

## State of the University, 2005

Good morning and welcome to another school year at Ohio Northern University. Toby and I hope you have had a productive and enjoyable summer that has given you time to focus on your family, friends and the many avocations that contribute so much to the quality of our lives. Just two weeks ago, Toby and I were reminded of the incredible joy that comes from new life when we visited our two month old grandson in Colorado. What a fabulous experience! I now fully understand that marvelous refrain that all grandchildren are “precious, perfect and precocious!”

The 2005-06 academic year will, I’m sure, be another outstanding one for ONU and I want to spend some time this morning talking with you about some of the things we hope to accomplish this year. As is my custom, though, I want to begin my presentation with a brief review of some of the highlights of last year. And, I want to start where I ended last year. As you will recall, I talked a good deal last fall about the 10 year re-accreditation review the Higher Learning Commission would conduct of the University in October, 2004. I emphasized that this was a “big deal” because the HLC review is the one that determines whether the academic and support programming available at the University are of sufficient quality to merit the continuing approval of our peers. We talked about the criteria the HLC would use to evaluate us and I suggested you might want to read the first volume of our report because it provided a good summary of the scope of University operations and the principal developments of recent years. I also noted that since the HLC team would be accompanied by representatives of the Ohio Board of Regents, this evaluation would be used as the foundation for the reauthorization of our programming by state officials.

Well, as we reported shortly after the team left campus, the visit went very well and we were completely re-accredited for another 10 years. In fact, the review team’s report was very complimentary to the University and required only one follow-up report. Moreover, this report, which will focus on our assessment activities, isn’t due until 2008. In the HLC’s view, therefore, things are in very good shape at ONU.

This external validation is a tremendous tribute to the enormous dedication and very hard work of everyone in this room, and it is, therefore, very fitting that we begin the 2005-06 school year with a resounding “THANK YOU.”

The Higher Learning Commission review, though, was not the only external evaluation of the quality of ONU programs that we received last year. Representatives of the University Senate of the United Methodist Church were here in April and, after reviewing essentially all of the materials included in the HLC report, these individuals concluded that we met the standards for continued

listing as a United Methodist related institution. Although the NCATE reviewers, like those from the Higher Learning Commission, raised questions about assessment, they concluded that our professional programs in education generally met accreditation standards. The National Association of Industrial Technology echoed this judgment when it accredited our programs in technological studies in October. Pharmacy received continuing national accreditation as well. However, a number of important concerns were identified and faculty members in the college have been working all year on the development of initiatives and efforts that will fully address these concerns. Hence, we expect to have a very successful visit when the accreditors return to campus this fall.

External evaluations of University programs last year, then, were outstanding. But, so, too, were the evaluations of the work of our students, faculty and staff. For example, Dan Waddell, a student in our chemistry department, won a Goldwater Scholarship for 2005-06. This is a highly prestigious national scholarship for undergraduate study and we believe Dan is the only ONU student to have ever received one. In Engineering, Stephanie Koch won the Eugene C. Figg National Scholarship. It provides her not only with a substantial check to help with her studies but also with a summer internship at the Florida headquarters of Figg Engineering, "one of the most highly regarded bridge design firms in the world," according to Farhad Reza in our civil engineering department. Jason Duff, a February business graduate, was honored at John Carroll on June 1 for his first place win in the Ohio Valley Regional Competition of the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards program. He will now compete against 13 other finalists from around the world for the global award. The results will be announced on October 29 in Orlando and Jason believes he has a good chance of winning! Barbie Tate, in Communication Arts, was elected Editor in Chief of the FORUM, the national newsletter of the Public Relations Student Society of America, at the national convention of PRSSA in Dallas. Joining her in a national role was Kevin Saghy, who was elected National Vice President for Chapter Development at the same convention. Jennifer Vandever, a May graduate, was a recipient of an Award for Excellence from Phi Kappa Phi this past summer and Ryan Schneider, a May graduate in Pharmacy who has been working with Dave Kinder for three years, received a scholarship from the American Foundation of Pharmaceutical Education to pursue Ph.D. studies. Rachel Kantosky, a senior in biochemistry, was elected Student Representative on the National Council of Mortar Board at the national convention in Columbus and Laurie Godfrey, a May graduate in Art and Toby Baker, a fifth year senior in Art had works accepted for the All-Ohio Art Show in Ashland this summer along with Bruce Chesser, Professor Emeritus in Art. And who will soon forget Katie Reinhard's magnificent performance of Lloyd Butler's arrangement of "Oh Holy Night" in last year's *Holiday Spectacular*?

