

Remarks by UAlbany Interim President George M. Philip
Spring Faculty Meeting
Performing Arts Center, Main Theater
Thursday, April 23, 2009
1:00 p.m.

- **Thank you, John, and thank you so much for your dedicated service as Senate chair. It is always a pleasure to work with you.**
- **Good afternoon and welcome, everyone.**
- **If things had gone according to plan, you would have had the Dalai Lama – a Nobel Peace Prize winner – speaking to you this week.**
- **Instead you have me.**
- **It is just as well. Today’s meeting is all about the University at Albany, an institution I know well and am very proud to serve.**

- **We have had a challenging year and yet wherever I look I see progress and accomplishment. Your energy and dedication make this possible. I deeply appreciate all the ways you make UAlbany such a remarkable community.**
- **Your impact is reflected throughout the institution but perhaps most notably in the achievements of our students. I hope you noted the list of 11 outstanding UAlbany students who were honored with the Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence.**
- **Their success is a reflection of the strong foundation you have offered them during their time at UAlbany. These students are a tribute to your teaching, scholarship and research.**
- **There is a special person I want to recognize today – Vice President for Finance and Business Kathryn**

Lowery.

- **After 31 years of outstanding service to UAlbany, Kathy is retiring on May 1.**
- **Kathy earned her bachelor's and master's degrees here - and in 1978 - accepted her first job with the University. Since then, she has earned nine promotions and the Chancellor's Excellence Award in Professional Service.**
- **On a personal note, Kathy has been a tremendous help to me. I greatly appreciate her wise advice and leadership.**
- **On behalf of our entire community, I thank you, Kathy, for the vital role you played in the transformation of UAlbany. *[Applause]***
- **There will be a reception for Kathy on May 4 at 3 p.m. in the University Art Museum. You are all**

invited. We hope to see you there.

- **I am pleased to announce that Steve Beditz has agreed to serve as interim vice president for finance and business following Kathy's retirement. He is also a UAlbany alumnus. I am confident that Steve and the seasoned team in Finance and Business will continue to provide excellent service and fiscal management.**
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- **Over the past few weeks, I have held a series of town hall meetings with Provost Susan Phillips and Vice President Lowery to discuss UAlbany's current budget situation.**

- **While the budget news is grim, our discussions at these meetings were open and honest. Many of you asked important questions and shared your point of view.**
- **Now more than ever, it's important to maintain an open dialogue. At the end of my remarks today, I will invite your questions. I hope you will have some for me.**
- **A year ago when I spoke to you, no one had any idea of the extent of the economic downturn. Nor could we predict the extent of state budget cuts and their impact on SUNY.**
- **Like so many universities across the state and nation, we face the difficult challenge of balancing a much depleted budget.**

- **When all is said and done, some institutions will come out winners and some will be losers. I am confident that by working together, thinking strategically and through open discussion, we can position ourselves to emerge a winner.**
- **It won't be easy but I believe we have the core strengths to accomplish this.**
- **In our current-year campus budget, we have already had to cut \$14.2 million**
- **For the 2009-2010 fiscal year, we now anticipate further reductions of at least \$4 million.**
- **In addressing the latest round of cuts, we'll need to direct University resources to support our priorities and strengths. We are being guided by the principles and priorities developed by the campus Budget Advisory Group.**

- **These principles call on us to identify and support what is most essential to advancing our core mission. Our mission is to provide high-quality undergraduate and graduate education, and produce scholarly knowledge and creative work.**
- **If we plan to emerge a winner, we need to seek greater efficiencies in what we do. We have begun that work with such efforts as our energy conservation initiatives.**
- **In seeking greater efficiencies, we need to right-size our organization. Believe me, right-sizing an organization is difficult. Brace yourselves for some tough decision-making.**
- **We will also be working more aggressively to increase our revenues from sources other than state tax support. This is already happening on many fronts.**

- **School of Business alumni at Deloitte and the Deloitte Foundation committed \$525,000 to the School. This gift will support faculty research and establish and maintain state-of-the-art teaching facilities within the school's new building.**
- **To date, the School has raised a total of \$2.7 million toward its building campaign goal of \$9.75 million.**
- **Private support is critical to achieving our goals and is certain to become even more important in the future.**
- **For many months, Provost Phillips, the deans of our schools and colleges, senior administrators, faculty and staff have been working to address our budget challenges.**

- **In their efforts, I have seen their outstanding commitment and dedication to UAlbany. It has been an honor to work with you and know that we all want the best for this institution.**
- **Like the phoenix rising, I am confident that we will emerge stronger from this difficult period.**
- **To paraphrase President Obama, there are signs of recovery but more pain is likely ahead and we all need to help build a stronger future.**
- **A positive sign for the SUNY system is the appointment of Nancy Zimpher as the new chancellor. I have met and talked with her, and been very encouraged by what I've heard.**
- **She will be touring our campus on June 4, and we hope you will have the opportunity to meet her and learn more about her plans for SUNY.**

