

Crisscrossing Forever:

Embracing and Celebrating Diversity at Utica College

Jennifer and I welcome everyone back for the College's 58th academic year, and we extend special greetings to the newest members of our community.

Those of us on campus have had a chance to welcome back Professor of Biology/Lt. Colonel Alan Bessette from Iraq and Kuwait and Director of Environmental Safety/Major Gregg Sponburgh from Afghanistan. I wanted those members of our extended campus community who receive the printed version of this talk to know that both have returned safely from harm's way. Whatever our various views may be about war and foreign policy, we thank Alan and Gregg for their service and sacrifice, and we are very happy to have them home with us.

The College community has once again experienced a very active summer, whether here on campus or at locations beyond the Mohawk Valley. A particularly memorable summer event, and one that I personally will remember for years to come, was the dedication of the Walter Edmonds Special Collection Room in the Gannett Library.

Organized by Professor of English Frank Bergmann and Director of the Library David Harralson, this celebration of the work and life of Walter Edmonds, with children and grandchildren in attendance, brought many friends of the College and admirers of Edmonds' work to campus. The celebration also found Professor Bergmann hosting a talk and discussion at the area's new Barnes & Noble Bookstore, which did not anticipate the popularity of Dr. Bergmann or Walter Edmonds.

The summer of 2003 will also be remembered for the various faculty development activities. As one case in point, 19 faculty participated in a workshop on ways to accommodate students with disabilities more effectively in the college classroom. The workshop was sponsored by our education faculty and funded with a \$114,000 federal grant.

I was privileged to travel with professors of education Laura

Dorow and Lois Fisch to Albany to present the program to the New York Board of Regents. I am proud to say that the State Education Department has already recognized the program as a model to be replicated at other New York colleges and universities.

The summer also found our master's in education programs and economic crime management residencies with full classes, and the campus was brimming with other academic activity, with 82 faculty teaching 578 students in 96 summer courses.

Many faculty have again taken advantage of the summer months to pursue their scholarship, and others continued to develop and refine curricula. I believe Professor Whitefeather takes the prize for the most distant and exotic location to complete a project. Carolynne traveled to Hawaii for a collaborative exhibition of a colleague's and her work at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center.

The summer also found Professor of English and Director of the Library David Harralson being recognized by the New York Library Association with the "Spirit of Librarianship Award," which is given to a librarian who exemplifies the spirit of librarianship, provides leadership in the profession, and demonstrates scholarly activity. I hoped that by receiving this award, David would be enticed to delay his retirement by a couple years, but I fear that Sarasota, Florida, beckons too strongly for Dave and his spouse, Chloe.

We also welcomed 22 HEOP students to campus for the Summer Institute and saw more than 200 Young Scholars from the Utica schools on campus for their summer program. The campus has also been buzzing with the energy of youth camps and conferences. We were privileged to host more than 400 young women for Girls State in July and welcomed the state Demolay conference and numerous sports camps.

It was also an active summer in our continuing efforts to improve the campus itself and to make it more accessible.

Perhaps the largest project was the first phase of renovations in South Hall, where we installed a sprinkler system, replaced furniture, and did much-needed cosmetic painting. This \$250,000 project unfortunately only scratches the surface of the needs in our two oldest residence halls.

I am also proud to mention that as the result of Professor of Psychology and Dean of Health and Human Studies Della Ferguson's efforts, Utica College received a \$449,000 grant from the U.S. Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to infuse cross-cultural information about aging into allied health curricula. Utica College will collaborate with historically black colleges on this important project.

Although the summer of 2003 may be remembered as the "summer that never came," it nevertheless held many memorable moments for members of the UC community

Remembering 2002-03

We can say something similar about the 2002-03 academic year. While many will associate it with the "winter that would never end," the past year was in many respects yet another year that will find its way into a revised edition of the College's history. Any time a faculty develops and approves five new master's degrees, historians will take note.

The year 2002-03 will be remembered, in part, for three new master's degrees in special education. These new degrees will nicely complement our current master's degree in inclusive education, which prepares teachers to work with young people from a wide spectrum of ability and disability, cultural and economic background, and language.

The other new graduate programs include a master of science in liberal studies, a master's in business administration with a concentration in accounting, and an MBA with a concentration in economic crime and fraud investigation. The latter complements our current executive master's in economic crime management and our bachelor's degree in economic crime investigation.

We also laid the groundwork for a European cohort in the economic crime master's program, a Washington, D.C. extension of our undergraduate economic crime investigation program, and a new major in information assurance. Development of the information assurance major is part of a National Science Foundation pilot project to create a continuum in curricula from the associate of arts through post-doctoral work.

