

**Annual Address to the Faculty
President Robert J. Jones
Campus Center Ballroom
Tuesday, April 22, 2014
2:30 p.m.**

Good afternoon and thanks for being here because I know how busy this time of year can be.

As we approach the end of the academic year and graduation which is only a few weeks away, I am reminded that for 170 years, the University at Albany has prepared tens of thousands of young minds for a lifetime of success.

The graduates of the Class of 2014 will join our 160,000 living alumni in every state and more than 115 countries around the world.

As they anticipate Spring Commencement and the successful futures awaiting them when they leave campus, I find myself also anticipating a future of success and excellence for this great university at this pivotal point in its history.

For 170 years, the faculty, staff and leaders of the University at Albany have found ways to celebrate and advance this institution, from a 2-year Normal School to the major public research university that we are today.

Our history reminds us that one of the greatest constants of this institution has been change. Change has been the avenue to growth, to advancement and to transformation – to the shape and form of a public research University un-like most and one that could not have been imagined at its inception in 1844.

I am thinking about the future of our great University at Albany that we cannot yet imagine and that we must stretch to envision. I'm here today to encourage us to embrace bold change together, because it is now and has always been the pathway to a future of excellence for this great public research University.

Last Fall, I identified four key areas for change—my four stakes in the ground—that represent opportunities to advance UAlbany to the next level of academic excellence.

While the list is not meant to be comprehensive, it does provide a framework to organize and prioritize our efforts. Let me quickly review them and mention a few of the ways we are embracing change:

The first is a concerted effort to expand our portfolio of degree-granting programs with a focus on high need areas.

Historically, UAlbany has not been allowed to evolve as a comprehensive research university as have the other University Centers. Nonetheless, it did evolve into a research intensive University primarily on the strength of social science and liberal arts programs.

Today, UAlbany is the largest higher education entity in the Capitol Region and the only public research university option.

We can proudly claim 8 graduate programs ranked in the nation's top 25, 12 in the top 50, and an additional 17 in the top 100—that's 37 top-ranked programs—and the innovation to create highly unique and successful research centers such as the world's only RNA Institute, the Cancer Research Center, and the greatest assembly of scientists in Atmospheric Sciences in the nation.

We are working to develop and launch new degree programs in areas such as Engineering; Allied Health, Biomedical and Human Health Sciences; and Big Data Analytics.

These are all high needs areas where we can capitalize on UAlbany's considerable academic strengths to deliver graduates to the fastest growing occupations across the state and in the Capital Region, including materials engineers, computer hardware engineers, biomedical engineers, systems software , network and computers systems administrators, and medical scientists.

The second key area for change focuses on recruiting more out-of-state and international students.

While our primary commitment will always be to serving residents of New York State, our current recruitment practices are no longer sufficient to ensure enrollments or tuition revenues, on which we are increasingly dependent.

Three data points illustrate the urgency of the challenge in this area:

- **Today, 88% of our students come from the state of New York. Only 5% of our students come from other states in the US, and about 7% international.**
- **Since 2008, total enrollment has slowly dropped by almost 5% (from 18,202 to a low of 17,142 in 2011).**

- **Looking ahead, we can see the number of 4 year olds across 62 of 64 NYS counties is significantly lower today than a decade ago. And the number is projected to decline even further in the coming decade.**

Thus, if we wish to recover enrollment losses sustained over the past 6 years and maximize tuition revenues that are needed to finance the mission, we must expand our geographic reach, and then improve our retention and graduation rates.

Under the leadership of Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Bob Andrea, we have embarked on a more aggressive enrollment management strategy.

Expanded recruitment efforts particularly for undergraduates continue to occur for both domestic and international students.

Domestically, the University added a national recruiter allowing us to expand our recruitment presence into new states including California, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

The University has also expanded its presence out-of-state with the addition of part-time recruiters to support on-going efforts in the northeast and in Southern California.

This effort has resulted in an increase (40%) over the previous recruitment cycle in the number of out-of-state contacts with students and guidance counselors through high school visits and college fairs and has led to an 8.9% increase in inquiries.

Future plans include continuing to increase out-of-state presence through strategic travel in the Mid-Atlantic region and the Southwest.

Plans are also in place to expand communication and outreach to targeted areas beyond New York including California, Florida, and Texas through strategic use of the College Board's PSAT Student Search Program.

Similarly, international recruitment efforts also continued to increase during the 2013-2014 recruitment cycle, with expanded efforts in India and recruitment occurring for the first time in Sri Lanka and Scandinavia.

These efforts have led to a 35% increase in inquiries from international students over the previous recruitment cycle.

The development of meaningful partnerships and agreements has also become a part of the University's international recruitment strategy.

The University continues to develop dual degree agreements like the one recently completed with Dokuz Eylul (DEU), Turkey for programs in Business and Interdisciplinary International Relations.

Plans are underway to increase the involvement of alumni in international recruitment efforts and the University hosted its first ever admitted student reception for international students in South Korea earlier this month.

