Center in Tuscarawas County; our largest enrollment ever (at least until next week!). □And this, as I hope to demonstrate to you in the next 45 minutes, is only a very short summary of all the things we've been up to in the past year!

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Let's start with this stage where I am standing right now. □always take a great deal of pleasure and pride in telling visitors to the campus that few small colleges in this country can claim to have a performance facility of the quality and technical capability of the Biggs Theatre. □Well, not too long ago, many of us sitting here today witnessed a truly spectacular event on this stage, namely the production of *Carmen*. □roduced, staged, choreographed, sung, and played entirely by our faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, it was the cultural event of the spring and it generated recognition and respect for our institution far beyond our immediate region. □How well I remember the breakfast I had with guests the financial aid office was hosting the morning after they had seen *Carmen*. □his group included individuals from Indianapolis, Chicago, and Columbus and they could not stop praising what they had seen the night before. □They were surprised, perhaps even a bit awed, at what they had seen. □It was obviously more than they had expected. □Indeed, in unison, they insisted that the quality of our production was at the level they would expect for productions in their urban, sophisticated environments! Quite a tribute, I thought, to the 161 students, faculty, staff, and friends who acted and sang on stage and played in the orchestra; cut and built the magnificent costumes the performers wore; operated the lights, microphones and other amplifications that gave the performance life; nailed and screwed the boards and poured the concrete □all two thousand pounds of it □that created the extraordinary set that provided the foundation for everything that happened on those extraordinary nights in April. □Yes, quite a tribute indeed, especially when it is recognized that two-thirds of the individuals involved in the production □a total of 107 altogether □were ONU students.

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Yet, Carmen came at the end of the 2000-01 academic year and was preceded by all sorts of other exciting events and activities. Earlier in the spring, for example, our entire region was focused on the incredible accomplishments and character of ONU's men's basketball team. Ranked #1 in the country for several consecutive weeks in the spring, it brought a spirit and excitement to our University and community that was very special indeed. Members of the Ada business community permitted us to decorate their windows and students and community members who hadn't been to a basketball game in years filled our arena to overflowing during the NCAA Division III regional playoffs. After that, and with the very special cooperation and understanding of our faculty, 1,000 students, faculty, and staff and Ada and regional residents traveled to Salem, Virginia for the Division III Final Four. And what an experience that was! Although the outcome was not what we wanted, we had the largest, best behaved group of fans in attendance. Our presence in this tournament attracted alums from places like North Carolina, Washington, DC, and Philadelphia. With their orange AGO BEARS @ T-shirts, they joined the Asea of orange @ that cheered our Polar Bears on for two nights. Once again, the quality of our programs and the incredible students who participate in them had generated respect, recognition, and distinctiveness far beyond our immediate region.

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And, these examples represent only two of the extraordinary achievements and accomplishments of the last academic year. In the fall, our football team, for the second year in a row, made it to the NCAA Division III Play-offs and, for the first time, ONU hosted the first round playoff game. Although our nemesis, Mount Union, got in the way of a national championship the following week, we know that our football program is now at the highest competitive level. The same must be said for our men's soccer team, which was, for the first time, co-champion of the OAC, and our wrestling team, which won the OAC for the second year in a row. These teams joined our consistently strong track and cross country athletes and our extraordinarily successful volleyball team which was OAC champion again last year and advanced to the first round of the NCAA playoffs.

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In athletics, in short, there was lots to cheer about last year. And, our cheering was not confined to the court, field, pool, track, or mat. For, last year our 645 athletes excelled in the classroom as well compiling an overall GPA of 3.09. Moreover, our volleyball team's GPA of 3.65 was the highest in the country among NCAA Division I, II, and III programs. That means we had the highest academic average among the more than 1,000 colleges and universities in this country that play volleyball at some level!