Utica College also played a primary role in establishing the Griffiss Institute, a nonprofit corporation funded with \$4 million in seed money through the efforts of Governor Pataki and our local legislators, Senator Raymond Meier and Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito. The Griffiss Institute, on whose board UC holds a seat, is designed to serve as a

catalyst for problem-based research and for timely development of services and products in the field of information assurance and cybersecurity.

The institute includes a consortium of corporations and public and private colleges and universities, including, in addition to Utica College, SUNY institutions throughout the state, the SUNY Foundation, Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, the U.S. Military Academy, Cornell University, Syracuse University, and our two local community colleges.

During the past year, the College also developed new environmental science and geoscience minor programs. We are excited about these two new programs, which should attract talented students interested in these fields of study within a small college environment.

Another new development is our nascent relationship with Butrint National Park in Albania. Through Professor Ted Orlin's contacts in Albania, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy Tom Crist (who is also a forensic anthropologist) and Associate Professor of Anthropology John Johnsen visited this ancient site last spring to explore the possibilities for UC programs.

Utica College is the only American institution invited by the Albanian government to develop educational and cultural programs at the site. Designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, the Butrint National Park has the potential of hosting a number of UC programs related to archaeology, anthropology, art, theater, biology, and others.

We hope this coming year to begin an anthropological field school, with a focus on the analysis of human remains that have been excavated at the site. Assistant Professor of Art Carolynne Whitefeather has also been invited to exhibit her work at the Albanian National Gallery.

One of the College's core values is our "commitment to continual improvement in our educational quality." This past year the work of our management, accounting, and economics faculty epitomized this institutional value. Our faculty have put in place over the past year a program that reflects the best thinking and practice in business education today. They have done this by consolidating the management-related programs into what is now called the Department of Business and Economics, establishing a Business Programs Advisory Council comprised of successful alumni from the business field, and creating a business curriculum that exposes students to 12 hours of integrated coursework in management, marketing, economics, finance, accounting, and human resources before they undertake a concentration.

By combining the business core with courses in the liberal arts, this dynamic new curriculum will allow students to develop critical skills in writing, interpersonal communication, research, analytical thinking, technology, ethics, social

responsibility, and global relations, in addition to specific skills and knowledge in business.

Last year also saw our nursing program initiating its Tapestry Project, which is designed to extend UC's capacity to prepare economically disadvantaged students for the profession of nursing. The U.S. Health Resources Services Administration has funded the three-year project with an \$889,000 grant and provided an additional \$57,000 for scholarships. We just received word this summer that the grant for scholarships has been extended for a second year. These two grants combined represent the largest grant ever awarded to an academic department at UC.

The psychology-child life program, the second oldest such program in the United States, celebrated its 25th anniversary at UC. The brainchild of Professor Gene Stanford, the former director of UC's teacher education program, the psychology-child life program is recognized nationally as the birthplace of the child life specialists concentration, and our program was recently selected as the site of the national archives of the profession.

Aside from the many successes and triumphs of our programs, only a few of which I can mention tonight, the achievements of individual faculty were once again too numerous to mention each and every one. However, a sampling is in order.

Assistant Professor of Biology Bryant Buchanan co-authored an article on acoustic interactions among male tree frogs in the *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* journal. Professor Buchanan may someday join the ranks of distinguished faculty like Professor Emerita Judy McIntyre and Professor Emeritus Bill Gotwald, who are known affectionately as the "loon lady" and the "ant man," respectively. I suspect that Professor Buchanan is destined to be known as the "frog fella."

Interestingly, Professor Buchanan recently found his and Assistant Professor of Biology Sharon Wise's research on the effect of light pollution on salamanders in a *National Geographic* article dealing with the toll that light pollution is taking on wildlife.

Other faculty like occupational therapy professor Debbie Marr, English professor Oliver de la Paz, government and politics professor Nate Richmond, sociology professor Jan DeAmicis, and psychology professors Steve Specht and Scott Smith saw their scholarship printed in such publications as the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Image: A Journal of Religion and Arts*, *Columbia: A Journal of Literature and the Arts*, *Journal of Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, *Encyclopedia of World Geography*, *Journal of Neuroscience*, and *Current Issues of Education*.

Still others like math professor Hossein Behforooz, criminal justice professor Don Rebovich, communication arts professor Jeff Miller, and biology professor Adam Pack

made presentations across the globe, including at such professional conferences as the International Congress of Mathematicians, American Society of Criminology, National Communication Association, and Association for Research in Otolaryngology.

Fully one-fourth of our faculty received Faculty Leadership Awards to make presentations at professional conferences.