But, there were other great student performances and accomplishments last year. For example, 8 sociology students, Scott Wolfe, Ross May, Katherine

Simpson, Christopher Stacko, Kara Lewis, Ryan Koubek, Brian Bailey, and Deb Kinder, accompanied Keith Durkin to present papers on binge drinking at the Mid South Sociological Association meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi. Two of the students, Scott Wolfe and Kara Lewis are now co-authors with Keith on a chapter on binge drinking that appears in *Readings in Deviant Behavior*. Two other students, Rachel Baumgardner and Megan Stevenson, reprised the papers they presented with Lisa Robeson at the Center for Antique and Early Studies conference at Ball State at a English department colloquia in December of last year. In the spring, a team from our College of Business Administration, consisting of Nate Hosek, Erin Engler, Lauren Hite, Franklin Asongwe, Josh Robinson and Francis Cardullo, won the Ohio College of Business Challenge at the University of Akron, while their colleague, Kristin Garver's paper on "The Post-Sarbanes-Oxley Shift in Audit Committees' Roles and Relationships" was the winner of the Deloitte and Touche/Ohio Region Outstanding Student Manuscript Award. In addition, the University's Marketing Club, also in the College of Business, won a national award for its trade show entry at its national conference in New Orleans. Students in our Center for Teacher Education were equally successful. They--that is, Elizabeth Cox, Suzanne Hall, Rachel Maris, Shelia MacGraw and Kristen Sloan--won the Ohio Association of Private Colleges of Teacher Education Technology contest. The University's political science honorary, Pi Sigma Alpha, was also recognized nationally this year, receiving a Best Chapter Award and well deserved commendation for its faculty advisor, Rob Alexander.

But, our students excelled outside of the classroom last year as well. The football team, for example, rebounded from its adversity and compiled an 8-2 record. That should have qualified us for the play-offs but, unfortunately, it did not. This year we will have to avoid this problem by simply winning the conference title outright. How does that sound, Coach Paul? Our women's volleyball team did exactly that last year and even managed to bring the first round of the NCAA play-offs to Ada. What an incredible accomplishment for Coach Witte and her team. Let's do it again! Coach Ewald had an equally incredible year. The men's swimming team won the OAC championship for the first time ever, and Coach Ewald was selected as OAC Coach of the Year. Coach Wills joined Peggy as an OAC Coach of the Year as his women's tennis team won the regular season and tournament titles last year and was named an ITA Academic All-American team for the fourth year in a row.

As is, I think, very apparent, our students succeed in all the ways I've mentioned because of the extraordinary commitment of our fantastic faculty and staff. And, what a year they had in 2004-05! For example, Vic Streib, in Law, was the principal reference in the landmark Supreme Court ruling on juvenile capital punishment. Long regarded as the "leading academic and legal expert on the juvenile death penalty in America," Vic's work was extensively cited in the decision to end juvenile capital punishment. His research has provided the definitive direction in this important area of the law for decades and the truly

distinguished role he has played in the ultimate decision is simply extraordinary. Congratulations, Vic! Anas Al Hajji, in our College of Business Administration, is rapidly becoming one of the principal international commentators on oil issues and in the past year he has been cited in articles in such highly respected newspapers as the New York Times, USA Today, and the Christian Science Monitor. In addition, he has made presentations literally all over the world. In fact, just since school was out in May, he has been to Japan, China, India, Saudia Arabia and Dubai. Nils Riess, also known for his ability to connect ONU students with theatre related opportunities all over the world, received a singular honor this year when he was selected for the Governor's Arts in Education Award for 2005. Nils was cited for his "determined [advocacy] for arts education on the state, national and international levels" and praised for the many contributions he has made to the enrichment and expansion of the Communication Arts programs at the University. Bud Smith, in English, also received a singular honor last year when he was awarded a UN Gold Medal in November for his contributions to the work of the Interregional League of Indigenous and Ethnic Groups.