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As I said last year, Aour students represent us well @. Bbut there's more B much more. Who, for example, can forget the contributions our students made during spring break when they participated in three different Habitat for Humanities projects and a mission trip to Haiti; or the accomplishments of our senior business students who scored

in the 90th percentile on ETS's Major Field Test placing them among the very best of the more than 64,000 students representing 388 institutions who took the test; or the success of our civil engineering students who placed second, third, and fourth in the International Highway Safety contest; or the singular honor earned by a number of our law graduates who obtained five of the six clerkship positions available in the Ohio Third District Court of Appeals through a highly rigorous and competitive process. And, who among us could not admire our students' resourcefulness in arranging Ralph Nader's visit last spring or their tenacity, learning, articulateness, persuasiveness, growing and changing maturity, and remarkable compromising and representational skills as we worked our way through the University governance process on visitation and calendar issues last year.

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There is, though, another group of students that I would like to introduce you to this morning. Their names are Sara, Jessica, Tisha, Michael, Gretchen, Brock, Justin, Natalie, Kris, Valerie, Mary, Melissa, James, Katie, Brian, and Paul and they worked as painters with the University this summer. The tremendous improvements in the appearance of buildings like McIntosh and the admissions and financial aid office are examples of their handiwork. So, too, are the freshly painted walls in Pharmacy, the Sports Center, 5-UP, and Taft. So, we thank our students this morning not only for sharing their academic and other talents with us but also for helping us with, of course, proper compensation maintain the quality of our campus environment. As our evaluation forms regularly remind us, the appearance of the campus is a major factor in the initial impression many prospective students and their parents form of us.

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Speaking of prospective students, we've certainly had a lot of them visiting our campus, haven't we? This is, of course, the result, in the first instance, of the dedicated efforts of our exceptionally able recruiters and financial aid experts. Year after year, they generate more than 2500 applications for admission. During our scholarship competition days alone, this year, for example, they brought 887 high quality prospective students from 15 states and their parents to campus. Indeed, a total of close to 3000 people visited ONU on the four Saturdays of the scholarship competition. Not all of these prospects ultimately choose ONU but sizeable proportions do and that is because of all the people in this room and the other members of our faculty and staff that were unable to join us today.

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And, what a fantastic group you are! Just listen for a minute to some of the honors and distinctions you received last year. Stewart Graham was recently surprised with the Craftsman of the Year award at the annual convention of the International Association of Printing House Craftsman in Toronto. Howard Fenton in the College of Law presented his thoughts about law reform in the Soviet Union at a conference in St. Petersburg, Russia in July and will be Chief of Party for the U.S. Agency for International Development's Rule of Law project in Tbilisi, Georgia this academic year. In a national competition, Bud Smith, of our English Department, was awarded a residency at the Anderson Center at Towerview in Red Wing, Minnesota to

continue work on his book about lapping America. Many of you will, I am sure, recall that Bud drove more than 10,000 miles in a red corvette in preparation for this book. Joe Campoli was not only selected as OAC coach of the year, Ohio Coach of the Year, Great Lakes District Coach of the Year and the Basketball Times Coach of the Year, he also received the Vincent T. Lombardi Memorial Award which is given annually by UNICO to a high achieving coach of Italian descent. UNICO is the largest Italian/American service organization in the United States and was established in 1922. Among the previous winners of this extremely prestigious award are Joe Paterno, Mario Andretti, Joe Montana, Jim Valvano, Tommy Lasorda and Phil Rizzuto. Bruce Berdanier, a new faculty member in civil engineering, received a major grant from the Water Resource Center that will provide support for his research and summer stipends for ONU students. Dr. Berdanier also traveled to Jordan to consult for the United Nations. Meena Rishi, Economics, took one of the valedictorians of the 2001 College of Business Administration graduating class, Liberty King, to Brussels this summer to present a paper at the International Conference of the Academy of Business and Administrative Sciences. The College of Pharmacy created partnerships with other Ohio institutions to sponsor a major conference in Columbus on medical errors. This initiative helped us attract Ralph Nader, an individual with well known views on this topic. Our Personnel Office initiated and co-sponsored a support staff spring conference in conjunction with Bluffton College and the University of Findlay that was well attended and well received. The Development Office not only established a record for annual giving at \$1.4 million, it also converted more than 35,000 physical files in the development and public information areas, some of which were in cardboard boxes, into useable and efficient records. Quite an accomplishment for an office that was significantly understaffed all year. Our Athletic Program presented the nationally renowned San Diego Chicken to an enthusiastic audience on February 17 and convinced the NCAA to allow ONU to host play off games and tournaments in both football and basketball. Our Financial Aid Office developed a very innovative partnership with Sallie Mae and Student Loan Funding that establishes ONU as a regional front runner in electronic aid awarding and student loan processing. As a consequence of this agreement, all returning student financial aid packages were made available electronically this year and loans were both sought and dispersed on line. Finally, as an institution Band with the help of some very talented Student Summer Conference Coordinators we hosted more than 2,000 campers and other guests this summer. We were reminded of the importance of this activity by the Department of Music which did a study this summer about where its former music campers went to college. Ed Williams and his colleagues found that at least 201 of their former campers decided to enroll at ONU. Although 110 of these became music majors, 41 enrolled in other majors in Arts and Sciences, 21 in Pharmacy, 21 in Engineering and 8 in Business. Clearly, the University's summer work contributes to its continuing health and welfare.

