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Illinois State University

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State of the University

Dr. Arlan C. Helgeson
Acting Dean of the University

4 p.m. Feb. 12, 1974
Capen Auditorium
Illinois State University

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The State of the University addresses which you may expect to hear at the beginning and at the mid-point of the academic year are, in part, accounts of the stewardship of the administration. President Budig and I are agreed that you should know of the major directions taken in the administration of university affairs both through our discussions with your elected representatives in the Academic Senate and in such meetings as these. In today's talk then, I will give some accounting of the changes in the organization of the University during the last few months, make some comments on the Academic Plan and general curricular developments in the University, discuss matters relating to budget and the outlook for salary increases next year and, in addition, address some remarks to you about the general and intellectual climate of the University.

First, some comments about organization. The reorganization of the colleges is substantially complete. The offices of the college deans are now fully operative and each of the college deans is again housed, as he should be, out among the troops, so to speak, in offices more readily accessible to the departments of his college.

I should like to pay special tribute to the deans of the colleges with whom it has been my privilege to work for several years, now, in one capacity or another. They have passed through a rather anomalous period when the reduction of their offices as fiscal units became, inevitably, much more than that. It became exceedingly difficult for them to prevent the erosion of the typical lines of authority and responsibility that are characteristic of colleges in universities all over the United States. That their colleges have been restored to more normal operating practices in a relatively short time speaks well for the goodwill that the deans enjoy among department heads and faculty and for the energy of the councils that are advisory to the deans in each of the colleges. I want to pay particular tribute to Dean Rives who has assumed an extremely heavy load in handling not only undergraduate affairs but acting as Dean of the College of Business as well. In addition to their regular decanal duties, Deans Bolen and Porter have also assumed temporary headships of academic units and it is a tribute to them that these units are operating smoothly and responsibly.

In several of the colleges it has been necessary to reexamine or to redo bylaws and this also has proceeded apace. We recognize that there have been gaps or anomalies in such areas as the rights and duties of faculty who may hold rank and tenure in a college but whose duties lie outside that college. The college councils are acting with speed in addressing themselves to these matters and we hope soon to have these cleared up. I might add, parenthetically, that Dean White and a committee of graduate faculty are codifying and bringing up to date the bylaws of the Graduate School also.

As you know, we have, currently, search committees selecting candidates for permanent deanships in the College of Arts and Sciences and in the College of Business. It is our hope that these offices will be filled with their permanent tenants by July, 1974.

All of you are aware that the area which was reduced most drastically in the reorganization and in the administrative budget cutting of the past two years was that of Student Services. We learned much in that process--among other things, that there are certain duties performed by the traditional office of the Dean of Students or the Dean of Student Affairs which are not readily assumed by faculty or by other university agencies.

During the past year Dean White assumed many of these duties as a kind of general university ombudsman and we are grateful for his help in these matters. It was time, however, for the University to take a more permanent step toward handling these responsibilities and it has done that in the creation of the Office of Dean of Student Affairs, under Dr. Gamsky. I should like to take this opportunity to urge faculty to acquaint

themselves with the kinds of services offered in the Student Counseling Service and in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. We have the capability in these two agencies, along with the Student Health Service, to minister to the needs of students under mental, emotional or physical stress especially, but also we have the capability of assisting students in basic decisions regarding their career choices and many other aspects of their personal growth. We are only as successful here as an alert faculty helps us to be. If you sense that a student needs help beyond your personal competence, please remember that there are such services available.

Several other matters relating to university reorganization are worthy of note, in passing, although President Budig has discussed these in appropriate releases. The office of the Director of Student Financial Aids has been filled with a capable and experienced director. Dr. Weisbecker has assumed additional duties as Acting Director of Development, and Mr. Lawlis, in addition to his regular post as director of the University Placement Service, has become the Director of Alumni Relations. For the time being, we have elected not to fill the Office of Vice President for Administrative Services, and Mr. Goleash and Dr. Gillett have accepted the responsibilities in this area during the period of adjustment, as we study what the needs of the University are likely to be in the next few years.