Other faculty and staff received similar accolades last year. For instance, Alisa Dentinger Aggozino, in Admissions, received the new member award from the Ohio Association of College Admission Counseling for the significant contributions she has made to the organization as a member with less than 5 years of professional experience. J-D Yoder, Julie Hurtug and Mike Rider, in Mechanical Engineering, were recognized for the "best presentation" at their session at the 2004 national meeting of ASEE in Salt Lake City. Rob Kleine, in Business, recently received similar recognition when he learned that one of his articles has been designated as "Essential Reading in Marketing" by the prestigious Marketing Science Institute. J-D Yoder, in Mechanical Engineering, obtained an NSF grant of almost \$70,000 last year that will "allow electrical and mechanical engineering students the opportunity to work in a hands-on setting to model and control complex systems." But, J-D was not the only one to receive significant outside funding in 2004-05. The College of Arts and Sciences, for example, obtained funding totaling almost \$52,000 from the Ohio Department of Education to support the creation of the Summer Honors Institute which provided programming this past summer to gifted and talented high school students in forensic science, GIS, philosophy, mock trial, theatre and technological studies. Programming in the College of Pharmacy will also benefit from resources generated externally. A grant of \$187,000 from the Ohio Medical Foundation, for example, will be shared with the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine to develop efforts to "prevent prescription drug mistakes by promoting collaborative relationships between pharmacists and physicians." In addition, a federal grant of \$121,000, made available to ONU by Congressman Mike Oxley, will help with the construction of the new facility for the College of Pharmacy.

While some of our staff members were helping to support University programming by generating external funding, others were doing the same thing in a wide variety of other ways. Some, like Dennis Tabor, Matt Rinehart, Fred

Stuart and Andrew Nicholson were remodeling 5UP and transforming it into a sought after place to live on campus; others, like Lee Ann Hall, John Romick and his paint crew and Chuck Waterbury were designing, remodeling, repainting and fully coordinating the renovation of the student dining room; still others, like Vicki Niese and Dave Dellifield, were creating a credit card system for University expenditures that has reduced the number of purchase orders issued by 76% since 2002-03; and still others, like Wendell Schick and his colleagues in Financial Aid and Stacey Neeley and her colleagues in the Controller's Office, were developing a tremendous new loan service for our pharmacy and law students, known as the "School as Lender" program.

It may have been, however, that it was in the collective, working together area that ONU faculty and staff excelled the most in 2004-05. Together, we dedicated Dial-Robeson Stadium last September in an event that many regarded as the best ever held on campus. Together, we welcomed 919 students and their parents to campus for Scholarship Days and served them scrumptious lunches in record time. Together, we continued to find ways to reduce our health care costs. And together we increased the number of individuals contributing to the campus fund raising campaign to 65% of all of the individuals employed at ONU. The national norm for these kinds of programs is 28-32%.

But, it was in the face of a natural disaster that we achieved our greatest successes together last year. On January 5, our community was struck by an ice storm of enormous intensity that forced us to close the University for more than 5 days. We were without power, almost without water, and greatly concerned about safety and the general welfare as branches, trees, and power lines fell down around us with alarming regularity. Yet, the response of our community was simply extraordinary. Once it became clear that we couldn't keep the University open, attention focused on getting our students off campus and out of Ada in a Level 3 emergency environment. We then started looking for generators and by Thursday evening, thanks especially to Scott Bode of Bode Electric, we were providing hot meals for our community in the cafeteria and shelter in the Activities Room and the Ballroom. Shortly thereafter, we got the showers in King-Horn going to the delight of residents miles away from Ada. Our students kept the McIntosh Center open 24 hours a day and, with the help of the Library, provided books, magazines, and even videotapes for our guests to enjoy.

It was an incredible time. The dedication and very, very hard work of our staff is practically impossible to describe. Everyone did everything that was asked without question and without hesitation. As a consequence, the University was able to reach out to its community and provide a place where neighbors could visit neighbors, friends could talk and play cards, and families could feel secure and safe. No one will ever be able to thank you adequately or enough. But, what you did for Ada and ONU in January, 2005 will never be forgotten.

