



State of the College Address
September 5, 2001

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"The Way It Is: The Spirituality of Utica College"¹

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Good evening friends and colleagues. Jennifer and I have looked forward to this occasion because it gives us an opportunity to welcome new members of our College community and to celebrate with old friends the beginning of a new academic year.

Jen and I have noticed over the past two weeks that there is a palpable sense of excitement about our 56th academic year and the prospects that it holds for new ideas, new initiatives, and new achievements. Our 55th year as a college community certainly was memorable in many ways, and the current year should prove even more so.

Last year at this time I mentioned that we had begun a journey to transform UC, to make it an even stronger institution and one well-respected in and of its own right. We take great pride in our heritage with Syracuse University, and we proudly embrace our continuing academic relationship with that great university. Yet, we now have a solemn responsibility to distinguish Utica College as an independent institution—an institution known for the opportunities and challenges it offers students, for its integration of liberal and professional learning, for

its hallmark programs, and for the achievements of its faculty, students, and alumni. In some ways we are building a new college, but a college that already has a strong academic foundation and tradition and a unique relationship with a research university. As with any "new" institution, our challenge is to persevere. We must endeavor to continually improve in all that we do. This is the well-spring of our reputation. We must strengthen our financial resources

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through annual, capital, and endowment giving; through a balanced financial aid program; and through prudent management. This is the sustenance that enables us to fulfill our mission and to realize our plans and aspirations. And we must work as a small but diverse community of learners that engenders the values that we profess in our literature and in our implied covenant with our students. This is the source of our shared energy—the energy that will sustain UC through generations to come.

In last year's State of the College address, I focused part of my talk

on UC's civic consciousness and engagement. This year I want to draw attention to an aspect of our community life that receives too little attention—our spirituality. Now, I can see the hair rise on the back of some necks in the room. My mentioning the word "spirituality" can, I realize, evoke an emotional response for some, one that conjures up unwelcome images of proselytizing or mandatory statements of faith, or simply the insertion of the sectarian into the

secular. One thing I have learned in my three years at UC is that we are a fiercely independent thinking community when it comes to religion, faith, and spirituality. We don't talk much as

a community about the spiritual or religious dimensions of life, and our mission statement, list of core values, and strategic plan are devoid of direct references to the "third dimension" of a holistic college experience—the "spirit"—with the other two being, of course, "mind" and "body." I have been at UC long enough now to have some influence on mission and value statements and strategic plans, so I am puzzled at myself for overlooking this part of the UC experience.

Now, some would say that our mission statement and our list of values together embody a spiritual

approach to education and life. This might be true, and I believe it is, but I suspect the unknowing traveler through college literature would not recognize UC's spiritual dimensions in its recruiting materials, catalog, and other publications. We are so self-consciously non-religious that we fail to express our spirituality in ways that have explicit meaning for us. I am not suggesting, heaven forbid, that we revise our mission statement so soon after an all-college effort that resulted in the current statement. However, I am suggesting that we pay more attention to the spiritual dimensions of our educational program—both academic and cocurricular. This might mean having general education or cocurricular goals that speak to this dimension of personal growth. It might mean devoting an all-college period to spirituality, or sponsoring sessions in the residence halls that focus on some aspect of faith. It definitely means not leaving this third dimension of a holistic education to chance or to the interest or motivation of any one individual or small group of individuals.

I suspect some may be thinking, "Okay, this is the president and the annual State of the College address. Is there a hidden agenda? Is there a definition of spirituality that should be the prescribed institutional definition?" The answer is "absolutely not!" I would emphatically oppose an institutional creed. Such a creed or spiritual philosophy would be out of character for UC. That's simply not who we are. American higher education is rich with deeply religious schools. The diversity of colleges and universities in this country is the envy of the world. Utica College is an institution that falls into the category of private, nonreligious. But that does not

mean we are not spiritual. Which brings me to the title of this year's address: "The Way It Is: The Spirituality of Utica College."

I have borrowed liberally for this title. It really belongs to William Stafford, the deceased poet laureate of Oregon and once consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress. I find inspiration and solace in his words. In many ways they hold for me a spiritual quality. I suppose I relate to Stafford like I relate to an old growth tree in an Oregon or California forest. Both hold symbolic meanings and both evoke in me an unexplainable reverence for life.