- **UAlbany, meanwhile, is going forward on many fronts.**
- **We see this in our thriving research enterprise. Last year, your work attracted nearly \$392 million in research funding, an all-time high.**
- **Based on your activity this year, we are optimistic we will be able to sustain that high level. For federal stimulus program funds alone, you have submitted 45 grant applications.**
- **Altogether, 255 faculty and staff members have attracted funding for their research. We know how competitive the research environment it is. Whether you have attracted \$10,000 or \$1 million or more, it's a tribute to the strength of your research.**
- **Speaking of a million dollars, let me tell you about what I'd like to call "the million-dollar club."**

- **In recent months, we received word of eight UAlbany research and service initiatives that have been funded at \$1 million or more. Hence “the million-dollar club.”**
- **These awards are from federal funding agencies, major corporations, and New York State.**
- **They reflect the impressive range of life-enhancing research and service under way at UAlbany.**
- **Early intervention services to children with developmental problems is the focus of one of our “million-dollar club” projects.**
- **A \$3.4 million grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Development is funding this joint effort by our School of Public Health and the state Department of Health.**

- **Two members of the School's Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics -- principal investigator Charlotte M. Druschel [*Drew shul*] and Erin Bell – are on the project team.**
- **The services UAlbany provides for children with autism and their families received a boost through new state budget appropriations totaling \$1.5 million for our Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.**
- **This center, led by Kristin Christodulu of the Psychology Department, is a valuable resource for many families.**
- **Also in the “million-dollar club” are three faculty members whose research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health.**
- **Two are working to advance our understanding of diseases and possible treatments.**

- One is Li Niu [*Lee New*] of the Department of Chemistry, who received \$1.5 million to support research into potential drug candidates for a number of neurological disorders.
- The other is Ewan [*U an*] McNay of the Department of Psychology, who is studying how diseases such as type 2 diabetes increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. His grant is \$1.3 million.
- Melinda Larsen, of the Department of Biological Sciences, is collaborating with a computer scientist to develop mathematical equations that can describe changes and movements of cells during organ development. She received \$1.5 million from NIH.

- **Another significant project is the new National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, spearheaded by our School of Social Welfare to prepare strong and effective managers and supervisors for child welfare systems.**
- **School of Social Welfare Dean Katharine Briar-Lawson and Mary McCarthy, director of UAlbany's Social Work Education Consortium, are principal investigators on the grant, which will bring \$1.4 million to UAlbany.**
- **Our College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering continues to attract major funding. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new expansion of the college's research complex, IBM announced it will extend its R&D partnership with the college through 2013.**

- **By that time, the company will have invested in excess of \$1 billion in the college's research facilities.**
- **Finally... I want to note the recent grant to College of Arts and Sciences Dean Elga Wulfert.**
- **Somehow, in her spare time away from her college administrative duties, she found time to secure nearly \$1 million from the National Institute of Mental Health for her work on gambling addiction.**
- **Congratulations to the members of our \$1 million club and to all our faculty researchers. With our impressively strong research enterprise, we are sure to emerge a winner.**
- **UAlbany faculty are nationally recognized leaders in many fields. This is a great benefit for our students – and a boost to our national reputation.**

- **Four recent national awards highlight the breadth and depth of our faculty strengths.**
- **Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy Dean Jeffrey Straussman was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.**
- **Jason Lane in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies was named a Fulbright New Century Scholar.**
- **Professor Teri Harrison in the Department of Communication and Theresa Pardo of the Center for Technology in Government received the 2007 Best Paper Award from the Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology.**

- **This is the leading journal in the field of information science. Teri and Theresa, along with Ramon Gil-Garcia, Fiona Thompson, and Dubravka Juraga [Du brav ka Ju rag a] at the Center for Technology in Government received the award.**
- **Our Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program won the 2009 Outstanding Training Program award from the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies...**
- **and our School of Business was ranked among the top 15 graduate schools most highly rated by students.**
- **The school's MBA degree program was also recently ranked ninth in offering the "greatest opportunity for women."**

- **These rankings were compiled by the Princeton Review – which we have not always favorably regarded. But in these cases, we believe they reflect the strength of the School’s teaching and research.**
- **All this success clearly indicates we are getting stronger and together we will emerge as winners.**
- **We also have great news on the admissions front.**
- **While we will have a smaller entering freshman class, it will most certainly be a better-prepared and stronger group of students.**
- **Applications for freshman admission reached an all-time high of just over 22,000. We anticipate an admittance rate of less than 50 percent, which means we are able to be more selective.**

- **Our Group I admitted students are about six percent more than last year. SAT scores of our traditional admits are up six points. We expect our final enrollment will reflect quality gains.**
- **We are on target to enroll a freshman class of 2,250, which is 100 fewer than 2008.**
- **Our transfer applications are up more than 10 percent over last year. We will enroll 1,350, which is 100 fewer than 2008.**
- **Applications for graduate admissions are up five percent, compared to last year.**
- **My thanks to the many faculty and staff who turned out this weekend to welcome our prospective students and to all who have helped throughout the year to recruit a well-prepared group of students to UAlbany.**