Administrative Savings

We are frequently asked whether the reestablishment of the colleges as viable units of the University means higher administrative costs. I should like to comment just briefly on the picture so far as costs are concerned as a result of changes made in the university administration since July, 1973. We have cut well over \$200,000 in salaries from the central administration and other administrative service areas of the University in the current fiscal year. We have effected these reductions mainly by electing not to fill vacancies which have occurred through retirement or resignation, and by absorbing the duties involved in other administrative offices, including those of the college deans.

"Well," you ask, "what have we done with the savings?" We have restored some positions, functions and services most badly hurt during the realignment of priorities and budget cuts of the past few years. First of all, we have greatly increased the number of research assignments during the current academic year, and we will support the largest number of summer research assignments in the history of the University during the summer of 1974. In this renewal of the research initiative we give substance to the statement in our Academic Plan that research and teaching are mutually supportive activities at this University.

Secondly, we have also increased substantially the amount of funds for graduate assistantships offered by the University, from the originally budgeted \$250,000 to over \$330,000 in the current year and \$409,000 in 1974-75, exclusive of any faculty positions converted to assistantships.

Thirdly, we have made a humble start also in the process of retooling some of our faculty whose particular training is inadequate for the needs of the seventies but whose capabilities we do not wish to lose. In addition to educational leaves for this purpose we will double the number of faculty on sabbatical leaves during 1974-75 over those on leave during this academic year.

Academic Plan

We hope that many of you have taken the opportunity to study the Academic Plan of the University, which is currently available in department offices and is to be acted upon by the Academic Senate during the month of February, before being submitted to the Board of Regents in March. The Plan was developed through a sequence of screening at the departmental and college levels; finally, it was reviewed and approved by the Academic Planning Committee of the University, a body including

college deans and faculty representatives from each college. The Plan is a blueprint for the University's next five years. It contains for the first time statements of collegiate missions and it stresses, among other things, the importance of research as well as teaching in the single process of discovering and transmitting knowledge.

The specific new and improved programs proposed in the Academic Plan are not simply a composite list of all the things that departments have indicated that they might like to do, but they represent the judgment of the college Academic Planning Committees and University Academic Planning Committee as a reasonable and responsible projection of the future academic program development of the University. The Plan also contains program plans of university-wide service units such as the library, and includes a considerable amount of statistical data furnished by the Office of Institutional Research.

An ominous note in the preparation of this new Academic Plan was the request by the Board of Regents that 13 graduate programs be reviewed, the implication being rather clear that there was some feeling on the Board of Regents staff that programs with relatively low enrollments and low output might be terminated. While the Academic Plan takes a vigorous stand in defense of each of the graduate programs reviewed, the fact that we are required to engage in such a process indicates how far we have come from the halcyon days of the 1960's, when the sky seemed the limit in academic planning.

It is also significant that hereafter the review of program proposals in the Academic Plan and the budget review of the University are to become a single process with the Board of Regents staff rather than separate processes as before. We are particularly indebted to Dean Rives, who shepherded the Academic Plan through its various stages of development, and to Dr. Dale Vetter of the Department of English, who has done much to lend some kind of unity to the prose offerings from so many parts of the campus.

I should perhaps add that all programs proposed in the Academic Plan of the University must pass through the usual internal approval process required of curricular proposals on our campus, receiving approval finally by the Academic Senate before being sent on to the Board of Regents. The Plan is also subject to annual revision as we bring our more distant projections into line with reality. In that sense it is truly a blueprint, subject to modifications as we build, and not an edifice cast in stone. In this connection I feel a need to comment on the optimism which is so often reflected in glowing predictions concerning the potential student enrollments in proposed new programs. The pool of students will not increase greatly--and there are now many more institutions bidding for student interest, particularly the community colleges. We must expect a large part of the enrollment in new programs to come from our own "old" programs, and that is why the word reallocation has become so significant in academic planning and in budgeting.