The final thing we did together last year that I want to call to your attention this morning was to mourn the loss of some wonderful leaders and dear friends. With great sadness, we said good-bye last year to Gene Hanson, legendary former dean of the Law School, George Hassell, long-time Vice President for Finance, Bud Hawkins, Ada High School teacher and coach and husband of Sharon Hawkins, Ed Williams, extraordinary leader of our music department for over 20 years, and Tim Benson, dedicated, hard-working member of our plant staff. Won't you join me for a moment in remembering them and their many contributions to our University.

That, then, was 2004-05! In my judgment, it was a real good year for ONU. I think 2005-06 will be equally good and I want to spend the remainder of our time together this morning talking about some of the topics, issues, and initiatives I hope we will pursue this year.

The starting point of our agenda every year, of course, is the strategic plan laid out in *ONU Charts Its Future*. Hence, before we get into the details of some of the issues I hope we will address this year, let's, briefly, review how we've been doing with the vision and goals articulated in our plan.

As I know you will recall, our vision is straight forward. We aspire to be:

...a leading, private, student-centered institution of increasing regional and national prominence. [ONU] will be a diverse, dynamic and unique learning community offering rigorous professional programs in partnership with the arts and the sciences to prepare individuals for lifelong challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Are we achieving this vision? Well, with few exceptions, our accreditation reports in recent years have praised the rigor and quality of our programs, and we are now included in the most prominent national evaluations of American colleges and universities, including U.S. News and World Report's *America's Best Colleges*, Peterson's *Competitive College Guide*, the Princeton Review's *Best 361 Colleges* and "Colleges of Distinction." Moreover, at least until this year, the number of applications from students outside of Ohio has increased markedly, and this is a trend we need to reinforce and expand since demographic evidence indicates that the college-going population in Ohio will not increase in the years to come, in sharp contrast to the situation in most of the other states in the Union.

Still, none of us would claim that ONU has become the "leading," increasingly recognized institution that our vision proclaims. This requires first rate faculty and staff working with highly talented students in classrooms, laboratories and other environments on learning challenges, opportunities and projects that prompt attention. It also requires a systematic and integrated effort to let others know about what is going on at the institution. That's one of the reasons we've recently established a Communication and Marketing office at ONU and recruited

a talented and experienced individual, Mrs. Kathy McDonald, to run it. It's also why we've entered into an on-going relationship with a nationally recognized marketing firm, Lipman-Hearne, to develop a plan to better articulate and present the University's excellence.

Yet, we are making progress with our vision and our goals. For example, we've created new and exciting programs in Nursing, Forensic Biology, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and Marketing. We've developed new partnerships with Marathon in support of the Engineer in Residence, with Lima Memorial and Blanchard Valley hospitals in support of the BSN completion program for RNs, and with a variety of new clinical sites in support of our conversion to a six year pharmacy doctorate program. We've encouraged the application of women and minorities for faculty and staff positions and the numbers show that almost 30 percent of our candidates for faculty positions in the past 5 years have been women. The proportion of women who have been appointed to permanent positions in this time period is 33 percent, and the proportion of women currently on our faculty stands at 32 percent. Although our minority faculty numbers are not nearly as strong and have remained in the 8-10% range in the past 5 years, about 30 percent of our applicants in recent years have been from non-Caucasian backgrounds. In addition, we have developed a multi-faith room in the Chapel and created full time positions in Admissions and Student Affairs to help with the recruitment and retention of a more diverse student body. In accordance with our plan, we have also developed a technology plan, a symbol and style manual to help us project a consistent message, and University-wide committees to help us launch a marketing program for ONU and develop priorities in the facilities area. Perhaps most importantly, at least in terms of our continuing evolution, we've created a planning process, a strategic plan, and, in 2004, a revision of that plan that confirmed the vision and goals of the original document while improving and specifying the strategies we need to follow to reach them.

But, what about the infrastructure development our plan requires us to make if we are to expand our student body? What is our record in this area? Well, I think our infrastructure investment has been extraordinary in the past six years. The buildings are obvious but it's still worth noting that the total value of the seven projects we've undertaken since 1999 is \$31.3 million. And, this does not include the \$5 million we'll invest in the Hakes-Pierstorf Family Pharmacy Education Center in the next year or the \$24 million we'll put into the first phase of our housing transformation in 2005-06. We've also added more than 55 positions, 43 of which have been full time faculty and staff, at a cost of approximately \$3 million in the last six years and increased the salaries of continuing employees by almost 45 percent. Among other things, this has enabled us to keep our student/faculty ratio stable at 13 to 1 during a time when our student numbers have grown by more than 7 percent. We've also been able to handle almost \$23 million in medical expenses in this time period and to manage a 312 percent increase in the cost of our health care plan without simply

passing a 312 percent increase on to you. And, while doing all of this, we've increased the number and quality of our study body while keeping our discount rate stable or falling, and increased our travel, program and hospitality budgets by 40% to 70% while reducing allocations to publications, postage and telephone by about 10-30%.

