

9-4-1962

## Presidential Address to Faculty

Donald A. Cowan  
*University of Dallas*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/cowan\\_speeches](http://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/cowan_speeches)

---

### Recommended Citation

Cowan, Donald A., "Presidential Address to Faculty" (1962). *Speeches*. Paper 4.  
[http://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/cowan\\_speeches/4](http://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/cowan_speeches/4)

This Lecture is brought to you for free and open access by the The Donald and Louise Cowan Archive at UDigital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of UDigital Commons.

Dr. Coven's talk to the faculty, September 4, 1962

There is much business to attend to today; therefore I shall speak only briefly. But on a later occasion I shall talk more fully about the plans and policies of the University. Do not expect any astounding changes; I have been enthusiastic about the University from the time I arrived here three years ago, and I thoroughly approve of the direction it has taken.

This seventh year of the University's existence is a critical one in many respects, the financial problem being most notable. The grandeur with which the University has been conceived, and the boldness with which it has been developed, have necessarily strained its resources so that we shall frequently have to forego the institution of some desirable features because of the expense involved. I shall count on your understanding when we are forced to veto some expenditures. But whatever is vital to our educational program we shall find some way of supporting. The budget is late in preparation again this year. Do not let the absence of a budget prevent your ordering necessary supplies, but proceed with caution. I expect to discuss the needs individually with department heads before the final budget is presented.

This year, too, we face the problem of accreditation. We shall expect a visiting team here sometime in the spring; but I call to your attention the fact that there can be no action on our application until the meeting of the Southern

Association a year from this November. So do not be impatient. The self-study report has been finished, I understand; and is in the process of being re-edited. You may be called on for late revisions. However, I think you will be relieved to know that that troublesome and important document is very nearly out of the way. In general, let me say to you that I think you can forget accreditation; the worries about it that are left are, I believe, administrative ones. I remain confident that our excellent faculty and our fine program, along with our burgeoning library and facilities will win the approval of any accrediting group.

We face acute space shortages at the beginning of this year. The delay of the completion of the library past the opening of school poses problems in office housing. Please forgive the pressure with which you are packed into a few small spaces. We shall relieve that condition as quickly as we can after the library moves out. I do not pretend that all our space problems will then be solved. Consultants have pointed out that our chemistry and physics departments need more laboratories. We need a computer room; the languages must have space; we need a visual aids room. It is obvious that we need a classroom and office building, and one way or another we shall work toward getting it. In the meantime, we shall attempt to make use of the space we have for the greatest benefit of our entire program and shall consult freely with department heads about relative needs.

This year we shall face the difficult matter of tenure. Tenure is a device invented by the devil; it can never make

people happy; it can only make them angry. Nonetheless, the granting of tenure is a grave responsibility of the Board of Trustees, one which is cannot shirk. We shall very shortly set up the committee on Faculty Welfare, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook and shall discuss with that group the procedures to be followed in the recommendations for tenure.

We start the year again without a public relations officer. In the absence of such a man, we shall follow a policy of being openly cooperative with newspaper reporters when they call us, employing merely the caution that is proper to professional persons conscious of their responsibility in representing the University. Talk to the press in friendliness and refer any questions which might be sensitive to someone in Administration. On stories that originate from here, however, please have them pass my desk before they go on to the newspaper. Turn your stories in to my secretary, Mrs. Lea, or give her the necessary information so that she can prepare the story. Mrs. Lea will forward the stories to the papers or follow any distribution you may suggest. We do not mean to underestimate the importance of the press, and we will not be long without a public relations officer. But on the other hand, neither the University nor its professors may, in conscience, seek publicity for publicity's sake. Last year Dr. Reid requested a policy of complete integrity in our published statements. It is an integrity which we need to observe beyond the mere recitation of facts. We must remember that we are a university and that universities have long lives and are not wholly dependent on the passing show. We shall not

stage any pseudo-events for the purpose of publicity. We want our news stories to be newsworthy and our feature stories to reflect the image of the University in its most serious sense. It is our ideal that the faculty is quite detached from the problems of publicity, recruitment, and donations. In this sense, at least, we believe in the image of the Ivory Tower. In practice we are likely to manipulate you into favorable positions for talks and interviews; but we never mean to compromise your integrity. You are to talk about your subject; about the discipline to which you are committed; it is in representing your discipline that you represent the University.