We are engaged, annually, in the process of reallocating resources, especially faculty positions, to those departments where we anticipate the swings of student interest to be reflected in increased enrollment. This is no easy task. Dean Belshe and his "Budget Team" have spent many weary hours in study and analysis in order to arrive at the allocations of positions for the coming year. In that process the assistance of Dr. Harden and his staff in Institutional Research has been invaluable. I do not hesitate to say that we have the finest service of this type among the State universities. This is our good fortune, for we must rely on sophisticated analysis if we are to avoid the pitfalls of overstaffing or understaffing, and especially if we are to avoid the tenure problems that result from inadequate planning. Let me be more specific: we have had departments which have lost as many as 10 to 15 faculty positions in the last two years through budget cuts and through reallocation. That we could do so without terminating tenured faculty is in large part attributable to the kind of

planning in the last few years that we must be prepared to intensify in years to come.

Faculty Tenure

No university function is of more immediate concern to faculty members than appointment, promotion and tenure. More than 20 years ago the old University Council assigned a major role to faculty members in the determination of university policies in each of these important areas, and in 1970 the new University Senate adopted a set of appointment, promotion and tenure policies which essentially continued that faculty involvement.

Recently, I have asked Dr. Hibbert Roberts to head a major university committee charged with the task of reexamining our entire set of policies regarding appointment, promotion and tenure. It is our hope that this committee will have suggestions for the simplification and improvement of our policies and procedures ready to submit to the University Senate by next summer. Following debate and consideration by the Senate in the summer months and in the fall of 1974, any modifications could then become a part of our policies and procedures, taking effect in January, 1975.

I am confident that faculty will wish to retain a high degree of involvement and responsibility in these important matters. Indeed, I feel that it is a combination of this kind of faculty responsibility and good administrative management that has kept Illinois State University in a healthy position with respect to such matters as tenure. Our success in convincing members of the Board of Regents that we have acted responsibly in these matters played a significant role in the retention of our tenure system.

We began the current academic year, however, with what loomed as a serious attack on tenure. I credit both the reasonableness of the members of the Board of Regents and the patience and intelligence of the many faculty representatives who dealt with the Board of Regents committee on this important subject with the major accomplishment of averting a disastrous blow to the institution of tenure in the Regency Universities. As discussions on this subject began early in the year, it seemed that we might possibly lose tenure altogether, or at the very least, face the establishment of quotas for tenured faculty as well as periodic reviews of tenure for all faculty. It is to the credit of all parties concerned that the modifications in the tenure rules of the Board of Regents have been relatively mild.

It seems to me that the institution of tenure can survive in the difficult years which we are now facing, only if the faculty who are ultimately responsible for the selection of tenured colleagues maintain a vigorous and healthy procedure by which they are chosen. We are engaged now, yearly, in the reallocation of resources in the University, through which we make it possible for departments to introduce new programs and to adjust to increasing or decreasing demands in older programs. The major funds for reallocation come through the release of personnel no longer needed in programs where the enrollments are scarce. It is for this reason that we urge that departments retain a healthy margin of temporary faculty. There are obvious difficulties in such a system, but the fact is that this university is one of the healthiest in the State today, not just because its enrollments have remained relatively stable, but because we have not had to cut tenured faculty in those programs where reallocations have been necessary.

I do not mean to suggest by these statements that the University should be indifferent to the welfare of faculty who may not yet be tenured. In actuality this University is currently breaking new ground in providing for faculty whose fortunes have been affected adversely by changing needs of the University. During the current semester we have several faculty on educational leaves for the purpose of "retooling" in order to better fit themselves for tomorrow's market in higher education. We also have several faculty who are interning in new areas of experience where they hope to find more opportunity

in the future. During the 1974-75 academic year we plan to make still further educational leaves available to faculty for the purpose of "retooling." We are particularly sensitive to the needs of minority faculty and of women faculty whose family obligations may have prevented them from full achievement of their goals in graduate education. We expect to have our horizons broadened a great deal in this important field by the study currently being undertaken by a university task force on the problem of retraining faculty, and we have already had some helpful suggestions from the Faculty Affairs Committee on this subject.