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In all, a very good year. A very good year, indeed! But, and this, of course, is the key question, are we moving the University forward? Are we moving it in the direction it needs to go?

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Last year at this time, I shared some thoughts with you about my vision for ONU's future. In order to assess the fundamental questions about direction that I have just posed, I think it is important that we remember the main parts of that vision. Let me, therefore,

briefly summarize what I said last year.

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First, I noted that we must continue to be what we have always been, namely a top quality liberal arts and sciences institution that focuses, primarily, on residential students. I emphasized, though, that we must remember what distinguishes us from other top quality small universities, namely our strong professional programs in business, engineering, law, and pharmacy. This was the continuity component of my vision.

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I said, secondly, that we needed to embrace change and I pointed to two important operational implications of this. On the one hand, I noted that we needed to enrich our historic mission to include serving new kinds of students with new and alternative programming through new delivery mechanisms, methods, and formats. On the other hand, I stressed that we needed to refocus our attention and become external as well as internal in our thinking and behavior. I argued that we should adopt an interactive relationship with our environment and see it as a rich, fertile source of ideas, opportunities, challenges, partnerships and even imperatives that stimulate us to create new and perhaps unimagined and unconventional initiatives and responses.

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Thirdly, I emphasized that we must accept diversity and an international perspective as permanent parts of the education we offer students and adopt an attitude towards our work that encourages experimentation and trying a lot of stuff and keeping what works. Finally, I encouraged us to become a welcoming organization that celebrates and encourages creativity, innovation, and initiative in all that we do and that recognizes that everyone is part of the team and that everyone has good ideas, talent, and contributions to make.

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Now, how are we doing in terms of these four criteria? Like most organizations, our progress is, not surprisingly, uneven. In other words, we've made more progress in some areas than in others. Still, overall, I think we are doing very well. There is a clear pattern to our activities and our direction seems to accord with the needs and dynamics that are emerging in 21st century higher education. Let me elaborate.

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First, we are, in my view, definitely including the external environment in our thinking and planning and seeing it as a fertile source of ideas, opportunities, and partnerships. The magnificent \$4 million gift from Jim and Eileen Dicke to build our new business building is a wonderful example of this. We knew we needed a new building but we also knew we needed to be very careful about taking on additional debt. Hence, we looked to individuals and opportunities outside of the University for

help. The Dicke's not only provided an enormous gift, the largest in the University's history. They also agreed to allow us to use a portion of their gift to encourage others to support this and other University projects. Listen to the language in the letter we received from Jim and Eilleen:

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We leave the details to you, but we encourage you to use the occasion of our gift as an opportunity and incentive to increase the support the University receives from [trustees, alumni and friends]. @

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With Jim and Eilleen Dicke, then, we are entering into a partnership that encourages new thinking about the ways we fund University needs. This same kind of motivation is at work in the relationship we have established with Corna Kokosing that will result in the construction of an addition to the chapel that will enhance its beauty and centrality in campus life and, simultaneously, provide wonderful new facilities for the Department of Philosophy and Religion. In this instance, we are taking advantage of the substantial cost savings that a large, experienced construction firm can provide and engineer, and the extraordinary graciousness and generosity of a three generation alumni family.