Although recruitment is limited at the graduate level, targeted recruitment of sponsored international graduate students has occurred and new dual degree agreements like those recently completed with Istanbul University and Hacettepe University in Turkey continue to be explored.

The progress to date has been encouraging with:

- **Total out-of-state campus enrollment for undergraduate and graduate, international and non-New York students, has increased 8.2% from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013**
- **Fall 2013 domestic out-of-state new freshmen enrollment increased by 12.4% from 2012, and 25.9% since 2011.**
- **Fall 2013 undergraduate international student enrollment, freshmen and transfers, increased by 11% from the previous year and 41.4% since 2011.**
- **Similarly international graduate enrollment has increased by 20% since 2011.**

We expect the upward trend in new student enrollment for undergraduate and graduate students to continue for Fall 2014.

We believe our more aggressive enrollment management strategy will enhance the campus environment as we move toward the goal of doubling the number of non-resident student to 24% in the next five years.

The third key area for change will require us to broaden our role as a University engaged in the community.

Since last Fall, the community engagement stake is advancing on two fronts under the leadership of Associate Vice President Miriam Tremontozzi.

First, we are working to build institutional capacity to support and value engagement through

- **an annual awards program for exemplary community engagement—Join me this Friday at 5:00 in University Hall;**
- **the development of a data collection system to enable us to document and tell our compelling story of public engagement;**
- **and initiating a quarterly e-newsletter to illustrate the great work so many of you do. Effective communication is vital to this initiative.**

In addition to building our own institutional capacity, we are working to be a more strategic and productive partner in tackling the complex social and public issues around us. To these ends, we can make valuable contributions to the “Opportunity Agendas” in our midst. UAlbany is presently leading in two efforts:

- **First, in the Albany Promise Cradle to Career Partnership, which is working to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students in the City.**
- **I am a co-convener of the partnership along with Chancellor Zimpher, and Albany Schools' Superintendent Dr. Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard. We are looking forward to welcoming a new executive director in May and to hosting this important community engagement right here at UAlbany.**
- **Secondly, City of Albany Mayor, Kathy Sheehan, is calling the City's non-profit community to consider ways in which we can work collaboratively to help our city achieve efficiencies, improve systems and services, and reduce costs. Your expertise in areas ranging from public policy and human services to urban planning and economic development are vital to this work.**

Going forward, over the next 6 to 12 months we will pilot and implement a new data collection system, begin a communications campaign, and work to advance several strategic partnerships.

Finally, the fourth stake requires us to find ways to grow our resources to fulfill our ambition. We must find new ways to finance the mission.

As a public university and a member of the largest public system of higher education in the country, we must continue to press for State support of our mission. State support contributes only 12% of our operating budget in the current fiscal year. Twelve percent.

New York State's approved budget for 2015 included four allocations to SUNY that are expected to benefit UAlbany. They are:

- **An increase of \$ 7 million to the overall budget for State-operated campuses (maintenance of effort)**
- **An increase of \$1.3 million for TAP**
- **An increase of \$700 million for capital projects and critical maintenance, systemwide**
- **And spending authority for approximately \$3.9 million in new tuition revenue for NYSUNY 2020**

We patiently await the Chancellor’s determination of allocations for critical maintenance and maintenance of effort, though neither is expected to match the targets we requested.

Specifically, UAlbany did not receive \$3.5 million recurring and \$5.5 million non-recurring for maintenance of effort under NYSUNY 2020 to cover mandated, union negotiated salary increases.

This means that we must look within our own budget for opportunities to re-allocate resources to cover what is now, essentially, an unfunded mandate.

In the meantime, we are already looking ahead to the 2015 session. We must do all we can in the next year to make dramatic improvement in legislative outcomes, at both the State and Federal levels.

Success in the State budget process requires effective advocacy year-round. Success at the Federal level requires the patience to work a long-term strategy, and time and attention spent in Washington DC, with our delegation members and also with key agency officials.

Last month, I was accompanied by Paul Agis, Everette Joseph and Chris Thorncroft in meetings with Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand and Representative Tonko.

While your colleagues noted what appears to be an inordinate investment of effort for three 20-minute meetings, I assure you our potential return on investment is well worth several travel days per year.

And in the future, I expect I will need to call on more of you to join me in these efforts. Vice President and Chief of Staff, Leanne Wirkkula, is currently working to restructure our Government Relations operation and anticipates welcoming new leadership for the portfolio by summer.

In addition to greater financial resources, we also are working to grow the faculty. To date, our New York SUNY2020 plan has allowed us to hire 152 new faculty and academic staff across all colleges.

Over the course of the five-year plan, UAlbany will hire approximately 200 new faculty and researchers aligned with the University's strategic initiatives that are focused on strength and opportunity. This is the largest faculty expansion since the 1970s.

Equally as important as growing the faculty by headcount is intensifying our faculty excellence. To me, this means faculty working at the cutting edge of their academic disciplines who also work effectively across our mission.

A world class faculty produces the cutting edge research that feeds a captivating story and compels the engagement of people and the investment of resources in this unique place called an American public research university.

Faculty excellence begets excellence in research, teaching and learning, and outreach and engagement.