No report in the area of faculty welfare would be complete without some comment on the University commitment to affirmative action for minorities and for women. In the past two years the University has made significant strides in this area. The salaries of every minority and woman faculty member in the University have been reviewed against a set of fairly demanding criteria, and a number of salary adjustments have been made across the University. This accomplishment does not complete affirmative action, however. We are committed to similar reviews with regard to rank and with regard to tenure, where opportunities have been too frequently confined to whites and to males in the history of American university life. In a larger sense, affirmative action has awakened us to the need for a careful look at not just the salaries and the opportunities available to minority groups and to women, but to the need for a reexamination of the entire faculty with respect to these matters, for we have discovered little pools of inequity here and there throughout the University by the process, and we will be the richer for early attention to and remedies for such inequities.

We are particularly hopeful that, as we turn to attacking the problem of parity, for which the Board of Higher Education has approved a major allotment of funds to this campus in the fall of 1974, we will not only bring average salaries at this university in line with those at leading universities of the State, but that, in doing so, we will be able to ameliorate local inequities among colleges, departments and individuals, as well.

Before leaving the subject of tenure and faculty welfare, on which we have had such productive exchanges with the Board of Regents, I want to make just a few parenthetical remarks about our relationships with the Board. Some years ago, as a member of an AAUP committee with members from several universities under the then Teachers College Board, I took part in the establishment of what was then called the Faculty Liaison Committee. It was the forerunner of what we refer to today as JUAC, the Joint University Advisory Committee. Through our faculty representatives on this committee, members of the Board of Regents get a firsthand glimpse of faculty reactions to matters of interest to all of us. I am sure that this exchange has much to do with the healthy relationship which prevails between Regents and faculty, and I believe that this ongoing communication is a much more effective way of dealing with matters of mutual interest than occasional confrontations.

This year we have added a new dimension to attempts to acquaint the Board of Regents more intimately with our university by embarking on a program involving faculty members in reports concerning academic programs. The Regents have spent several days on our campus this year listening to descriptions of several of our academic programs, taking a personal look at our art, science and education facilities, and getting acquainted with a number of our faculty. The mutual understanding which results from such exchanges can only be productive for the University.

Salary Increments

I know that many of you are concerned about budget, and especially that portion of our budget which is allotted for salary increments. We requested for this purpose the sum of \$1,480,434 and were allotted \$1,233,700 by the Board of Higher Education. You should understand that this sum of money is to be used for salary increases of all personnel in the University, including civil service staff as well as temporary

faculty. We hope to make an inflationary adjustment in this year's salary changes along with the usual merit increments which are now being assigned by each of the departments in the University. We will not, of course, be certain of the amount that we can finally apply for this purpose until the legislature has acted upon our appropriation bills and until they have been signed by the Governor of the State. It is for this reason that we have turned to using an incremental "unit," which can be adjusted according to the appropriation we finally receive and quickly converted to dollars once the legislature and the Governor have acted.

Apart from the above sums, as most of you are aware, we have a \$250,000 sum, approved by the Board of Higher Education for the purpose of achieving salary parity with other leading universities in the state. If this sum is finally approved by the Governor, we will need to take additional action in the fall of 1974 to adjust salaries specifically along the lines of parity. It should be clear that we would have no legal right to divert these funds to other purposes, such as, for instance, further merit increases. We will need, nevertheless, to arrive at an equitable process by which these parity monies can be distributed among our faculty, and we hope that in that process we can remove some of the inequities that we have discovered among departments, colleges and individual faculty members. With the help of the Faculty Status Committee and other appropriate groups, we will be studying through the spring and early summer the methods by which this distribution could take place, but it should be remembered that the objective which we hope to achieve is that our average salaries per rank be on a par with the average salaries per rank in comparable institutions in this state and elsewhere.

Teacher Evaluations

Before closing I should like to comment briefly on some other areas of concern. In talking to both faculty and students I find that one area of mutual concern is that of student evaluations of faculty. Many of our faculty, even those who have no cause to be so, feel threatened by student evaluations. Perhaps it would be more proper to say that they feel threatened by the use made in their departments of student evaluations. Equally, I find that students are negative toward student evaluations of faculty. Some of them are jaded by a process which is repeated so often that they become bored and indifferent to the importance of the task. Others feel threatened by hints of reprisals from faculty who make it their business to analyze hand-writing. I make no mention of the more obvious violation of professional practices on either side of the process. It is not a problem with which I wish to deal at length here, but it does seem to me that we need to put our emphasis on quite another approach. It is the student evaluation of courses in which we ought principally to be interested. By such a process students may inform each other about the desirability or attractiveness of courses. They may also inform faculty of the means by which such courses could be improved.