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Another example of our new approach is Northern on Main. Students, faculty, and community members have talked with me about the need for a coffee shop practically from the beginning of my association with ONU. With input from a variety of individuals and interested parties, we explored many options and alternatives. Regrettably, none worked financially or programmatically. Then, the Dairy Mart space opened up right at the intersection between the University and the community. We immediately contracted to use this space. But, how could we persuade a major vendor to be interested in establishing a coffee house where the Dairy Mart used to be? After exploring a few options and being frustrated by the standard response that we BONU and Ada--just weren't big enough, we remembered that we already had contractual relationships with Sodexo Alliance and Barnes and Noble and both of them had relationships with Starbucks. From this was born the notion of a University coffee shop featuring Starbucks coffees and products that would have an especially comfortable and attractive environment and that would have hours that would meet the needs of both students and community members.

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Similar thinking motivated the creation of an Office of External Initiatives this year and the identification of an individual who could represent University interests in interactions with the Ohio Congressional delegation. As we are repeatedly reminded by visitors, we have facilities second to none. For that reason, we always receive serious consideration when decisions are made about regional meetings, tournaments or events. Why should we

not, therefore, market the University to public and private agencies and organizations looking for conferencing facilities like those available at ONU? But, who at the University had the experience and contacts necessary to accept this challenge? Again, we thought about a number of possibilities and options, with, again, none of them, ultimately, meeting the criteria we had specified. Then, we remembered that our Career Services Office has established relationships with thousands of public and private agencies in our region and lots of practice in interacting with them and responding to their needs. We have now invested in Alice-Kay Hilderbrand's operation and she is successfully marketing us to potential clients in this region. Indeed, she had a meeting just last week for 40 people in the Old President's House that was a resounding success. Check out her brochure on Meeting in the Country on our website.

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With reference to our Washington representative, I hope some of you saw the listing in the August 10 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education of the projects the Ohio congressional delegation has helped colleges and universities in the state fund in the past year. The listing includes, among others, Capital University, Case Western Reserve University, Heidelberg College, John Carroll University, Wittenberg University and the University of Dayton. Perhaps most interestingly, an allocation of \$1.5 million is identified for Ohio Wesleyan University for a construction project to improve research facilities, and an allocation of \$941,000 is listed for the University of Findlay for the National Center for Terrorism Preparedness to train and prepare underserved populations to react to bioterrorism.

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We noted this funding when it was listed in the Chronicle a year ago and began to think about how ONU could gain access to these kinds of resources. This, ultimately, led to the identification of a representative and the submission of a proposal for more than \$4 million for University projects in Engineering, Pharmacy and English. We obviously won't know until after the budget battles of this fall if any of our requests will be supported, but we do know that the federal government is another external partner we need to cultivate just like other similar private institutions in Ohio.

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And, finally in this discussion of our efforts to focus attention on the external environment, there is the effort we undertook to persuade the Cleveland Browns to hold their summer training camp at ONU. Like our work with the Dicke family, Corna Kokosing, Sodexho Alliance and the federal government, this initiative represented an effort to create a partnership with an external organization that would help us address a campus need. The need was an outdoor events center and stadium and the strategy was to develop a partnership with the Browns that would generate the resources we needed to build this facility. After several years of trying, it was apparent that it was unlikely that we would be able to raise the \$6 million needed to build the stadium through our alums and friends. We needed a partner who could either provide us with or help us get access to substantial resources.