In his last month of life, Stafford wrote the following:

There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change. People wonder about what you are pursuing. You have to explain about the thread. But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can't get lost. Tragedies happen; people get hurt or die; and you suffer and get old. Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding. You don't ever let go of the thread.²

For each of us, "the thread" in Stafford's poem has a different meaning. For me, it resonates as a metaphor of faith, or more generally, spirituality. It is a poetic construction that has both personal and universal significance. I recognize in this metaphor my own faith. Through it I glimpse the spiritual dimension of my life—a dimension that is obscured far too often by the pragmatic and intellectual parts of who I am.

For us as a community, the "thread" is not a straight line stretching between polar opposites, with resolute atheists at one end and devout evangelists at the

other. Rather, it takes more the form of a web of beliefs, with complex patterns and interconnections as well as creative and unexpected intersections and radials. Within this web we find all manner of faith and spirituality. For some of us, words like scripture, resurrection, salvation, soul, and redemption hold deep and special meaning. For others, that deep and special meaning is attached to linguistic symbols like incarnation, chakra, enlightenment, nirvana, and hakomi.³ Still others invest spiritual meaning in terms like collective consciousness, unbounded unity, quantum domain, or mystery of life.

We also find our inspiration in different historical and sacred figures—like Moses and Mohammed, Buddha and Jesus—and in different contemporary poet-prophets, spiritual guides, and religious leaders like Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama, Mother Meera, the Reverend Billy Graham, Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi, and Shaykh Hisham Muhammad Kabbani. Others find inspiration from spiritual therapists, pastoral care givers, healers, and teachers such as the late Moshe Feldendrais, Ida Rolf, Ram Dass, Deepak Chopra, and Margaret Kornfield.⁴

Our "portals to the spiritual," that is, the teachings, institutions, and experiences that offer us spiritual direction, also reflect our remarkable diversity of belief. I have already mentioned that William Stafford is one of my portals to the spiritual. Over the years, traditional religious works, New Age writings, and syncretistic religious works have also provided passage to the spiritual for me. And I have found expression of my spiritual side in the grandeur

of nature. Other members of our campus community access the spiritual through their church, synagogue, or temple, and look to such works as the Holy Bible, the Torah, the Koran, writings of the Dalai Lama, the Holy Books of Devas, or myriad contemporary writings for spiritual guidance and inspiration.⁵ For others, portals to the spiritual are found in the human experience. I know colleagues, for example, who find spirituality in their vocational calling, in their commitment to social justice and the well being of others, and their reverence for life and nature. Citing the work of David Elkins and his Pepperdine University colleagues, Alexander and Helen Astin describe these ways of viewing spirituality as Mission in Life, Altruism, and Sacredness of Life.⁶ The definition that Elkins, et.al. developed from their theoretical research seems to express well the more secular view that we find in UC's web of spirituality. Elkins and his colleagues conceived of spirituality in this way:

Spirituality, which comes from the Latin, *spiritus*, meaning "breath of life," is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate.⁷

Some of you this evening will likely recognize in this definition its "humanistic and phenomenological" origins, origins grounded in the thinking of Abraham Maslow, John Dewey, William James, Carl Jung, and others. For many academics who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, this view of spirituality resonates strongly.

The spiritual web within our college community also includes a rich variety of beliefs about a deity or life force. Many of us practice a monotheistic religion and refer to our deity as God, Allah, the Almighty, Yahweh, and the Divine. Others believe in multiple manifestations of a deity, such as the Hindu trinity. Still others believe in secular variations of what Anne and Charles Simpkinson refer to as "the inner wind that takes flight and draws us out of ourselves to connect with that which is larger than we are."⁸ Some refer to this as universal energy, collective consciousness, or oneness.

In the midst of this diversity of faith and belief, this complex web of spirituality, is a common center. That center is our mutually-held values. These include a commitment to highest ethical standards and integrity in all that we do; a commitment to fostering a diversity of perspective, background, and experience; and a dedication to freedom of expression and to the well being of others. Implicit in these four core values is our covenant to one another. Through them we have pledged to respect one another's right to follow a spiritual path of our choosing, as long as that path does not infringe upon the right of another to travel his or her path.