Not to be outdone, our economic crimes faculty launched a second online peer-juried professional journal, the *Journal of Economic Crime Management*, published by Utica College and its Economic Crime Institute. This journal joins the *International Journal of Digital Evidence* in UC's stable of juried professional publications.

Several faculty received especially noteworthy recognitions. For example, Professor Sally Townsend received the 2003 Recognition of Achievement Award from the American Occupational Therapy Association at its annual conference in Washington, D.C. The award recognizes occupational therapists for notable contributions to the profession.

Director and Associate Professor of Nursing Mary Kay Maroney was honored in April by her alma mater, Columbia University, when she received the Distinguished Career in Nursing Award. Associate Professor of Criminal Justice Bruce McBride received the Richard Lewis Award in Excellence in Criminal Justice Education from the Criminal Justice Educators Association of New York State. And Assistant Professor of Geology Sharon Kanfoush joined the editorial board of the national journal, *Geo-Marine Letter*.

Like our faculty, Utica College students once again distinguished themselves and their college this past year. Biology students Julia van Kessel '03 and Tarah Scanlon '03 were two of 60 students nationwide who presented their research to Congress at the annual Posters on the Hill event. This was the fourth year in a row that UC students participated in the prestigious occasion, sponsored by the Council on Undergraduate Research. They also co-authored a paper with Professor Larry Aaronson.

Other students presented papers and poster sessions at conferences like the American Physical Therapy Association's Combined Sections Meeting in Tampa, the 5th Annual Research Symposium in the Chemical and Biological Sciences in Baltimore, New York State African Studies Association meeting at Cornell University, and the National Service Learning Conference in Minneapolis. A number of these students collaborated in research and co-authored or co-presented with their UC faculty.

As an academic community, we have many reasons to take pride in our students' and our faculty's scholarly achievements, not the least of which is how this kind of activity enlivens and enriches UC's teaching and learning environment.

Academic year 2002-03 will also be remembered for a very warm event on a cold, rainy day in April – an event that honored the career of Professor Emeritus of English and Film Scott MacDonald. This gathering, which brought together Scott with his friends, family, former students, and colleagues, was one of the more memorable happenings of the year.

Notable achievements were apparent in other quarters of the campus as well. For example, under the leadership of Chief Technology Officer Steve Chen and Project Director Scott Humphrey, the College successfully launched the three-year implementation of its new administrative information system.

This software will replace a woefully old but venerable legacy system and will ultimately provide much greater database capability and Web-based access to academic records for students and faculty, create a campus Intranet, and accommodate online registration, to name just a few of the advantages of this \$1 million-plus investment.

We also completed two new buildings this past year. Tower Hall, named for its 70-foot illuminated clock tower, opened in August and is the second recent addition to our residential quad. Designed with the input of students and responding to the demand for more personal space, the hall has 45 single- and 12 double-occupancy rooms arranged in clusters of three rooms, each cluster with a separate bath.

In January we opened the first new academic building in 34 years. Called the Faculty Center, the facility includes 15 faculty offices, four high-tech smart classrooms, office space for our Young Scholars Program, and unfinished space that will eventually house a convergence media lab for our public relations/journalism program and very likely a faculty teaching-learning center.

Notable achievements on the athletic front included the naming of Michele Davis, our head women's basketball coach, as the Empire 8 Coach of Year. Michele and her team achieved an 18-9 season, with a 12-2 home record, and a berth in the East Coast Athletic Conference (ECAC) Upstate Tournament. Dave Claussen also led our women's ice hockey team to ECAC playoffs. And 10 UC students were named to the Presidents Academic List in the Empire 8 conference. (The Empire 8 includes Utica College, Ithaca College, Hartwick College, Elmira College, Alfred University, Rochester Institute of Technology, St. John Fisher College, and Nazareth College.)

This past year also saw us initiating the unusual requirement

that members of every athletic team attend at least two cultural events during the year, whether on campus or off campus at the Stanley Theatre, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, or other venues.

We also rolled out our faculty mentor program in which faculty members adopt a team and serve as an informal liaison, advisor, or friend. This fledgling program has already received favorable attention within the Empire 8 conference. Finally, on the athletic front, we saw moose tracks on campus for the first time last fall as our new mascot, Trax the Pioneer

Moose, appeared on the campus scene.

Utica College continued to make its mark in the community through the campus's involvement in volunteer activities. One of the most notable activities once again was the Heart Run & Walk.

Utica College for the second straight year captured the college division of this event. Team UC, comprised of about 164 students, faculty, and staff and led by tri-captains Gary Heenan (men's hockey coach), Susan Risler (Senior Assistant Director of Admissions), and Vince Kuss (Development Associate), raised more than \$9,500.