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The Browns certainly fit these criteria and I can tell you, quite unequivocally, that we came close. Very, very close to creating the partnership we needed. Ultimately, things did not work out but it was not, I believe, because of anything we did. We were completely open and upfront in all of our discussions and conversations. They were too, and we have no doubt that they fully understood precisely what we would need, financially, to make the proposed partnership a reality. Moreover, we thoroughly enjoyed our interactions with all of the Browns representatives we met and believe we have created a foundation for some great relationships in the future. For all of this, we have one person, in particular, that we need to thank: Tom Simmons. He was absolutely fantastic and represented ONU superbly in every aspect of the discussions and negotiations that took place with the Browns. Many thanks, Tom!

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Despite Tom's tremendous efforts, this anticipated relationship did not work out. But the ones with the Dicke's and Corna Kokosing, and Sodexo Alliance and Barnes and Noble did. The important point is that all of these examples give evidence of an institution seeing the external environment as a source of opportunities, ideas, and relationships and this attitude, as I have repeatedly said, will be vital to our future.

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But, what about some of the other aspects of the vision we talked about last year? Are we making similar progress in other areas? Well, let's talk for a moment about our efforts to serve new students through new programs, delivery mechanisms, and formats. When the law school started classes on August 20, it included 14 students in its first year class who had spent the summer at ONU participating in the Early Start Program. They completed two courses during the summer term and compiled a GPA of 2.59. Not bad for students whose LSAT entrance scores indicated they couldn't succeed in law school. Our faculty concluded that their undergraduate performance (which averaged a GPA of 3.37) at top quality institutions told a different story and they decided to take a chance on them. Their faith has clearly paid off and we are optimistic that they will complete their education at ONU with a strong performance that will be followed by success on the bar exam and outstanding careers as attorneys.

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When our engineering students start classes next week, they will find that Room 212 in the Biggs Building has been transformed into the Engineer in Residence program. This year's company in residence is Marathon Ashland Petroleum and on Monday we officially inaugurated this new effort. The Engineer in Residence program is a type of co-op. However, there is one huge difference: instead of the students going to the company, the company is coming to the students. The consequence for our engineering students, of course, will be that they will have the opportunity to participate in a program that will provide them with new and enriched learning experiences. For the companies participating in this program, there will also be significant benefits. Most importantly, they will have special access to high quality students who could eventually become

employees. In the highly competitive market that currently exists in engineering, this is a very attractive benefit.

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In the Dukes building in our professional education program, conversations will be different as school opens as well. Why? Because on June 28, ONU officially submitted its request for a Masters degree in education to the Ohio Board of Regents. This represents, of course, our first request for graduate degree granting authority. It also represents an important new direction for our professional education program as it enriches its curriculum to keep pace with the changing licensure standards in Ohio.

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Speaking of enrichment, think of the incredible opportunities that are now going to be available to biology and other students in Bolon Hall at ONU's Metzger Nature Center in Tuscarawas County. This brand new \$1.4 million, 8,000 square foot facility will provide living and learning opportunities that are unmatched at other institutions in our region. The facility was constructed with funds generously provided by the Hillier Family Foundation; it was conceived through the vision and brilliance of a great ONU alum, the late Henry Metzger; and it has been nurtured, monitored, and developed by Professor Terry Keiser, Chair of our Biological Sciences Department, who, as director of the center, has provided outstanding leadership for many years. Toby and I can tell you that this is a fabulous place that is absolutely ideal for retreats, leadership seminars, and other small group encounters. We thoroughly enjoyed the night we were able to spend at the Center after its dedication on August 4.

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Finally, let me tell you about an exciting new initiative in the College of Business Administration. In the next several months, Dean Terry Maris will do workshops in 8 locations around the state on the topic of Maximizing Supervisory Effectiveness. Dean Maris' presentations will be followed by workshops led by other business faculty as this college follows the example of other university units and moves into the continuing professional education arena. In the process, of course, we will be, once again, demonstrating the quality of the University's programs way beyond its immediate region.