Overall, then, I think we can take some considerable pride in what we have achieved in recent years. Yet, we certainly haven't accomplished everything we talk about in our plan. Hence, let's turn now to the agenda and challenges for 2005-06.

One area that I hope we can give more attention to this year is program development. Now, there's no doubt that we've done some of this in recent years. In fact, just a moment ago, I referenced our new programs in Nursing and Forensic Biology as good examples of innovative programming that responds to the needs of our time. This morning, I want to encourage you to do more of this. And, in doing so, I want to encourage you to think unconventionally or "out of the box" as it is so often expressed these days. Our plan talks about cross-department and cross college degrees and a 5 year Master's program that might be analogous to our 6 year Pharm D degree. But, it also invites colleges to "identify what faculty regard as programmatic growth opportunities...in existing majors [and] new areas of study...that respond to emerging needs and trends....

But, how does one do this? What does one need to do when thinking about programming alternatives and opportunities? Well, one of the keys is a careful assessment of the match between what seems to be needed in the environment and the educational strengths of a particular institution. Our two most recent new programs, Nursing and Forensic Biology, illustrate, I think, how this assessment can work and what a good match looks like. Hence, let's explore their evolution slightly more carefully to see if they can help us understand how this matching process can work.

The current demand for nurses is readily apparent. Hardly a week goes by when we don't get a comment from one authority or another about the huge shortage of nurses, especially bachelor's prepared nurses. Similarly, it's also unusual for a week to pass without someone talking about forensics in some form. There seems no doubt, therefore, that there are needs in these areas. If this is true, though, why hasn't every American college and university created programs in these areas? The answer, of course, is that many—if not most—don't have strong science departments. Not all, particularly smaller, private universities can claim strengths in these areas. Hence, if creating a nursing program requires significant expansion of the facilities, equipment and faculty in the sciences, in addition to significant expansion in these areas for the nursing program itself, the cost and feasibility of mounting a nursing program can be completely prohibitive.

Fortunately for us, this was not the case for ONU. We already have superb programs in the sciences. Indeed, this is one of the University's acknowledged strengths. Although the cost of creating a nursing program is, I assure you, by no means inconsequential, we have not had to make huge, new investments in the sciences to do so. Moreover, the creation of these two new programs strengthens and enhances the arguments we can make for new investments in the sciences, particularly for the greatly needed new building that will connect Meyer and Robertson-Evans.

What lessons, then, can we learn from these case studies about the strategies to pursue in the development of new programs? The most important one, undoubtedly, is that it is wise to build on strengths. Another is that it is important to remember who you are, and to create programs that fit with that identity. In our case, we are an institution that has pursued a consistent mission for more than 130 years, namely the integration of the arts and sciences with professional education. Nursing makes sense for Ohio Northern, therefore, not simply because we are strong in the sciences. It also makes sense because we are already heavily invested in health and health-related programming. In addition to our outstanding College of Pharmacy, we have very strong programs in Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Exercise Physiology and Athletic Training and first rate preparatory programs in Medicine, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physician's Assistant. Nursing, in short, takes advantage of faculty, equipment and facilities we already have; it builds on our strengths.

There are, moreover, other possibilities in this area that we may want to explore. Health care is one of the most rapidly and extensively expanding sectors of our economy and society at this time. Individuals who can provide leadership and management for health care facilities and organizations are in considerable demand. ONU has strong health care programming. We also have management and administration expertise in the Colleges of Business Administration and Arts and Sciences. Hence, undergraduate and graduate programs in health care administration makes sense at ONU and I hope concerned faculties, departments and colleges will explore our options and possibilities this year.