And this is one of the challenges of including spirituality in the UC educational experience. As I intimated earlier, I believe we have an obligation to provide opportunities for students to explore their spirituality, to reflect, search, and question. Because teaching is an unavoidably personal calling, we cannot, and probably should not, avoid sharing our own faiths and spiritual sides. This is part of the experience in which teachers and

students learn together. Even so, because of the inherent power that teachers hold, great care must be taken not to cross the line between sharing and proselytizing, however inadvertent.

While preparing for this talk, I had occasion to sit with Father Paul Drobin, the pastor to Utica College's and SUNY/Utica-Rome's Newman Centers. Father Drobin is for many in our community one of those "portals to the spiritual" to which I have referred. Although he ministers to individuals of the Roman Catholic faith, Father Paul has that extraordinary capacity to reach out to anyone of any faith or spiritual proclivity. During the course of our conversation I asked him what he thought were the most important spiritual issues facing college students today and what were the greatest obstacles to the contemplation of faith and spirituality. Typical to form, Father Paul described without hesitation and with eloquence and simplicity what he saw as the most important of the issues. This issue is encapsulated in the question, "Who am I?", in other words, self-identity. College is a formative time of life, a time in which students grapple with the question of who they are becoming in relation to their self-identity, to others, and to a higher power. At a time when the life of the mind is more challenging than ever before, students find themselves in a profound process of self-discovery. They are reconciling the "child within" to the person who they have suddenly become, a person with more independence, responsibility, and self-reliance. They find themselves redefining their relationship with parents, siblings, and friends, or in some cases, with spouse, children, and employer.

They struggle with new relationships with peers and a demanding but caring faculty. They begin thinking about their connectedness in the larger sense, their place in the world in which they live, both proximate and remote. As part of this discovery, they explore the questions of who they will become and what their calling will be.

Raised in a culture with many de-personalizing influences, students today have the particular challenge of connecting with others in ways that transcend superficial feelings—that achieve an emotional bond characterized by trust and commitment. Father Drobin observed that when we trust in and have a deeper understanding of another, we open ourselves to being affected by that individual. We become vulnerable when we connect at a deeper level.

In the midst of such tumultuous self-discovery and growth is the question of one's relationship to the "above and beyond," however it may be defined. Issues of self-identity, relationship to others, commitment, trust, and achieving a deeper interpersonal understanding come into play when students explore their spirituality. This is the case both for students who come from formal religious traditions and those whose faith and spirituality are grounded in humanistic or eclectic belief structures. I recall Father Paul saying that a rooted belief system is a contextual part of life—a companion of sorts. It seems to me then that a student's spiritual exploration is akin to becoming comfortable with a companion. It takes time. It takes knowing that companion in different circumstances and in relation to others.

Life in the academy is full of obstacles for the contemplative part of life. We have precious little time for true intellectual reflection, and for many of us, even less time for spiritual reflection. "Doing" overwhelms "being." If we are to make room for the spirit along side the mind and body, we need an educational environment that enables and supports processes of self-discovery and spiritual exploration. We need an educational environment that encourages our students to discover and hold onto their "thread." As one member of the UC community, I hope we will search for additional ways to encourage spiritual exploration among our students, to remind them and ourselves about the importance of the "thread" and the mind-body-spirit trinity for a holistic education.

Campus Achievements and Memorable Events of 2000-2001

It is now time to celebrate our many successes and achievements. Our 55th year was remarkable in many ways, and I wish we had time to review every accomplishment by our students, faculty, and staff. Because none of us wants to stay here until midnight, I will offer only a sampling of the many notable happenings over the past year. I ask forgiveness in advance from those whose good work and creative endeavor are not mentioned this evening.