The College also undertook a successful United Way Campaign under the leadership of Vice President for Financial Affairs R. Barry White. More than 100 employees participated and giving increased by about 10 percent, with the average gift jumping from \$116 to \$135.

I am also proud to report that the College achieved what we now have determined to be the largest fundraising year in its history, with a total of \$5.2 million in private and public gifts and grants. Our goal was \$3.75 million. Private giving totaled \$1.92 million, a little under our goal of \$2 million; however, public grants totaled \$3.25 million, well surpassing our goal of \$1.75 million.

We also had a very successful year in our Graduate and Continuing Education division, which increased its revenue by 19 percent, including graduate revenue, which is now at \$2.5 million – a nice side benefit of excellent new programs that are meeting important regional and, in one case, national needs.

Thanks to the efforts of UC favorite son and alumnus, U.S. Representative Sherwood Boehlert, this past year Utica College received commitments from Congress for \$3.1 million to fund technology and scientific equipment and \$1.8 million for health sciences facilities within the planned science and technology center. As I have said in the past, this building will anchor the academic future of UC and will serve as a center for learning for the entire institution.

As an academic community, we have many reasons to take pride in our students' and our faculty's scholarly achievements...

Among the grants received was also a small but important \$10,000 award from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. This grant is funding a Healthy Campus-Community Demonstration Project at UC. Spearheaded by Cheri Van Etten, a counselor in our Academic Support Services Center, the project is enabling UC to partner with area agencies and other colleges to address one of collegiate America's greatest problems – alcohol and substance abuse by students.

Alcohol use interferes with the academic work and lives of far too many of our students, and the College is working diligently to continually educate students about responsible use of alcohol and healthy ways of living.

One disappointment in fundraising last year was the continued low rate of giving by alumni. Despite the fact that I regularly hear how much they value their UC education and how the College made a significant difference in their lives, a sentiment reflected in a recent contracted survey of our alums, only 12 percent of alums contributed to the College last year. Among private colleges nationwide the average is 27 percent, and some of our comparison schools are above 40 percent.

We also raise about \$400,000 in our Annual Fund, when many comparable institutions raise \$1 million plus. It is the Annual Fund that should enable the College to achieve much-needed improvements in salaries for our faculty and staff, fund grants in aid for our very needy student body, make qualitative improvements to programs, and underwrite new initiatives.

We must do a better job of communicating UC's story and its successes to our alums and of keeping them meaningfully engaged with the institution. And they must do a better job of supporting their alma mater if it is to realize a bright and prosperous future.

Finally, it is worth remembering that this past spring Utica College received one of three Empire Promise Visionary Leadership Awards from the New York State Liberty Partnerships Program for our Young Scholars Program. We are proud of this program and what it symbolizes, as we are proud of our history of embracing and celebrating diversity. And it is this history and this commitment that is the theme of this year's talk.

Embracing and Celebrating Diversity

As I pondered what I would say tonight about Utica College and diversity, Martin Luther King's vision of the "Beloved Community" came to mind. King's vision was for a community of people with an attainable all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. While this might be a utopian notion in the short-term, Dr. King believed passionately that love and trust would ultimately triumph over fear

and hatred, and that the spirit of friendship and goodwill would prevail.ⁱⁱ

In many ways Utica College is striving to become a "beloved community." Like humankind, our academic community has its foibles and its weaknesses. But our collective heart is inclusive. While our actions do not always reflect our stated values, our intent is genuine. In its relatively brief existence as an institution of higher learning, Utica College has a long history of embracing diversity.

Of course, diversity can be manifested in many forms. Certainly UC is not and cannot be a microcosm of U.S. society or the globe. Our diversity is defined first by our sense that to "exclude" is wrong. While we do make discriminating decisions about a student's ability to succeed in our educational environment, we also realize that there are multiple ways of recognizing talent and potential. I believe that this is true also when we make employment decisions.

My experience has taught me that a basic impulse at Utica College is to include rather than to exclude. It is one reason why we have the rich campus culture that we have today. Diversity at UC has many faces: ethnicity, nationality, geography, sexual orientation, economic background, academic ability, disability, learning style, communication style, religion, and political persuasion.

In the past, I have likened our diversity to a bouillabaisse. The whole is rich and flavorful, but each ingredient is glorious in its own right.

Our mission statement pledges us to "creating a community of learners with diverse experiences and perspectives." Our foundation of core values includes a "dedication to fostering a diversity of perspective, background, and experience for education in an increasingly global society." We are unabashed in our belief that a diverse educational environment offers all learners – students, faculty, and staff alike – a rich context for learning. We are in the business of human development.