But, there are other areas I hope we'll get a chance to take a look at this year as well. In addition to our excellent strengths in the sciences, ONU is known for its commitment to professional programming. Indeed, we regularly emphasize that one of the distinguishing characteristics of an ONU education is that it prepares students for a fulfilling life as well as a productive career. We need to remember and emphasize this central characteristic of the education we offer in planning and developing future programming. Crossing disciplines should be natural in an environment like ours and we should be constantly looking for ways to combine the focus and expertise of one discipline with others. As a consequence, current discussions like the ones initiated by Tarun Goswami, in Mechanical Engineering, about biomedical engineering make sense and I hope these

conversations will move forward this year. Similarly, the conversations about engineering management, arts management, pharmacy management also make sense and I hope that they, too, will expand this year.

There is, though, another aspect of programming that I want to talk with you about this morning. It has to do with some of the things we talk with our students about in and outside of the classroom. As you will recall, we had some unfortunate and destructive events in our residence halls last year. Not surprisingly, they were the focus of discussion in several of the Open Forums I held with faculty and staff last spring. There was worry, to be sure, about the lack of respect for property and the threats to life, safety, and welfare that were unquestionably parts of these incidents. The concern I heard, though, went beyond this and embraced a genuine and deeply-felt worry about the cultural climate on our campus and on others in this country at this time. Faculty and staff were concerned about the civility of students to one another and to others and references were made to the harshness of blogs and xanga files. There was also anxiety about the unwillingness of students and student groups to focus on the common good or even to entertain the concept that the larger good of all is something that deserves attention, and legitimately should motivate and determine decisions and allocations. In an e-mail following one of the forums, a faculty member urged me to sponsor “a renewed emphasis on communication and argument.” He went on to note: “In such vitriolic times, it seems we’ve lost the ability to develop common ground and understand and appreciate competing positions.”

I was struck by these concepts of “common ground” and “common good.” And then, this summer, I received a book from The College Board entitled *Refocusing on the Common Good*. It wasn’t really about the issues faculty and staff had brought to my attention in the spring. Rather, it was about what we need to do to provide equity and access in higher education in America today. Yet, the title, “Refocusing on the Common Good,” seemed to capture what I was hearing in my interaction with the campus community. And then the annual report of the American Council on Education arrived in the mail. Its title was “Partnering with our Members for the Common Good.”

I sensed, therefore, that others were beginning to worry about the extent to which we are focused on the common good and seeking common ground in this country these days. And, that is why I wanted to bring this topic up with you today. I think it is important to find time in our educational interactions with our students to emphasize that there are broader interests and concerns besides their own individual interests--or even those of student or other societal groups of which they may be a part--that need to be considered when decisions and plans are made. We may want to remind them, in the words of one of my academic mentors many years ago, that interest articulation and interest aggregation are two different processes. We may need to remind them that it is not unusual for conflicting needs, requests, priorities and proposals to be put forward by multiple

individuals, groups and constituencies. These articulated interests, needs and proposals are then reviewed and prioritized—i.e. aggregated--by individuals who are often guided by criteria that emphasize the general, common good rather than satisfaction of a particular constituency interest. Not surprisingly, therefore, some things get done, some things get supported and some things don't. Things that are not supported or adopted are not designated as bad or unimportant. It is simply determined that the supported priorities are, at this time, believed to be the ones most likely to contribute to the general welfare, the common good.

But, I'm sure some of you are saying to yourself, this is obvious. Everyone understands this. This is the way things are always done. Perhaps so. Indeed, I hope so. But, if this is so obvious and such standard operating procedure, why is there bitter, sometimes even deliberately inflammatory, rhetoric when one priority or view is chosen over another, or one group seems to get more than another, or when sanctions are imposed when community standards are violated? Similarly, if this is so obvious, why do we find it so difficult to accept that there are always competing positions, competing arguments, competing interpretations, competing individuals, and so forth and that if we are focused on the common good, our goal in our interaction with one another should be to find common ground?

Now, I'm neither naïve nor, I hope, foolish and I'm certainly not a Pollyanna. Thus, I know, very well, that the faculty members with us today have lots of things besides issues of the common good to talk about in their classes. I also know that our support and professional staff have loads of issues besides the ones I've talked about to focus on with our students when they are not in class. I hope, nevertheless, that you will find time this year to engage your students with questions like the ones I've raised and work with them to see and understand the common good and the common ground that is so vital to a positively evolving modern world. All of us will be grateful for your efforts.