So far as our evaluation of faculty is concerned, student evaluations form only a small part of the evidence we can bring to such a process. We need to have such evaluations, we need to decide when they ought to be taken (whether, for instance, after a student has graduated, or when he is a senior as against an earlier period when he still has further work to take, possibly from the same instructor), we need to decide what questions ought to be asked of students about courses, and we need to decide what to do with the information we receive in order to use it well.

It seems to me that there are many other factors which should be considered in the evaluation of faculty, and it should be clearly understood that the Faculty Status Committee has directed only that student evaluations must form a part of the evaluation process as it relates to teaching performance. The Faculty Status Committee assumes that other forms of evaluation, including self-appraisal by faculty members, peer reviews of course syllabi and instructional materials, peer reviews of faculty contributions in publications, professional meetings, colloquia, and in other activities by which faculty make their

contributions available to their colleagues, are an essential part of the evaluative process.

Continuing Purpose

I mention that particular problem only in passing, for in talking about the state of the University it seems to me that a much greater problem looms on our horizon or more correctly, is settling down upon us like a pall. Nearly every faculty member with whom I talk these days has a sense of dismay about the intellectual climate of the University. It is a problem by no means confined to our campus. Nearly all higher education seems to have lost sight of its goals and, as well, of its standards. Some people relate the loss of standards to new student power, such as is embodied in student evaluations of faculty members. I think personally that the problem goes much deeper than that. It seems to me that it grows out of a milieu in which we have placed greater emphasis on feelings and have often led ourselves to believe that misguided applications of love could replace our responsibility to be honest to students about their abilities and their performances, and to be truly helpful to students in the selection of their courses of study.

We are selected as faculty because our authority, and by that word I do not mean power, but I mean wisdom, experience, training and expertise, our authority is such that we have special knowledge and expertise which we are expected to transmit to students. To the extent that we are cavalier about the importance of what we offer, to the extent that we are indifferent to such seemingly mundane matters as class attendance, office hours and opportunities to help students experiencing difficulties in our courses, to the extent that we fail to promote standards of excellence and fail to reward varying performances with appropriate recognition, to that extent we contribute to the dismay that all of us feel about the intellectual climate of the University.

There is also a profound challenge which faces us as we examine the trends toward practical and applied programs and toward free electives in universities across the country. Because we want our graduates to get jobs, because we want to keep our enrollments high or increase them, we look not only to programs which appear to have the greatest promise for the moment, but also to courses for which student demand, sometimes born of whimsy seems high. In doing so it is extremely important that we not forget the very fundamental and continuing purpose of the University, which has always been embodied in that group of courses or that body of work which we label general education or university studies or the liberal arts, or what have you. Allow me to list what Sidney Hook has called the "minimum indispensables" which we expect from the student as a result of his work in that core of general education:

- 1) "The ability to communicate clearly and effectively
- 2) Rudimentary knowledge about the world of nature and related matters that are central to rational belief about the place of man in the universe
- 3) An intelligent awareness of the great historical, economic, and social forces shaping our society
- 4) The significant facts and theories about the conflicts of values and ideals in our times
- 5) Methodological sophistication which can sensitize the students or even immunize them to the more obvious fallacies and deceptions of discourse
- 6) An introduction into the cultural legacies of his civilization in its literature, art, and music."

Perhaps we need to keep in mind the story of the elderly lady who was standing in the bus queue, in a driving rain storm, with her dress held firmly over her head. When a friend reminded her that her legs were getting wet, she rejoined that her legs were 60 years old, but that her hat was brand new.

Our challenge is to arrive at that happy compromise by which we adequately preserve the necessary underpinnings of a good general education and yet protect these bright and innovative additions and experiments that prove age has not diminished our interest in educational improvement or our willingness to try out the new.