I begin the review of 2000-2001 with Buckminster fullerene, nicknamed Bucky Balls. While this might sound like a new recruit for our men's baseball team, or another of the crazy games that Director of Student Activities Paul Lehmann has brought to campus, it is actually a pure crystalline form of carbon. I mention

it first because it represents one of the most important developments at Utica College—the growth of undergraduate research across many disciplines. And it represents the high quality of collaborative research by our students and faculty. Professor of Biology Lawrence Aaronson and Professor of Chemistry Michael Miller, working with students Sandra Augusto '02, Joe Churchill '02, Paul Sardina '02, and Nathan Sinclair '02, have investigated the ability of this form of pure carbon to arrest the growth of viruses like HIV and bacteria that threaten the life of hospital patients. While the research will continue for several years to come, involving other students in this exciting work, it is already showing great promise for its possible contributions to the medical field.

In March, Sandra Augusto and fellow student David Taylor '01 received national recognition for their research into the antimicrobial effects of compounds found in skin oil. Selected by the Council for Undergraduate Research, Augusto and Taylor presented their findings to members of Congress at the Posters on the Hill conference in March. This is the third consecutive year that the Council has selected Utica College students to make presentations at this prestigious conference.

As I mentioned earlier, undergraduate research is alive and well across the disciplines. Seven seniors in History, including the 2001 valedictorian Daniel Smith and senior class president James Baricelli, conducted original research on the history-rich Mohawk Valley and published a volume of papers entitled "1919: A Year of Crisis." Three of the students also presented their

Achievements 2000–2001

Last fall we welcomed the largest entering class in the College's history. Very few of these students would have enrolled at UC if they did not perceive an excellent faculty, high quality academic programs that blend the practical with the theoretical, a caring campus culture, and overall value in the UC educational experience.

Working with students, Professors Lawrence Aaronson and Michael Miller investigated the ability of a crystalline form of pure carbon to arrest the growth of viruses like HIV.

Seven History seniors conducted original research on the Mohawk Valley and published a volume of papers entitled "1919: A Year of Crisis."

Psychology students, along with Associate Professor of Psychology Steven Specht, made presentations at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association.

Professors John Swanson and Polly Ginsberg have been awarded Fulbright Fellowships for 2001-02.

Library Director David Harralson has been elected to the New York State Library Association's Governing Council, which represents all of New York's public, private, and school libraries.

Under the leadership of Professor Lois Fisch, Utica College established the Center for Excellence in Education.

Utica College's Economic Crime Management master's program, headed by Associate Professor of Criminal Justice George Curtis, received an award for excellence from the National Continuing Education Association.

The National Continuing Education Association also recognized UC's Professional Development Certificate Program as one of the top ten in the country.

research at the New York conference of the Phi Alpha Theta history honorary society.

Additionally, Psychology students Greg Markiewicz '01, Jamie Watterman '01, Carol Foll '01, and Katie Nardolillo '01, along with Associate Professor of Psychology Steven Specht, made presentations at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, and Sociology major Ervin Murga '01 presented the results of his research at the Society for Applied Sociology. And in April, more than 80 UC students presented their research at the Undergraduate Research Fair on campus, an event that I found extraordinary for the quality and diversity of the work that I saw.

I have already mentioned the scholarship of several of our faculty. Many others across the disciplinary spectrum have been engaged in productive and fascinating research and creative endeavor. Three faculty have published books: Assistant Professor of History John Swanson, Professor of Criminal Justice Bruce McBride, and Professor of Biology Alan Bessette.

The rich array of scholarship is also exemplified by the work of faculty in Psychology, History, Journalism, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and English, representing the three undergraduate divisions of the College. Assistant Professor of Psychology R. Scott Smith, Assistant Professor of History David Wittner, and Professor of Journalism Cecilia Friend all presented papers at national conferences.

Six faculty in our Physical and Occupational Therapy programs were particularly active in pedagogy-related scholarship.

Not to be outdone, six of our English faculty published articles or presented papers at regional and national meetings.

Aside from their scholarship, faculty have been especially active in other professional endeavors, as have administrative staff. I am particularly proud to mention that two of our faculty, Professors John Swanson and Polly Ginsberg, have been awarded Fulbright Fellowships for 2001-02. Professor Swanson will be in Hungary for a year pursuing his research, and Professor Ginsberg will be teaching and conducting research in Kenya during the spring semester. While we will miss them both, we are honored by these special achievements.