Now, besides programming issues and questions, what else will be on the agenda this year? Well, there's certainly going to be a good deal of construction underway on campus. I'm sure all of you have seen the progress we are making on the addition to the Robertson-Evans Pharmacy Building. It is now well underway and we expect this new 22,000 square foot facility to be available for use no later than the beginning of the fall 2006 term. The cost will be \$5 million.

If you've looked on the other side of campus, that is the south side, you've probably seen workmen making preparations for another major University project. This is the next phase of our on-going effort to transform the housing options available to students attending our institution. In the area immediately adjacent to the west side of Polar Bear Way, we will create residence and living spaces that will be occupied by so-called "affinity groups." These are groups whose membership is defined by a common affiliation or characteristic. Affinity groups, therefore, include fraternities and sororities and, at this point, 3 of our sororities have committed to be part of this complex. Affinity groups, though,

also include students who are tied together by some other common bond. Hence, we expect one of the facilities we will be creating to be occupied by our honors students. In the future, the occupants might be law students, international students, graduate students, or, perhaps, musicians or athletes.

What will this complex look like? The slide on the screen now gives you an idea. At present, there will be 4 residential buildings with a capacity to house 160 students in two bed suites with bath. The residential buildings will be connected to houses that will provide space for the students to interact and congregate together in support of their common affiliation. If they are Greeks, their letters will, I'm sure, be prominently displayed on the outside of the building. The honors' students will similarly identify their house. The residential and "chapter houses" will be arranged in a horseshoe pattern adjacent to Polar Bear Way. At the top of the horseshoe right behind Loop Road, we will build a facility which the affinity groups can use for meetings and other projects. This facility will also have some areas for dining that will provide alternatives to our current dining hall.

In addition to this complex, there are two other components to this next phase of our housing transformation. The first is the construction of additional student apartments in the space to the west of the large parking lot along Lima Avenue that serves the existing apartments. A 200 bed complex will be built with a mix of two and four bedroom apartments. The second component is the complete renovation of Lima Hall. As soon as school is over next May—and, possibly, even a bit before this—the university's construction partners will arrive on campus to completely remodel the Lima complex. The existing residence hall will, essentially, be gutted and new suites with a shared bathroom and private bedrooms for each of the two residents will be created. Most importantly, this complete remodeling of the Lima complex will take place in the summer and be completed by the time school opens in the fall of 2006.

A year from now, then, we will have created an affinity village to the west of Polar Bear Way, new students apartments to the west of the current apartments, and two person suites in the Lima complex. The cost of this project is \$24 million and I'm pleased to tell you that we were able, thanks to the superb work of our finance office, to sell the bonds for these funds this summer at a very favorable interest rate. If everything works for this project the way we anticipate, we will move to a similar renovation of Founders in 2008. The ultimate goal is a complete transformation of the residential options at ONU by 2011-12. At that time—and after an estimated investment of more than \$50 million—the oldest housing on campus will be the first apartment complex we built in 2001.

In addition to construction, we want to take a close look at a number of personnel issues this year. Currently, for example, we are interviewing possible consultants that we can ask to study the classification system we use for secretarial support personnel. Some of our new management folks do not need or want the kind of office support older personnel, like me, require. With the help of modern

technology, they do much of their own typing, composing, filing, scheduling, etc. Most, if not all, have voice mail which they can transfer to their computers with ease. Increasingly, therefore, our colleagues in the support area are being asked to function as assistants with responsibilities that considerably exceed and transcend their job descriptions, titles and compensation levels. We need, therefore, to look at our classification system, determine whether actual jobs accord with titles, job descriptions and compensation rates and then implement, over time, the necessary changes and adjustments.

We also need to recognize that some offices may need support capabilities they do not currently have. To address this issue, I want us, this year, to evaluate the training opportunities currently available for University personnel and determine the improvements and expansion that are necessary. From discussions held this summer, for example, it has already become clear that more extensive and regular campus-wide training in the use of Banner could be beneficial. As a consequence, we have made contact with representatives of the company that provides this software and we expect it to provide some campus training sessions this fall. We need, though, as an institution, to make a firm commitment to on-going education for University personnel and to identify the programs that are needed and the regularity with which they should be scheduled.