Our purpose is to stimulate and enable growth in intellect and imagination, as well as in knowledge and skills. The early 20th century educational philosopher Alfred North Whitehead explained the purpose of colleges and universities this way:

The universities are schools of education, and schools of research. But the primary reason for their existence is not to be found either in the mere knowledge to be conveyed to the students or in the mere opportunities for research afforded to the members of the faculty.

Both these functions could be performed at a cheaper rate, apart from these very expensive institutions... So far as the mere imparting of information is concerned, no university has had any justification for

existence since the popularisation of printing in the fifteenth century....

The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. The university imparts information, but it imparts it imaginatively. At least, this is the function which it should perform for society. A university that fails in this respect has no reason for existence.

This atmosphere of excitement, arising from imaginative consideration, transforms knowledge. A fact is no longer a bare fact: it is invested with all its possibilities. It is no longer a burden on the memory: it is energising as the poet of our dreams, and as the architect of our purposes.ⁱⁱⁱ

I would argue that a diverse campus community is one that is better prepared to connect knowledge with the zest of life by enabling the imaginative consideration of learning. Certainly Professor Whitehead would not have conceived of the "atmosphere of excitement" in terms that included human traits that we associate with a diverse campus community. But then again, he could not have envisioned the historic changes triggered by this nation's post-World War II G.I. Bill and, 20 years later, its civil rights and higher education acts.

As our own Dr. Virgil Crisafulli said in his book, *Reflections: The Early Years of Utica College*, "...higher education ceased to be the privilege of the privileged and became the right of the masses."^{iv}

Diversity is widely recognized today as a key ingredient in an excellent education. This was one of the philosophical premises behind the recent Supreme Court decision regarding the University of Michigan Law School's affirmative action admissions policies.

A recent proclamation by a coalition of 30 major organizations put it this way: "We applaud the Court's explicit recognition that diversity is indeed a compelling educational and civic value – essential to excellence as well as equity."^v

On July 18, the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) also proclaimed in a news and information release announcing its role as a lead partner in the Pathways to College Network that, "The Pathways initiative reflects a core commitment at the heart of that vision [the AAC&U vision for learning in the twenty-first century] – that diversity and inclusion must be integral elements in any twenty-first century articulation of educational excellence."^{vi} Which brings me back to UC.

Utica College is no Johnny-come-lately in its commitment to

diversity and to access for men and women once denied a college education. Dr. Crisafulli noted that with its founding Utica College "brought new life to the people of the greater Utica area. For the reality was," he stated, "that, until 1946 when the College was established, the local population was trapped within the boundaries of an economy that offered few promising jobs to its youth and limited educational opportunity beyond high school."

As a "G.I. college," Utica College began its life as a "people's college." The vast majority of its students, Dr. Cris observed, came from the working class and the student body was "richly ethnic" (although our definition of "richly ethnic" is more inclusive today).^{vii} Many students were what we call "nontraditional students," that is, older than typical college students. It is believed that many, if not most, were the first person in their families to attend college. Even today first generation college students comprise two thirds of the student body. In its own way, Utica College embraced diversity from its earliest beginnings.

It is fitting that within one generation of its beginning, the College became, arguably, the birthplace of New York State's Higher Education Opportunity Program. The 1960s and the civil rights movement opened college doors nationwide to much larger numbers of low income students and students of color.

Utica College embraced this societal change with enthusiasm. In 1966 the College initiated one of the early federal Upward Bound programs, and not too long afterward leaders from private colleges across New York gathered on the UC campus to formulate plans for what would become the New York Higher Educational Opportunity Program (HEOP).

This program would afford students from educationally and academically disadvantaged backgrounds opportunities to attend independent colleges and universities in New York. In 1969, Utica College became a charter college in the HEOP program, enrolled its first students, and began a commitment that has transformed and enriched the lives of not only HEOP students, but also thousands of other students who have attended UC and hundreds of faculty and staff who have worked at UC during the past 34 years.

Over the years HEOP students have performed well academically and have been among our strongest student leaders. And very importantly, HEOP students have graduated from UC at rates consistently higher than that of the overall student body.

Recently, we added the Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program (C-STEP) that is designed to recruit disadvantaged students into the science, math, and technology fields. This program is realizing early successes as well.^{viii}

Utica College's commitment to building and maintaining a diverse campus environment has been manifested in many other ways over the past several decades. For example, in 1969 the College chartered the Black Student Union, now known as Students of African Descent Alliance, and not too long afterward the Black Alumni Association. More recently we have seen the emergence of numerous student groups that contribute educationally and socially in myriad ways to the life of the campus.

Examples of these organizations include the Latin American Student Union (LASU), Africa in Motion, the Asian Association, the Muslim Students Association, the Jewish Student Union, UC Christian Fellowship, the International Student Association, and the Womyn's Resource Center.