From these examples, it should be clear that we are beginning to offer new programs to new kinds of students in new contexts and through a variety of delivery mechanisms. Just as in the case of our external focus, in other words, I think we can claim some success in this component of our new direction. But, let us look at the final component, namely becoming a diverse and welcoming institution. To what extent are we having success here?

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The diversity of our student body and our faculty and staff remains a challenge. Although I am pleased at the impressive diversity of the backgrounds of the new colleagues we have recruited for this school year, we need to continue to work hard and aggressively in

this area. Similarly, although we continue to succeed in recruiting students from different ethnic backgrounds, the numbers are not what they could be. We have made some changes in our approaches in hopes of doing a better job in this area. But, we need to make more changes and pursue additional and new initiatives, including promoting programming and opportunities on our campus that will ensure that all students have positive experiences at ONU. We also need to continue our efforts to recruit international students. Fortunately, Dean Terry Maris of our College of Business Administration has agreed to serve as our Coordinator of International Enrollment for the next two years in addition to his regular duties as dean. He will be traveling throughout the world pursuing contacts and attending college fairs that will, hopefully, help us to increase the number of international students we can welcome to our campus.

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And, when I say welcome, that is precisely what I mean because I believe that we are, indeed, making good progress in our efforts to become a campus where things like creativity, innovation, and initiative flourish and where it is clear that everyone is an important, contributing member of the team. Between September, 2000 and May, 2001, for example, 255 suggestions were submitted as part of our Bright Ideas program. Most involved expenditures of funds rather than savings and some were complaints or personal requests. Still, there were about 200 (including some very expensive items like a trash compacting process) that we thought we could reasonably consider. Of these, at least 42 have been implemented or will be implemented by October 1. You are very familiar with some of these. Practically every light switch on campus, for instance, now has a Save Polar Power sticker on it. This was selected as the best Bright Idea in September and three employees received awards for it. Moreover, faculty and staff can now insert the ONU web address on the signature line of their e-mail, thereby permitting interested recipients of e-mail to go directly to the ONU home page. This quick and direct advertising for ONU was the winning Bright Idea in April. In addition to these ideas that won our monthly competitions, we have implemented all sorts of other ideas submitted by employees, students, alumni, and friends. Outside lights at the President's House, for example, are now on timers to save on electricity bills. Internet connections are better and many of our forms will be on line this fall after installation of WEBfinance. There will be a stamp machine in the mail room in McIntosh and room numbers in Meyer Hall. And repairs and painting will have occurred all over campus.

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It seems to me, in other words, that ideas and initiatives are beginning to circulate and get attention everywhere. But there's some other important evidence of this. All of you will recall that we established a number of task forces last year and asked them to look at the major functions of the University to see if they could find ways to save money. The work of these task forces generated a general focus on efficiencies and cost savings across the campus. As a consequence of all this, we did, indeed, find some very significant ways to save money that could be reallocated to other priorities and needs. Let me share with you what some of these ideas were.

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Since most of our students are on their family's health insurance programs, we concluded

that we could drop our existing student insurance program and replace it with one that would give those students who needed insurance much better coverage than they currently had. This saved the University \$230,000. Since we knew it would be impossible for us to ever have enough ports to satisfy the need for dial-up computer service, we decided we should negotiate a favorable rate for employees and students with WCOIL, an off-campus ISP, and drop our program. This produced a \$16,000 savings. By aggressively seeking bids, we saved \$38,000 on excess worker's compensation insurance and \$56,000 on our personal computer purchases this year. And, all of these savings were in addition to those we managed to achieve by turning our thermostats back 4 degrees and our hot water settings back 10 degrees.

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It seems to me, in short, that we are, indeed, increasingly becoming an organization where ideas circulate freely and the contributions of all are valued and recognized.