We shall reconstitute the Publicity Committee to serve as an advisory and review board, protecting the interests of the faculty. I emphasize again that these faculty representatives will not be pitch men and mid-way barkers but will be critics and policy-makers. Do not misinterpret my remarks here; we are happy for professors to represent the University when they are invited to do so; but we do not want them to have to seek notoriety. It is not the image of the University with which we are concerned but its reality; not what people think of it but what it is. And the reality of a university lies in its students and faculty.

There are some curricular matters which will require our attention during the year. It is likely that the freshman and sophomore course structure can be unified, making it more coherent and exciting in its cross linkages between the various disciplines. As the self study report points out, we must continue to consider ways of repairing our deficiencies in

mathematics and science for the non-science majors, paying heed to the barrier we might have erected between our better students and graduate or professional schools. These matters are the concern of the Academic Affairs Committee but the advice of the Educational Program Committee will be needed in these considerations.

I have no intention of burdening the faculty with administrative chores. But I am jealous of the wisdom which resides in the faculty and shall seek constantly to turn it to the benefit of the University. The same devices of committee structure which will tender this wisdom will also serve in the other direction to advise the faculty of administrative planning. Let me review these committees briefly.

The University Council on which are two elected representatives of the faculty -- Fr. Anselm and Fr. Norton.

The Academic Affairs Committee consisting of Division Heads.

The Faculty Welfare Committee.

The Publicity Committee.

There are other more specialized committees, such as the Writing Committee and the Discipline Committee.

In addition I shall schedule meetings with department heads for the purpose of informal exchange of information. I should remind you, however, that the official communication lines are through department chairmen, division heads, the dean, and the vice-president. Send your complaints through that channel and avoid broadcasting them over cocktails and telephones.

If we have recounted the problems facing us this year, we can also count many blessings. The Student Center is finished. It includes a faculty dining room which can serve as a coffee

house for learned conversations. It also includes a book store with a fine display of paperbacks. The library is nearing completion. During the summer several thousand books were purchased and received, giving us a quite respectable collection. The Dominican Priory is under construction. The old cafeteria has been altered slightly and christened Little Hall. At present the Music Department and Physical Education are housed there. The P.E. Department and supplies are thus close to the archery range, the volleyball court, and the tennis courts which will be started shortly. The Music Department has a big brick wall behind which a piano can be played at anytime without disturbing classes. It also has space for sheet music cabinets next to a big room suitable for chorus or band practice. The name as well as the alterations of Little Hall are temporary. The large class room invites other functions and the ambiguity of the name protects its multiple possibilities.

There are other blessings which you might frequently call to mind. His Excellency our Bishop is a learned man having an earned doctorate; he has, accordingly, an appreciation and a desire for the excellence of our program without which we would not now have the kind of University which is here flourishing. We have an Executive Committee whose generosity and foresight have nurtured the growth of the University at great personal sacrifice. We have, I suppose, the best Building and Grounds supervisor in America, who is unstintedly dedicated to the University. A vice-president to whose capacious mind, unflagging energy

and selfless devotion is due a major share of credit for our facilities and our perseverance in excellence, a dean who has never wavered in his determination to build a superior faculty, a registrar who possesses not only technical competence but wisdom -- the list lengthens at every post. I assure you these are not the usual conditions. Something powerful is at work on this campus. What was it God had in mind when he moved the Sisters of St. Mary to initiate a University at such a time that the Cistercians would find a home here? What has this powerful conflux of forces meant -- these individuals, groups, and ideas? Surely there is supposed to be here on this campus a great center of Christian learning. There is something particular about our portion of history that demands the intellect, that cries out for the glory of our scientific, aesthetic, economic, and political knowledge to be released from the confines of secularism and assume their places in the right order of values. It is our privilege on this campus -- it is the privilege of this excellent faculty to carry out this mission.