These organizations are among the most active on campus. Additionally, our core curriculum includes required courses that include a diversity component; we celebrate diversity through the annual Unity March; and we provide resources and support for events like Kwanzaa, the Vagina Monologues, and the International Student Dinner.

Our broad commitment to diversity, and more specifically to improving access to higher education for disadvantaged students, is also demonstrated in our partnership with the Utica City School System. With the inspiration and guidance of trustee Mike Damsky, UC and the Utica schools together created in 1993 the Young Scholars Liberty Partnerships Program (YSLPP). Now under the very capable leadership of Frank Perretta (UC '66), this program identifies low-income and other disadvantaged students as early as the sixth grade and then for six years provides year-around tutoring and enrichment activities, an intensive six-week summer program, support for and from parents, and college exploration activities.

Beyond this, the College commits itself to meet the full financial need of any Young Scholar who is ultimately admitted to UC. Of the very high percentage of Young Scholars who have remained with the program, 81 percent have enrolled in college; 36 Young Scholars are currently attending UC.

Most critical to the success of disadvantaged students is the commitment of our faculty to the availability of comprehensive and effective academic support services, and a campus atmosphere in which diversity – and not just ethnic, racial or socio-economic diversity – is embraced and celebrated.

...a diverse campus community is one that is better prepared to connect knowledge with the zest of life by enabling the imaginative consideration of learning.

This atmosphere is exhibited in recent academic programs that deserve mention tonight. Among these is our master's program in leadership and instruction in inclusive classrooms, which was begun two years ago. Designed to prepare teachers for classrooms where the students are highly diverse on many dimensions, this program is a leader in its field, and its faculty, notably program director and associate professor Lois Fisch

and associate professor Laura Dorow, have been prominent players in shaping New York State standards for inclusion.

Two other recent programs include our Nursing Tapestry Program and our cross-cultural gerontology program, both of which I mentioned earlier.

Finally, it is worth noting that we are endeavoring to increase the international student population to 5 percent and to provide increased study abroad opportunities for a student body that is generally reticent about this type of experience. We currently have about 30 countries represented on campus and our students from other nations have contributed mightily to the environment of the College.

It would be easy for me to carry on about diversity at Utica College and the many ways it is manifested in our college community. I am proud of our record and who we are. However, I need to spend a few minutes reflecting on the coming year. Before talking about the coming year, I want to say that I fear for the loss of that quality which has defined UC for so many years – our diversity. If we are not careful, we could lose this part of our identity as we try to achieve enrollment goals like increasing the size of the student body and lowering the discount rate.

With the recent growth in the student body over the past three years (50 percent growth in the freshman class, 27 percent growth in the undergraduate student body), we have seen the percentage of students of color in the freshman class decline from about 22 or 23 percent to 18 percent. While this is still a laudable number, we must nevertheless pay attention more now than ever to balancing competing enrollment goals and remaining committed to a diverse campus.

For this reason, I have asked the Admissions Office this year to redouble its efforts to recruit a freshman class with diverse characteristics and I will ask the Diversity Committee to examine the entire matter and make recommendations to the All-College Council and me. This is one point of emphasis for 2003-04. Let's take a look at several others.

Anticipating Another Memorable Year

I anticipate another year full of energy and positive anticipation. We continue to define what our Strategic Plan and Dr. Crisafulli identify as a new era in the College's history. Transformations that are molding the College are underway and others are yet to come. This will be a year in which we spend time as a college community talking about and reflecting on the future and analyzing proposals and possibilities.

While celebrating our history and recent successes, we must also continue to recognize and acknowledge the major challenges that remain for this relatively young institution.

Under the leadership of professors Robert Halliday and Nancy Hollins and vice president Carol Mackintosh, UC submitted its five-year Periodic Review Report to the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools this past spring. This report outlines challenges we continue to face, along with our successes over the past half-decade. The Middle State's reviewers of our report observed that, "The Utica College community has accomplished an extraordinary amount of work during the past five years." They also underscore that we must

- Continue our efforts to solidify core messages to continue the process of developing a mature and distinctive institutional identity
- Develop a culture of assessment with the goal of more routinely using the results of assessment to inform planning and resource allocation
- Continue to support the development and maturation of our new governance bodies and their interrelationships
- Continue our fiscal discipline and our careful management of the financial aid discount rate
- Continue to monitor and bolster our student retention efforts and
- Continue to integrate the new athletic programs into the campus community.^{ix}

These broad, ongoing goals are among the priorities for 2003-04. Others include:

Engage the campus community in reviewing the Strategic Plan – The campus and the Board of Trustees approved the plan three years ago. It is time again to take a close look at it. In addition to reviewing existing goals, we will need to evaluate possible new initiatives over the coming several years, including doctoral-level, "career" degrees such as a doctor of physical therapy or a doctor of education in leadership. We will also evaluate the possibility of expanding our online degree offerings, particularly in those fields and disciplines where we are strongest. From a business perspective, the

College must find additional ways to enhance and diversify its revenue in order to achieve the other goals we have set for ourselves.