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So, what answers are appropriate to the questions about University direction that I posed some time ago? I think it is quite fair to say that we are, indeed, moving positively forward in the directions we need to move at this point in the 21st century and in the evolution of ONU. I'm sure, though, that some of you have noted that, to this point, I've not said anything about the first component of the vision I laid out a year ago, namely continuing to be the first rate small university with a residential focus that we have always been. I would argue, of course, that many of the programmatic changes I have described as well as some of the external partnerships and cost savings have contributed significantly and positively to the continuance of our established identity and role. There is, though, another good piece of evidence on this matter that I would like to share with you.

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Hopefully, all of you have, by now, received a copy of the report Sharon Hawkins recently prepared on our new faculty and staff appointments. I want to urge you to review this document carefully. You will find that we have recruited faculty from the finest graduate programs in the country and the world, including John Hopkins, Michigan, Stanford, Illinois, Penn State, Clarkson, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Bowling Green, and Toronto. You will also find that our new law college faculty have JDs from Boston College, Toledo, and Ohio State, and two of them have JDs/PhDs combinations, one from the University of Virginia and the other a Columbia/Yale combination. And, you will find that our new colleagues have held positions in organizations and at institutions all over the world.

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All of this says to me that we are very much concerned about maintaining the first rate liberal education we have long been known to provide. But, our hiring pattern suggests a concern about continuity in another way. Judiciously, we have also recruited some of our own graduates. Some, like Bob Cupp and Scott Wills have distinguished themselves in other careers before joining the University. Others, like Kristen Sayre, Angela Campise,

Alisa Dentinger, and Danielle Verone, are May 2001 graduates. Why does this judicious recruitment of some of our own provide evidence of our commitment to the continuance of what we have always been? Because our own graduates know why they came to our institution and what kind of education they got in our classrooms, and we can be sure that they will continue to remind us of what an ONU educational experience must be.

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Well, enough about last year. What about this year? What are the principal issues on the agenda for this year? Well, I was certainly not able to predict and identify for you last fall all the things that happened last year that I've talked about this morning. And, although I'd like to tell you that we're going to win several national championships and million dollar grants this year, I suspect many of you would find that VERY Band rightfully!!-- presumptuous. I think, therefore, I'll leave the predictions to others. □

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Still, there are several things that I know we will need to address this year that I can share with you. The first is the University's ultimate size. There are regular speculations about this at all levels of the institution and we need to do the thorough research and careful thinking that will result in recommendations we can discuss with our Board. To do so, I intend to initiate our regular, on-going planning process by asking a number of you to serve with me and the vice presidents on a Planning and Oversight Council. Secondly, we need to give increasing thought to the accreditation visit the University must schedule for fall, 2004, ensuring that we have all the materials, especially assessment reviews, we will need to make the case for the strength and quality of our programs. Thirdly, we need to move forward with some technology planning to make sure that ONU continues to offer the most up to date technological environment possible for its students and faculty.

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In addition to these issues and areas, we know we will have a critical accreditation visit for the College of Business Administration in the fall, and the beginning of the construction of its new facility in the spring. We also know we must make some decisions about additional apartment complexes for our students and continue to aggressively seek funds and partnerships that will enable us to complete the All Events Center/Stadium that is under construction on the western edge of the campus. We know, too, that this stage will be the site of stimulating presentations, delightful entertainment and spectacular displays of talent and that our fields, courts, mats and tracks will be venues for student competition that will make us proud. And, Toby and I know that we will continue to bring the exciting story of ONU's development, excellence and accomplishment to alums and friends all across the country.

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In all, we can expect another truly extraordinary year in which we continue to build on the marvelous foundation crafted by all of those who have gone before us. Toby and I will look forward to seeing you this afternoon at the house we now have furniture!! Bandtonight at the opening dinner in the field house. We will also look forward

to interacting with you in all sorts of other ways this year, and we want now, as I close this state of the University talk for 2001, to again thank all of you for the incredible things you do for our students and our University every day. Dedicated, loyal individuals committed to service and excellence are what make all organizations strong and great. ONU is fortunate to have more than 600 such individuals and together they Ball of you--make it an extraordinary place to be!

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Have a great year!