Finally, in this area, I want to work, this year, with the Personnel Committee to take a close look at faculty salaries. For the past several years, we have included a parity pool in our annual salary package. The purpose of this funding, which has been in addition to the merit pool, has been to address major and unjustified differences between the salaries of ONU faculty and national norms. The latter are based on the data provided annually to us by the College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) which collects salary information from 813 schools and reports averages by rank and discipline at a variety of different kinds of colleges and universities from research institutions to baccalaureate institutions. By reference to the tables in this annual compilation, therefore, we are able to get a general sense of whether, for example, Associate Professors of Political Science at ONU are above or below national averages. The parity pool we've included in our salary package each year has then been intended to help address the discrepancies.

Of course, there has never been enough parity money to solve all of the problems. This fund has ranged from \$75,000 to \$100,000 annually and the differences between ONU and national averages exceed these amounts by a considerable margin, (though some of them are completely explicable when one reviews performance evaluations). An equally important difficulty with our current process is that parity dollars, which are supposed to be focused on correcting differences between our salaries and national norms, are being used to address all sorts of other salary issues. In some instances, for example, they have been used simply as extra merit dollars and all members of a department or college have gotten an equal share. In other instances, they have been used to rectify

problems that have resulted from rapidly changing market conditions. Sometimes, for example, the salary required to recruit a new person into a unit is higher or very close to the salary or salaries of individuals who have been in a unit for several years and have been performing commendably. In such instances, we have “salary compression” and parity funds have been used to address this issue as well.

What I’d like to do in conjunction with the Personnel Committee this year is to carefully and thoroughly evaluate our salaries and determine the nature and, hopefully, the magnitude of the problems we have. Once we have these data, we can identify potential solutions and assess our ability to address them. I certainly don’t have any illusion about our ability to solve all of our salary problems in one year or, for that matter, in several. Hence, I don’t want all of you to start thinking you’re going to see major improvements in your salary bases in the near future. Yet, I hope we will be able to carefully identify the kind of problems we have with faculty salaries and develop longer term strategies to address them.

This effort will be facilitated, I hope, by the creation of a database of information on peer institutions that are very similar to ONU. When we compare ONU to other institutions these days, we typically reference 28 institutions, including such universities as Bradley, Calvin, Cedarville, Drake, Grove City, Hope, Messiah, Stetson, Trinity, Valparaiso, Pacific and Evansville. This peer group was created in 2001 and was the best we could develop at that time given the kind of data that were available. Yet, it had clear limitations. Only 6 of the schools had pharmacy programs, only 14 had law schools, and only 19 had engineering colleges. University wide averages, therefore, sometimes were low or high because of the absence of adequate representation from these groups. This peer group, however, was better than others that were available because the latter normally included only arts and science colleges.

Since 2001, the kind of data available to compare institutions has improved markedly in quality and scope. Today, therefore, we can create a peer comparison group that includes many more schools like us. If we require, for example, that an institution have 4 of the 5 programs available at ONU to be included in our peer group, 20 very respectable private universities appear on the list. All of these universities have arts and science and business colleges, almost 90 percent have law schools, almost three-fourths have engineering colleges, and more than 60 percent have pharmacy programs. They are, moreover, very much like us in other important ways as the table on the screen demonstrates. We intend to use these 20 institutions as our peer group in the future and we believe this will make all of our comparisons, including those focused on salaries, more comprehensive and accurate.

I want to end my remarks today by, again, commending all of you for the extraordinary effort you made to help the University and our community during

the Ice Storm. What was impressive was the magnitude and sincerity of the response. Anyone who could help stepped forward. No one said something couldn't be done. No one was overwhelmed by the complexity or expense of the task. During those difficult days in January, ingenuity reigned and teamwork prospered. We believed we could handle any challenge—and we did!

My hope as I welcome you to another school year this morning is that this marvelous “can do” attitude will continue to motivate our approaches to our work and our responsibilities. As you go about your daily routine, I hope you will focus on the reasons something will work or should be tried rather than on all the reasons it will be inadequate or fail. Similarly, I hope you will begin every task and approach every challenge with a conviction that you can and will find solutions and answers rather than with a determination to criticize and find fault. These attitudes served our University and our community well during the Ice Storm. They can continue to inspire us.

Welcome, again, to 2005-06 at ONU. Toby and I hope you have fantastic year!