Faculty and staff have also distinguished themselves and the College in other ways. Professor of Biology and Dean of Arts and Sciences Larry Aaronson was recently elected Biology Counselor for the Council for Undergraduate Research and has been appointed to the Committee on Undergraduate Education of the American Society for Microbiology. A host of other faculty and staff too numerous to mention have assumed leadership roles within their professional societies. However, I will mention that Professor of English and Library Director David Haralson exemplifies the professional achievement of our faculty and staff, having been elected to the New York State Library Association's Governing Council, which represents all of New York's public, private, and school libraries, and was appointed contributing editor of a national journal, *The Journal of College and University Libraries*.

Most of us here this evening are aware of the programmatic and institution-wide achievements

during the past year, but we should take this occasion to celebrate these one more time.

Last fall we welcomed the largest entering class in the College's history (453 freshmen, 232 transfers). Last week we welcomed the largest entering class in the College's history (477 freshmen, 221 transfers). It's nice to be so redundant! These record-breaking classes say something important to us; they say that an increasing number of high school students are seeing value in Utica College. While these large recruiting numbers have been driven in large part by the new athletic programs, very few of these students would have enrolled at UC if they did not perceive an excellent faculty, high quality academic programs that blend the practical with the theoretical, a caring campus culture, and overall value in the UC educational experience. Another indicator of the growth in perceived value is the number of applications from the sons and daughters of faculty at other institutions. This number is the largest it has been in recent memory.

Of course, along with growth comes some stresses and strains: a few more students than we would like in some classes; the need to hire additional adjunct faculty; and the need to place students in triple rooms in our residence halls. The campus has responded well to this challenge, and planning for more permanent solutions is already underway.

During the past year we witnessed dramatic developments in several academic areas, most notably in our teacher education program. Under the leadership of Professor Lois Fisch, the Center for Excellence in Education was established, along with the related

Education Consortium at Utica College, an association of thirteen school and BOCES districts and UC. We also saw the emergence of three new master degrees in education, adding to the existing master's program in Inclusive Education. One of these new master's degrees is an accelerated and intensive certification program for future math, science, and foreign language teachers, which is the first of its kind outside of New York City. Through the Institute, the Consortium, and our master's programs, Utica College is responding to the state's and nation's critical need for well-qualified teachers.

Another new center with an education focus is the Center for Economic Education, the brainchild of Associate Professor of Economics Rick Fenner. Established with generous funding from the Community Foundation of Oneida and Herkimer Counties and support from the New York State Economics Education Association, Utica College's Center will assist middle and secondary school teachers with incorporating economics into their curricula. As a public service, the Center will also sponsor speakers and informational forums during major election seasons.

I am also pleased to mention that our Economic Crime Management master's program, headed by Associate Professor and veteran attorney George Curtis, received an award for excellence, and our Professional Development Certificate Program was recognized as one of the top ten in the country, both by the National Continuing Education Association. And thanks to the hard work of Anne Flynn and Mary Morton in our Human Resources Office, the College received the

“Make a Difference Award” from the School and Business Alliance for the career shadowing opportunities that faculty and staff made available to area high school students. This was only one among numerous contributions that UC made to our local community.

It is also important to note that our student organizations also made noteworthy contributions to the life of the College and community. For example, the Womyn’s Resource Center, advised by Alane Varga, our Coordinator of Counseling Services, offered 27 programs and activities in which more than 450 faculty, staff, and students participated. Another example was the projects of the Alpha Chi Rho fraternity, which sponsored a golf tournament to benefit the Autism Society of America, in addition to their annual camp-out during the dead of winter to benefit a charitable cause.

Finally, like any diligent president, I have to mention money. I am proud to say that our new Graduate and Continuing Education Division, headed by Dr. James Pula and overseen by Vice President for Academic Affairs Mary Lee Seibert, realized an increase in revenue of 42.5 percent, coming primarily from graduate tuition. The 2001 Senior Class, led by class president James Barricelli, raised a modern record \$10,020 for its class gift. And the College saw another successful year in development. Gifts and grants to the College totaled \$2.46 million dollars; giving to the Annual Fund increased by an amazing 31 percent; and grant dollars grew 148 percent in one year (from \$492,000 to \$1,220,000) and 266 percent in the last three years. While the need to increase these statistics is

immediate and great, we have sustained the success of the Campaign for Utica College and set the stage for the College’s next campaign.

