

Fall 2014 Assembly

Chancellor's Address

- Good morning. Goeie morgen, Buenos dias, Bonjour! And, most of all, thank you for being here and for having me as your Chancellor and President. Thank you also Regent Bancroft for your generous introduction. If I'm smiling, it's because I'm thrilled, honored and inspired to be at TWU which I guess makes me the 1st TWU president to begin her tenure in *this millennium*. I have now been here 6 weeks and have enjoyed the cooler Texan summer! I think that some of that cooler weather actually followed me from Ohio..... I would be remiss if I didn't thank all of you for the warm hospitality that you have given me. I have been completely overwhelmed by everyone's generosity. Thank you.
- I don't want to cram so much into my remarks this morning that there isn't time for discussion with you...after all, if there is one thing that I am most focused on right now is to be on a 'listening journey' —and will be for some time, so I very much look forward to our conversation throughout the day. I want to learn and absorb as much as I can from all perspectives as I get my feet on the ground both here at TWU and in Texas.
- I thought I'd share with you a bit about myself and as I said in my first day email to you, it very much relates to the symbolism of Pioneer Woman (image). Those words of "marking a trail in a pathless wilderness" pretty closely describes my own personal path. A path with many steps...a path that led me to Texas Woman's University, to the West, and to the Urban West...
- I think it is important that I do this sharing, for as I look back on my life, I can see how my path has shaped my values, my confidence, my belief in people and my leadership style.
- What I propose to do is the following: 1) share a couple of stories about my professional life so far that exemplify the kinds of things I believe in and what my underlying thinking was; 2) then I want to show you why it is not a coincidence that I am standing here before you—and I will highlight how special this place really is and why it attracted me away from a place where I had built many friendships; 3) and lastly, I would like to offer a framework for how we might envision the path ahead of us and ask you for your thoughts.
- But first, I would like to say something about the images that are being displayed. The images you are seeing are physical parts of the campuses you walk by every day and

likely have grown used to; perhaps the familiarity masking the beauty that exists all around us here. There is a favorite quote of mine that speaks to that idea, and I think to each of us as we embrace this university as a great place but also often thru an old lens...instead of perhaps thru a lens that is dynamic and responsive and full of nuances. It's a quote from the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer that says: (slide/images)

“Thus the task is not so much to see what no one yet has seen, but to think what no one yet has thought about that which everybody sees.” (repeat for emphasis). I think that frames the continual challenge of higher education and TWU...taking what everybody sees and thinking about it in new ways.”

- So here is my background:
 - I was born in Belgium, as most of you know by now (pic of Belgian chocolates), a place where I still have most of my family and where we make the best chocolates in the world (I am biased). (in an era when what America did for Europe in the 1940's was valued and cherished. As an aside, in Belgium, even today, all school children are required to visit one of the many American cemeteries so that the children don't forget the sacrifice and role that this great country played to achieve world peace.)
 - I'm a product of an all-girls Catholic boarding school and attended what many would say is the finest if not oldest university in Belgium and even in Europe, founded in 1425, the Middle Ages! (slide). My background is in Germanic Philology and Applied Linguistics and I focused most of my career in the US in the areas of foreign language education and second language acquisition.
 - Where the Pioneer begins to emerge was me shaping my own path to learning and experiencing the world. It was not enough for me to sit in a classroom; I was going to learn directly on my own, going to England to learn English or Mexico to learn Spanish. My family never knew what or where I might next go, but it was on this path that my interest in linguistics emerged. I always thought of languages as windows onto the world...the reality looks slightly different depending on the perspective or window you choose.
 - I came to America in 1983 (USF slide). Along the way I became fascinated with the American higher education process and discovered the power of technology.
 - From USF, a 50 year old university, large urban (50,000 students), mostly commuter, research I institution, I went to Miami University, a 200 year old residential public university considered a Public Ivy and now TWU...
- Enough about my background...here are my takeaways from these experiences that will guide how I approach my responsibilities and give you an insight into my management style.