Faculty excellence attracts the best and brightest students and generates the external support to advance the reputation and excellence of UA... It is faculty excellence that will drive the four stakes.

On Fundraising: Under the leadership of Vice President Fardin Sanai, the University's development team is working double time to build the endowment and maximize revenue streams from philanthropic sources.

The University at Albany Foundation's endowment has grown from \$15 million in 2004 to more than \$45 million today. Our goal is to build the endowment to \$100 million, in part by capitalizing on the momentum in giving over the past four years.

- We have hired an additional development officer to ensure that we have the capacity to secure major gifts.**

- **The Annual Fund, the bedrock of philanthropic support for UAlbany, is focused on increasing giving at every level, and especially on expanding membership of the 1844 Society, which recognizes donors of \$1,000 or more to the University.**
- **Lee Serravillo, Director of Alumni Relations, is mounting a robust roster of alumni relations events, across the country and around the world, that supports giving by engaging our alumni, reminding them of what they valued about their own UAlbany experience, and illustrating what makes their school special today.**

Our fundraising strategy eventually will culminate in the launch of a multiyear comprehensive campaign with the primary goal of raising resources to help finance our ambitions across the mission, with specific focus on scholarships to keep a UAAlbany education accessible and affordable to all students who have the intellectual ability to compete for admission.

Today, I also want to talk about excellence from an organizational perspective. As President, nary a day passes that I do not contemplate the set of organizational characteristics that will nurture and advance our academic ambition rather than hinder it.

What kind of university do we want to shape for the future generations of faculty, staff and students?

What does it mean to cultivate a culture of excellence at a public research university?

How they will view us tomorrow depends in large part on our collective efforts as visionary and prudent stewards today.

- **As prudent stewards we must continue to use our precious resources wisely, including the deployment of facilities and people. We must be accountable but that doesn't mean allowing ourselves to be risk averse.**
- **We must embrace innovative, out of the box thinking. More money will ease our burden, of course, but it will not deliver the best answers to our greatest challenges—strategic thinking, in the context of a planning culture, will.**
- **More than ever before, we must cultivate an organizational culture that is simultaneously more entrepreneurial and service-oriented.**

- **We must be more engaged, more inclusive and more inviting.**
- **We must be nimble and collaborate more effectively across units to thwart the inflexibility of silos that grow thick over time. Certain initiatives, such as Diversity and Inclusion, Community Engagement and Internationalization, will strengthen and progress more quickly when understood as collective responsibilities and celebrated as collective successes.**
- **We must establish and maintain productive dialogues on everything from effective governance, to the shared responsibility of managing the institutional brand, and the indispensable role of diversity in our future.**

- **We must advance our agenda together. To this end, I am launching a departmental tour so that I can hear directly from faculty in all 43 departments across campus, and I expect to initiate a new compact planning process that will directly engage the Deans as primary academic partners in the strategic allocation of resources to the academic units.**
- **Finally, we must accept the institutional imperative for steady and effective leadership.**
- **Over the next 18 months, I anticipate a number of leadership transitions. As you know, I welcomed a new Chief of Staff in February and soon expect to announce the results of active searches for a new Chief Financial Officer as well leadership in Government Relations.**

- **As previously announced, the searches for a new Provost and Vice Provost for International Education will launch in the next few weeks. And I expect a few dean searches sprinkled in for good measure as we accept the retirements of some exceptional University citizens who have gone above and beyond to serve with distinction.**
- **Each search presents an opportunity for a representative search committee to identify and recommend the leaders best suited to join us in crafting the best future for the University at Albany.**
- **We must maintain a steadfast focus on a vision for academic excellence. We must each understand our individual role in terms of our contributions to the academic enterprise.**

- **Whether you are a tenured full professor, a dedicated part-time instructor, or a staff member in facilities, IT, or student success; whether you are a proud member of CSEA, UUP, or management/confidential – each of us must understand how one’s job is aligned with the institutional mission.**
- **Each of us must understand how our efforts—individually and collectively—advance a culture of excellence at our great public research university.**

In the not too distant future, I envision a University at Albany that is, once again, the crown jewel of the SUNY system.

- **A university that is at the top of the list for graduating high school students and their families.**

- **A university known as the place to receive a world class education at an affordable price.**
- **A university center that leads the system in sponsored research, with the management systems and practices befitting a world-class research operation.**
- **A university center that leads SUNY with respect to selectivity of the incoming freshman class, diversity of the student body, and 4-year graduation rates.**
- **A university center with a robust portfolio of academic programs in the STEM fields to balance its considerable strengths in social sciences, arts and professional schools.**

- **A university center with deeply engaged alumni, a mutually beneficial relationship with business partners, and the largest—and growing—endowment.**
- **A university center that is a destination of choice for the next generation of great minds and great leaders, among prospective faculty and students.**

We have before us an aggressive agenda for change. Well managed change has been the avenue to growth, to advancement and to transformation. Our challenge is to embrace bold change, to manage it well, and to do so together in the spirit of collaborative leadership, because it is now—and has always been—the pathway to a future of excellence for this great public research University.

Thank you.