Complete planning for a comprehensive campaign and achieve annual fundraising goals – While our fundraising efforts have been in the preliminary "quiet" phase of a campaign, it is time to intensify the effort. The last campaign ended in May 1999. We are at the end of the requisite "breather" between campaigns. One of the Board's primary goals this year is to complete its own planning for a campaign. As I said last year at this time, this campaign is an historic imperative for this institution. There are simply too many needs and too many aspirations not to succeed.

While the overall goal will be set at a later date, our goal this year is to raise \$2,500,000 in private funds, secure between \$4 and \$5 million in pledges and actual gifts, and obtain \$2,250,000 in federal and state grants (up from a goal of \$1,750,000 last year).

As I mentioned earlier in this talk, one of the College's biggest challenges is attracting the support of its alumni. Our goal for 2003-04 is to have 15 percent of the alums contribute to the College in the form of annual support or campaign support. While this percentage is still low for a private college, it will set a new minimum threshold upon which we can build. We have also set a goal of a half million dollars (\$500,000) for the Annual Fund. Annual giving at a college like UC should be no less than a million dollars per year, a goal we must pursue vigorously.

As I alluded earlier, it is this type of giving that allows a college to pay faculty and staff competitive salaries, maintain and improve facilities, provide research and professional development funds to help faculty and staff stay abreast of their fields, and provide students with enhancements in cocurricular activities and facilities like the student newspaper, radio station, and fitness center.

I cannot stress more strongly how important our fundraising goals are for the present and future of this institution. We are no longer a branch campus of Syracuse University. We are an independent college in partnership with that great university, but we are also in direct competition with other small private colleges and universities that have endowments four to ten times our size, academic facilities that are newer, and annual funds that enable them to provide resources that our faculty, students, and staff deserve. And the SUNY campuses are ever improving their facilities and building endowments.

Inspiring giving to the College must be my highest priority, as it must be the Board's highest priority. Only the building of new programs and development of new revenue sources come close. And I will rely upon the academic and business affairs leadership of the College to achieve these important ends. This leads me to the next priority goal.

Implement new academic programs and explore new offerings – It will be important during the coming year to get the recently approved master’s degrees fully in place and marketed. In addition, the ECM Europe (i.e., M.S. in economic crime management program-European satellite) and the undergraduate economic crime investigation program in Washington, D.C. will be important new additions.

We are also exploring a new undergraduate degree in sports management, which could prove to be an attractive companion to existing programs.

As I mentioned earlier, we will also begin a conversation about introducing professional doctoral programs into our curricular offerings. External demands and conditions are driving the need for this conversation. For example, doctoral preparation in physical therapy may soon become the minimum credential in this field, and there is a crying need in New York for a new generation of doctorally trained school administrators.

Finally, I alluded to the need to explore further the value of adding online offerings. Online programs reach people who are place and time bound and can extend the educational influence of the College (as well as create revenue that will ultimately support the on-campus curriculum).

Evaluate, revise, and achieve enrollment goals – Because UC remains highly tuition driven, even more so than many of our peers, it is important that we achieve the quantitative and qualitative objectives that we set for the coming year. While we can take some solace in the fact that this year’s class of 450 is 50 percent greater than the freshman class five years ago, we have not seen the extent of enrollment growth in particular majors as we had expected. Enrollment management is a mega-process that requires improvement in programs along with improvement in recruitment strategies. With recent and anticipated curricular changes, along with even more effective recruitment and marketing strategies, I expect that we will see selected growth in our incoming classes. This will be a year in which we re-evaluate the admissions numbers and re-align the five-year forecast.

There are several important facilities and infrastructure goals that are priorities in the coming year, including:

- **Completion of the co-generation project** – With a \$1 million grant from the State of New York, a partnership of Utica College, Faxton-St. Luke’s Hospital, and a private energy company will build an energy producing facility that will supply all of UC’s and the hospital’s electric needs as well as supplemental heat. This exciting project should provide both savings and more reliable electricity to both partners.
- **Extension of planning for the science and technology center** – This center for learning, for which we hope to

break ground in three years, will be the academic cornerstone of the future. Our facilities are 40 years old and tired. They have served us well, but will not accommodate the curricula of the future. A faculty planning committee will work with architects this year to flesh out the programmatic details and design of the building.