- **Many of you are also helping with another important institution-wide effort – our self-study in preparation for re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. I thank steering committee co-chairs Sue Faerman and Steve Messner and all the committee members for excellent progress so far. We can expect a draft report for campus review in the early fall.**

- **Now it's my very great pleasure to recognize some outstanding UAlbany faculty and staff.**

- **As many of you know, our Collins Fellow Award was established to recognize and celebrate exceptional, institution-wide service.**

- **I'm proud to introduce this year's new Collins Fellow: Professor Lindsay Childs of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.**

- We will celebrate Professor Childs' designation at another event, but I ask him to stand for a moment to accept our applause.
- I am also pleased to recognize colleagues who have been selected for the 2009 President's Awards for Excellence. They will be honored at a special event on May 7 to which you are all invited. For now, let me read the names of these special individuals:
- For excellence in academic service:
Professor Kwadwo Sarfoh [*Quad wō Sar fō*],
Africana Studies

- **For excellence in professional service:**

**Janice Bogan, Office of the Vice President for
Research**

Beth Quackenbush, Office for Sponsored Programs

**Winifred Kutchukian [*Kut chuk i an*], University
Libraries**

Corinna Ripps-Schaming, Art Museum

- **For excellence in support service:**

Julie Deden, Office of the Registrar

**Suzanne Peplowski, Office of Human Resources
Management**

**Rebecca Salinas, Office of Communications and
Marketing**

- **For excellence in teaching:**

Professor Mitchell Earleywine, Psychology

Professor Ingrid Fisher, Accounting

- **For excellence in teaching by a part-time instructor**

Dr. Mary Corrigan, Social Welfare

Dr. C. Aida Torres-Hewitt, Languages, Literatures & Cultures

- **For excellence in teaching by a teaching assistant:**

Elise Bouhet, Languages, Literatures & Cultures

Kristy Thacker, Psychology...

- and for excellence in research:

Professor Laurie Feldman, Psychology

Professor Alan Lizotte, Criminal Justice

Professor Phillip McCallion, Social Welfare

**Professor Serge Oktyabrsky [*Surge Ok ta bur ski*],
College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering**

- Please join me in congratulating all these exceptional colleagues and thanking them for their dedication and contributions to our University.

[Applause]

- **There is another outstanding member of our community I'd like to recognize today and this is the dean of our No.2 ranked School of Criminal Justice – Julie Horney.**
- **At the end of this semester, she is moving on to Penn State. She is a great scholar and administrator, and has befriended so many during her time here. We will miss her great personal warmth and collegiality.**
- **I'd like to conclude today's remarks by talking about our students. At the end of the day, what we do is all about them.**

- **In so many ways, you are providing them a strong foundation for success. You do this in our classrooms, laboratories, libraries, counseling center, residence halls, and athletic fields.**
- **I want to mention four national awards that spotlight your excellence in promoting student success.**
- **The American Historical Association honored Distinguished Teaching Professor Warren Roberts of the Department of History with the Nancy Lyman Roelker prize for the mentoring of undergraduate students.**
- **Trudi E. Jacobson, head of user education programs at University Libraries, won the Miriam Dudley Instruction Librarian Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries...**

- and our Counseling Center received two national awards for its alcohol prevention and intervention program. One of the awards was the Grand Gold Medal from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators for the top Student Affairs program in the country.
- My congratulations to these award winners and my thanks to all who mentor and support our students.
- These awards are impressive, but I'm sure you would agree that the accomplishments of our students are ultimately the best measure of our success. There are so many examples.
- Our students' excellence in undergraduate research is being recognized by new provost's awards, which also recognize each student's faculty mentor.

- **Three remarkable students are the first recipients of these awards:**

Karime Gazdik, anthropology, mentored by Professor Marilyn Masson;

Jennifer Kowalski, English, mentored by Professor Paul Stasi; and

Laura Mariconda, biology, mentored by Professor John Schmidt.

- **The complete lists of these and other award recipients are among the materials available when you entered.**
- **UAlbany students are tremendous contributors to our community.**

- **I was so impressed by the six students who survived the massive earthquake in Sichuan, China and came here to study. In showing their gratitude to our community, they volunteered with Capital District Habitat for Humanity to help complete one of the organization's latest homes.**
- **More proof of our talented students will be on display at our University Art Museum, starting May 1st. It is the annual exhibit featuring the work of our MFA candidates.**
- **Our student-athletes are standouts in the classroom and on the playing fields. Sixteen athletes earned selection to America East Conference all-academic teams.**

- **Eleven members of our football team were chosen for the Northeast Conference academic honor roll. Forty-three percent of our athletes have grade point averages of 3.0 or higher.**
- **Finally, I'd like to show you a brief video that was produced by our Office of Communications and Marketing. It shows how a group of our students and faculty spent their school break. It's one more example of the impact you all have, one more cause for great pride, and another reason UAlbany will emerge a winner.**
- ***[Show New Orleans video and at conclusion George speaks again.]***
- **This video is available on our website.**

- **Once more, thanks to everyone for all you do to put “The World Within Reach.” It’s your dedication and hard work that will assure UAlbany emerges a winner.**
- **Now I’d like to open the floor for questions.**