At this point, I need to catch my breath, and you need a mental break before I reflect briefly on the year in which we now find ourselves, Utica College’s 56th year. So, let’s toast all our successes. May our future be as bright as the 2000-2001 academic year!

Outlook for the Current Year: 2001-2002

Once again I recall the image of mounting a stallion in full gallop, an image which I believe Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning Carol Mackintosh conjured up a couple of years ago. It certainly feels something like that again this year.

Without question, our faculty are in full gallop. They are handling record size classes with little complaint, doing research, developing new programs, planning for new academic buildings, advising and mentoring growing numbers of students, and generally sustaining a culture of inquiry for which any college would be envious. From my vantage point, I’d say that our administrative and support staff are galloping in stride with the faculty. They are advising undecided students, improving leadership programs, planning for new residence halls, organizing major cocurricular activities, raising money, finding ways to improve campuses services, and generally creating a nurturing environment for all members of our campus community.

The staff of each major area met this summer to develop their re-

spective goals in relation to the College’s Strategic Initiatives, and members of the President’s Cabinet met to review these goals and identify institutional priorities. We have worked hard to ensure that all constituencies through their organizational divisions have had input into this year’s goals. I count 21 pages in the list of goals that the academic and administrative divisions have developed. All are important. Several are vital.

First, we must continue to develop master’s level programs and seize appropriate opportunities to develop off-campus academic programs. Let there be no misunderstanding. Our undergraduate programs alone cannot sustain this institution, given the financially needy nature of this student body. In plain business terms, we must have a diversified revenue stream. We do not have the luxury of putting all of our proverbial eggs in one basket. Our history as a Syracuse University branch campus, however satisfying and gratifying, left us with little in the way of financial resources or a mature culture of giving. My vision for UC remains steadfast. I believe we will become a small regionally and nationally recognized university, distinguished by our mission of integrating liberal and professional learning, and by our innovative and high quality undergraduate and graduate programs.

Second, it is important that we complete the review of the general education program and adopt changes that reflect our mission and core values, as well as the creative thinking of our faculty. As I said last year, revising general education will require courage and careful compromise, lest the result be a program that

lacks focus, coherence, and a balance between relevance and more traditional canon.

Third, it is imperative that we continue to develop our Board of Trustees. These committed volunteers are the stewards of the College's resources and they hold the financial key to its future. We look to our board for their time, talent, and treasure. They have given generously in the past, and we look for their continued commitment. At the same time, I will be asking the board in the coming two years to provide leadership in the next capital campaign, a campaign that must far eclipse the last campaign if the College is to have the resources it needs to realize its strategic plan.

Fourth, we must achieve our enrollment goals, both for the recruitment of new students and the retention of current students. Because 94 percent of the College's revenue currently comes from tuition and room and board fees, our institutional health depends upon our success in attracting and retaining students. While our Admissions and Financial Aid offices have the primary responsibility for orchestrating our enrollment strategies, it takes the entire campus working together to achieve enrollment goals. In this day and age, the recruitment of students involves very sophisticated and complex marketing strategies. To be successful, these strategies depend upon the participation of faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni. Likewise, the retention of students requires a total community effort, as well as focused programs like the Freshman Seminar and special advising for undeclared students. For fall of 2002, we expect to enroll 459 freshmen and 203 transfer students, and we

Goals 2001–2002

Develop master's level programs and seize appropriate opportunities to develop off-campus academic programs.

Complete the review of the general education program and adopt changes that reflect our mission and core values, as well as the creative thinking of our faculty.

Continue to develop our Board of Trustees.

Achieve our enrollment goals, both for the recruitment of new students and the retention of current students.

Add space for classrooms and faculty.

Select and begin the implementation of a new administrative information system.

Plan for a new capital campaign.