- **Completion of planning for the next residence hall** – Enrollment projections suggest that UC will need to build a third new residence hall by fall 2005. During the coming year, we will determine the style and size of this new hall – whether a more traditional facility for upperclass students like Tower Hall or a townhouse complex that can accommodate upperclassmen and graduate students.
- **Continuation of renovations and improvements to South and North residence halls** – Our students must have improved facilities in which to live. The challenge will be funding. The goal this year is to find creative ways to continue this work.
- **Continuation of the campus-wide efforts to implement the new administrative information system** – This three-year long project will reap benefits that we will both see and not see. The current system is 20-plus years old and simply cannot support the kind of decision making and access to information that is demanded today.
- **Continuation of the refinement of UC’s Web site** – Nearly 80 percent of prospective students say that Web sites are a major source of information about the colleges they are considering. View books are being supplanted by this new medium of communication. Alumni are increasingly relying upon a Web site to stay in touch with their alma mater. Colleagues seeking information about UC visit us via our Web site. The importance of the Web site as a tool of communication, marketing device, source of information, and reflection of our institutional personality has grown exponentially over the past several years. Thus, the goal to make demonstrable improvements in the Web site will be an ongoing one.

Finally, the continuing development of our Board of Trustees as the primary policy making body of the institution, as the primary fiduciary oversight body, and as the primary resource enhancement body will continue to be a priority for 2003-04.

Last year, after a comprehensive self-study and evaluation workshop led by a facilitator from the Association of Governing Boards, our Board decided to align its committees more closely with the College’s seven broad strategic

initiatives. This reorganization will be undertaken this year. It is designed to increase involvement and improve interaction and engagement.

The College also continues to identify and cultivate prospects for the Board, individuals who can bring various combinations of wealth, wisdom, and work to the benefit of the institution.

I have no doubt this will be another memorable year. It will not be without its challenges, but we must keep our eye on the future even as we deal with the immediate issues and unexpected interruptions in the flow of progress. All of us here this evening, all of us who make up the extended UC community – students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and dedicated friends – are stewards of this institution of higher learning.

Its future is literally in our hands. Its future is bright as long as we “do the right things, and do things right.” This will require balancing, sometimes awkwardly, immediate needs with future demands. I am excited about what we are building. I am proud of all that UC has accomplished during its short life. I’m looking forward once again this year to adding building blocks to the future of UC.

It will not surprise many of you that I once again close this

evening with an image from poet William Stafford, from his poem, “Climbing Along the River” (Stafford, 242):

Willows never forget how it feels
to be young.

Do you remember where you came from?
Gravel remembers.

Even the upper end of the river
believes in the ocean.

Exactly at midnight
yesterday sighs away.

What I believe is,
all animals have one soul.

Over the land they love
they crisscross forever.

May we as a community always realize our “one soul” and forever crisscross in our dreams, aspirations, hopes, and plans for UC. May we celebrate the diversity we bring to this wonderful college and allow it to nurture us and those who touch us.

May each of us have a year filled with professional success and personal contentment. 🍷

References

- ⁱ This reference to “crisscrossing forever” is taken from William Stafford’s poem “Climbing along the River” (from *The Way It Is*, 242), which includes the two verses:

What I believe is,
All animals have one soul.

Over the land they love
they crisscross forever.
- ⁱⁱ The King Center, “The Beloved Community,” <http://www.thekingcenter.org/prog/bc/index.html>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, New York: The Free Press, 1929, 92-93.
- ^{iv} Virgil C. Crisafulli, *Reflections: The Early Years of Utica College*. With illustrations by Robert Cimbalo. Utica, NY: Devon Press, 2000, xiv.
- ^v Association of American Colleges and Universities, et al. “Diversity and Democracy: The Unfinished Work,” an Advertisement in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 11, 2003, A29.
- ^{vi} American Association of Colleges and Universities, “Association of American Colleges and Universities Becomes Lead Partner in Pathways to College Network,” News and Information Release, July 18, 2003.
- ^{vii} Crisafulli, 52-53, 121, 127.
- ^{viii} I want to express my gratitude to Robert Woods, long-time Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs and now Executive Assistant to the President, for his insights and recollections, and also to Professor Emeritus Jack Behrens for his eminently readable history of the College: John Behrens. *Pioneering Generations: The Utica College Story, 1946-1996*. Utica, NY: Utica College, 1997.
- ^{ix} Dr. L. Jay Lemons, President, Susquehanna University, and Dr. David C. Stinebeck, Provost, Albright College, “Report to Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students of Utica College: Prepared following analysis of the Institution’s Periodic Review Report,” August 1, 2003