

Good afternoon - it is traditional for the Chair of the faculty to deliver an address at the final faculty meeting of his or her term.

These past two years have provided a tremendous learning experience for me; I have been exposed to this University in a manner that few faculty ever have the opportunity to see it. I am now appreciative of how complex our University's interrelated operations are, how complicated and difficult its managerial and functional decisions are, and how much ability and strength it takes to succeed in the top leadership of the University - roles in which most of us would fail.

This past year has certainly been event filled. In reflection, most of those events can have a very positive effect for our University and our faculty; how we, the faculty, choose to share in governance will affect the impact of those events...

- (1) Auburn has a new Provost, he is a very able and knowledgeable leader for academics in our institution, he is the first Auburn Provost who was not promoted from within, and he can lead us to the academic excellence that we desire and deserve.
- (2) Auburn has a new, short term President who has an aggressive agenda centered on governance reform upon which he is moving more expeditiously than is the norm in institutions of this size. Governance is changing; we will have a new President within a couple of years which will bring another evolution in our governance.
- (3) Auburn has three new trustees who will receive, to my knowledge, the first ever orientation which begins in a couple of days. The nomination and appointment process for two additional trustees is in process; the dynamics of the Board are changing - and governance is changing.
- (4) The faculty-lead JAC complaint filed in 2001 has finally reached closure. The SACS probation requires documentation of the limits of the authority of the Board and the trustees - and safeguards that future acts will not repeat the past - all of which is the result of the external assessment which we sought. With this closure, Auburn can look forward.
- (5) The long-standing lawsuit between Auburn and SACS has been withdrawn and the process toward meeting our mutual objectives has begun.
- (6) The long-delayed SACS re-affirmation Visit has concluded and the preliminary report delivered at the exit meeting was very positive affirming the internal health of our University and commitment of the faculty.
- (7) The November coaching search debacle \*\*rephrase to make it explicitly the Nov. search\*\* has also reached closure. Then President Walker accepted responsibility and ultimately (8) resigned as President of Auburn. - actually two significant events...
- (9) AND - this past year the faculty adopted and has now implemented electronic voting to elect its officers. 673 faculty voted Even the apolitical have come forward to participate - faculty governance is also changing.

These nine major events - are each one important - collectively, the events are of greater significance than the apparent sum of the individual events. Some of the changes that have occurred have exacted a toll on our University; the aftermath of change can be opportunity or chaos. Our choices determine the magnitude of benefit to be derived from the events and changes or the degree of chaos

Today I move from the role of faculty Chair and become the, second ever, Faculty Advisor to the Board of Trustees. Our faculty seat at the Board table will be as valuable to us as we choose to make it. We had pursued a faculty position at the Board table for more than a decade. I will work with Willie and Conner to optimize the opportunity for the faculty to influence the Board - it is their role, without me, to influence the administration.

The absolute best and most rewarding part of the past two years has been the opportunity to get to know and work with another group of truly wonderful faculty members. Paula Sullenger and Barb Streumpler are treasures of this University - hard working faculty who have dedicated themselves in a most unselfish way in service to the larger good.

I have learned so much from - and appreciate the leadership provided by colleagues Bill Gale, Chris Rodgers, Leann Lamke, Debra Cobia and Willie Larkin, as well as the guidance of Bruce Gladden - whose consultation and contribution has been exceptionally valuable - most of these are all colleagues who I hardly knew two-years ago.

I also had the opportunity to visit almost every Departmental faculty, over 550 faculty total, and am ever proud to be counted as one of their colleagues. It was with a sense of true pride that I listened to all of the accolades for our faculty and University by the Chair of the SACS team. I don't need a survey to re-affirm the dedication and quality of effort of Auburn faculty.

What I wish for Auburn and for the faculty at this juncture -

- I hope that we will determine if we are at the end of one era and the beginning of another - or if we will remain mired in the murky past
- I hope that we, the faculty, will continue to communicate with the administration and the trustees - and that they will learn from and follow our example
- I hope that we can focus our energy through the next year and years on advancing our University and on attracting the President that we need and deserve.
- I hope that we find closure -
  - On the coaching matter - in Dr. Walker's accepting responsibility and ultimately resigning
  - On the JAC complaint and all matters of question that occurred prior to its filing - in the SACS probation and the subsequent reform of Board authority
- I hope that we can hold persons accountable for their acts and yet somehow get past our "zero tolerance" for the human error
- I hope that the continuing catalysts for rumor will be supplanted by communication of fact - and that the perceived necessity for conjecture, speculation and conspiracy theories will diminish
- I hope that we will understand that the resignation of Mr Lowder and/or others is not a requisite for Auburn being a great, comprehensive land-grant institution
- I hope that we will be continually cognizant that our acts and actions are sending a current message to candidates who may consider becoming our new President

Congratulations to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, thanks to Paula and my thanks to you for having given me this opportunity to serve. As the Chinese curse goes - may you live in interesting times - I have lived in interesting times.

Thank you