My vision for UC remains steadfast. I believe we will become a small regionally and nationally recognized university, distinguished by our mission of integrating liberal and professional learning, and by our innovative and high quality undergraduate and graduate programs.

had projected a graduate enrollment of 198, which will be revised downward because a couple of master's programs have not yet been approved and implemented. Still, our various master's degrees in teacher education, along with the programs in Economic Crime Management and Physical Therapy, have already begun to provide a critically needed alternative revenue stream. We look forward to a new master's of science in Occupational Therapy, an MBA program, and perhaps most unique of all, a master's in liberal studies that will address as yet unsatisfied regional demands for a master's degree that focuses primarily on disciplinary rather than professional content.

Fifth, as our undergraduate and graduate enrollments grow, our space seems to shrink. Three short years ago we were not fully utilizing our classrooms; today we are finding creative solutions for lack of academic real estate. Moreover, as enrollment has grown, so has the number of faculty. Even prior to this enrollment growth, there was a serious shortage of appropriate space for faculty offices. Although the new science and technology center will add to our inventory of faculty offices, construction of this building is still three to four years away. In the meantime, we must add space for classrooms and faculty. I have therefore asked the trustees to approve as part of a new bond issue a wing for Hubbard Hall. Planning for this wing will begin forthwith under the direction of Professor and Dean Steve Neun, who has been anointed by Vice President Seibert as UC's "space czar."

Perhaps an even faster track project will be the construction of a new residence hall with approximately 80 beds. Groundbreaking is only six weeks away. For this project, I have asked Director of Residence Life Mark Kovacs to join the "hole-in-the-ground gang" as chair of the planning committee. I should also point out that during the course of the coming year, we will plan a half



million dollar renovation of North and South halls.

When I speak of the "hole-in-the-ground" gang I must again mention Professor and Dean Larry Aaronson, who is heading up the first phase of planning for the future science and technology center. This project is unquestionably the College's highest priority. It will be a symbol of the College's new era and will serve as the centerpiece in the next capital campaign. I envision this signature building to be a center for learning in all the disciplines, even though it will have dedicated space for our science, health, and technology programs. We expect the first phase of planning, driven by current and future curricular needs, to conclude in the coming months.

Other projects that are underway include the multi-sport stadium, which will add an attractive new dimension to the campus. We had expected it to be completed by August 15; unfortunately, the steel and bleacher manufacturer is holding its completion hostage. The new team facility, which includes a 1,000 square foot multi-purpose meeting room, is substantially complete

and is being used by our students. Made possible by a generous donation from trustee Tom Clark, this new facility will be dedicated in the memory of Mr. Clark's father on September 22 during Autumn Holiday Weekend. As an aside, I should announce that we will also dedicate the New Hall plaza in recognition of Ed and Jean Duffy, long-time friends of the College. Mr. Duffy

served as national chair for the last capital campaign and as a member of the College's former foundation.

Finally, one additional "hole-in-the-ground" is nearing completion and one is underway. These two projects include the redesign and reconstruction of the Addison Miller White Hall Plaza and the Michael Romano Plaza. The White Hall Plaza, which is the campus' front door, has been realigned to accommodate in the future a new entrance and drive. Changes in the Romano Plaza should make this space more conducive for social gatherings, or as the architects are fond of saying, for serendipitous encounters. We look forward to re-dedicating this plaza in the memory of Michael Romano, grandfather of trustee Linda Romano and father of one of UC's most generous donors,

Eugene Romano. These two renovated spaces will add to the growing beauty of our campus.

Sixth, we must select and begin the implementation of a new administrative information system (AIS). Our system is more than a decade out of date and it is failing the needs offices like Admissions, Development, Graduate and Continuing Education, Human Resources, and Payroll. It also lacks the value-added features that students and faculty have come to appreciate at other institutions, like transcript audit and compatibility with information portals. The implementation will be arduous for the next three years, but the benefits will be large and immediate.

A seventh and final priority focuses on money. It has been a little over two years since we celebrated the very successful Campaign for Utica College, which finished 50 percent over goal. Bold for a relatively young institution, the campaign raised more than \$12 million, most of this money for greatly needed scholarship endowment. It is now time to plan for a new campaign—a campaign that will have momentous implications for the College's future. We are already in the silent phase of the campaign and will complete the feasibility work and finalize goals this year. This campaign must be commensurate with the Strategic Plan that the Board has approved. It will require a generosity of giving unlike anything that the College has seen in the past. And for the coming year, we are looking to raise our sights as well. We are looking for the Annual Fund to grow by 15 percent on top of last year's 31

percent growth, and we are aiming for gifts and grants that total \$2.8 million, up from last year's \$2.46 million. Once we are fully into campaign mode, giving will need to reach the \$4 to \$5 million per year level.

When I began writing this address, I promised myself that I would pull no punches. This is a time for candor and grit. For UC



to persist and thrive for future generations, it must successfully achieve all the elements in its Strategic Plan for 2010. However, there are several financial imperatives that seem to take precedence at this point in time. I want to emphasize them one more time. Given the nature of our student body, which is as needy as any that can be found in this country and thus requires a huge financial aid commitment on the College's part, and given the small size of our endowment and annual giving, it is absolutely imperative that we accomplish the following: Continue to grow the undergraduate student body, accompanied by incremental changes in the economic profile of each entering class. Add graduate degrees that have the effect of supporting our undergraduate programs and making UC more competitive within New York and the North-

east region. Significantly increase giving by our alumni and friends to support the Annual Fund, to build an endowment well above the current level, and to renovate aging facilities and to build the campus of the future, including a new science and technology center, and several years hence, an expanded student/campus center. We must also look for additional cost-savings and continue to

manage our resources prudently. All of these elements are critical. Nothing short of accomplishing all will do. My personal priority is to raise more money for our great and numerous needs. I will expect every constituency to dig deep, to help make our plans and aspirations more than just words in speeches and documents.

We have a wondrous "thread" here at UC, a campus spirit and soul that shines so brightly that visitors take notice. Like the thread in Stafford's "The Way It Is," people will wonder about what we are pursuing. We'll have to explain about our thread. While we hold onto it, we will not get lost. Problems will arise, disagreements will occur, tragedies will happen, and we will get old. But getting old also means that UC continues to mature and thrive. We can't stop time's unfolding, but we must never let go of our thread.

Everyone in our campus community has my deepest gratitude for your steadfast dedication to UC. We have a very special place to live, learn, teach, create, and grow. I look forward to another year of exceptional progress while we hold onto the "thread" together.

¹“The Way It Is” is the title of a poem by William Stafford; I have borrowed from him for the title of this talk for two reasons: 1) I have a deep admiration for Stafford and his body of work; and 2) his poem and its title epitomize one way of defining spirituality at Utica College. “The Way It Is” was published in *The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems*, a compilation of William Stafford’s work, Graywolf Press (Saint Paul, MN), 1998.

²William Stafford, “The Way It Is,” in *The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems*, Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1998, p. 42.

³Hakomi is a Hopi word that means “How do you stand in relation to these many realms?” From *Soul Work: A Field Guide for Spiritual Seekers*, by Anne A. Simpkinson and Charles H. Simpkinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), p. 205.

⁴Mother Meera is a major Hindu figure who resides in Thalheim, Germany, and who is considered to be an avatar by her followers; Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi, is a leader of the Jewish Renewal Movement; Shaykh Hisham Muhammad Kabbani is a prominent Islamic scholar and leader of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order in the Americas; Moshe Feldendrais and Ida Rolf were somatic leaders; Ram Dass (formerly known as Richard Alpert) is a psychologist, author, and spiritual teacher in the Hindu tradition; Deepak Chopra is a leader of Ayurvedic medicine; and Margaret Kornfield is a leading pastoral psychotherapist. Additional information about spiritual leaders and practitioners is available in *Soul Work* by Simpkinson and Simpkinson.

⁵The Holy Books of Devas are from the Wiccan Tradition.

⁶Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin, *Meaning and Spirituality in the Lives of College Faculty: A Study of Values, Authenticity, and Stress* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, 1999). These three dimensions of spiritual life were originally identified by five Pepperdine faculty in the following study: David N. Elkins, L. James Hedstrom, Lori L. Hughes, J. Andrew Leaf, & Cheryl Saunders, “Toward a Humanistic-Phenomenological Spirituality: Definition, Description, and Measurement,” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Fall 1988), vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 5-18.

⁷Elkins, et.al., p. 10.

⁸Simpkinson and Simpkinson, p. 245.