- (image) First, and above all for me, it's all about relationships. My nature is to build relationships at every level and build them in an atmosphere of openness, integrity and frankness. One of my proudest accomplishments is the interdisciplinary PHD I built at USF: a collaboration between two colleges offering a joint degree. Still one of the only ones in the country.
 - (image) Next, I want to understand how our key stakeholders think and how they perceive TWU. Using this as a backdrop, we can clarify the niche in the market that we can fill better than anyone else.
 - (image) Third, I want to understand all three campuses. I know from experience that each has a distinctive culture and personality, yet our strength comes from being united.
 - Lastly, I frame our work within the paradigm of the "Triple Bottom Line", with a focus on People, Profits, and the Planet, with the explicit intent of respecting and balancing each one with the other.
 - All that to say that I believe in the wisdom of multiple approaches, in building on strengths and in niche marketing, and I like to realize the shared vision in a sustainable way.
- (image) I approach this work on a day to day basis of "Servant Leadership"...Robert Greenleaf's work. I have to confess that I am still growing myself in this regard, but I deeply believe in it and I ask myself these questions about those whom my leadership is affecting:
 - Will they grow as persons
 - Do they become healthier
 - Do they become wiser
 - Do they become more autonomous and confident and nurture others
 - (image) So what are some of my views on higher ed in general?
 - Since the 90's, the slings and arrows have been aimed at K-12; now they are aimed at the Academy and there is no state more prominent than Texas to see that being played out. But it's not just with politicians and legislators, it's with business people, parents, commentators like Clayton Christenson and especially, the nature of technology that constantly pushes us to meet the needs of our students.
 - Something I think that describes this larger environment is the term that the US Army created for use in its leadership development schools some years ago. It's been coined for broader use now and I'm sure some of you are familiar with it. The phrase is, 'we live in a VUCA world.'...Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. It can be a bit scary but is also exciting as it keeps us fully engaged

and requires us to be fully aware... and we can see it play out virtually every day now...and that is the reality of the academic world as well.

- (image) Because the world is so dynamic, I believe that organizational purpose, values, vision and strategy can't be fixed in stone like the words on Pioneer Woman, and that periodically we must go through the exercise of resolving and aligning around: "What is our core purpose...why do we exist". Is it about the role we play in Denton or Denton County, or Dallas, or Houston or the entire state of Texas? Or even beyond? Are we building programs to directly respond to economic needs? What is the balance with liberal arts? It will take some patience to come to consensus around these issues but if we take the time and have the patience for the process to answer those questions, our values and operating strategies will emerge much more coherently.

- (image) When I think about our vision I like what Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University said: "We have to think about our university as a force, not a place." That is a mindset I hope you will embrace with me. Because when I think about our vision, it occurs to me:
 - That TWU is a unique environment where women must be a 'force' and play a prominent role
 - That we must be perceived by legislators, business and philanthropy as a 'force' that is important to this state.
 - That in today's "learning economy" we are a leader, not a follower.
 - That because we are geographically in a high growth area, we are a 'force' partnering with area community leaders and embracing and perhaps leading "smart growth."

- (image) Regarding my commitment to transparency, I look forward to sharing my insights from the 'listening journey' I started and will be on over the next several months.
- Here are some initial thoughts that you shared with me during my visits with various groups, when I asked what makes TWU so special, what distinguishes it from any other place....
 - Sense of community
 - Warm, friendly, and welcoming place for all, a place where people care
 - Complete dedication to students, personal attention from faculty to students (this was corroborated by the students as well)
 - Students are cared for academically, emotionally, and psychologically
 - Pride in serving a diverse group of students, first generation, and non traditional students

- Access and affordability (attractive cost-benefit proposition)
- Safe campus
- Distinguished and highly ranked programs (mention library #3)
- Collaboration among and across programs
- Outstanding facilities and locations in Dallas and Houston
- I also want to share the real and perceived challenges we face, including budget realities, our research profile, increased competition in the health sciences and online offerings, overcrowded resident halls, facilities in desperate need of repair or rebuilding, declining support for needy students, and.....and,...and.
- I'd like to wrap up this portion of our morning by noting some wonderful opportunities that are like fireworks going off in my mind:
 - Recruiting internationally, especially women
 - Creating new as well as strengthening international partnerships with more universities. As faculty, you will play a key role in this regard and I have already spoken with some of you about your interests.
 - Strengthening university advancement at every level: promoting our brand, and in particular, a significant push to increase financial support for the university.
 - Building stronger community ties with our hometown and even leaders in Dallas and Houston. We can have a much stronger role in our community and I plan to get that underway immediately. As opportunities emerge, I hope many of you will want to play a role.
 - Strengthening our external messaging, our reputation and visibility in the community, region, state, and nationally
 - Engaging our alumni in a powerful way
 - Strengthening our school spirit

(image) Lastly, I want to share something about me personally. I'm what some call a techno-geek. I love technology and am on it all the time. I send and answer my own emails, I Facebook, twitter a bit when I can and try to keep up on all the latest apps. And finally, if I could wave a magic wand, I'd probably have an office on the bottom floor where I can connect with people. But truth be told, I can't help but feel inspired by the view from the 15th floor, it IS spectacular, and very powerful and energizing. Please don't let that 15th floor elevator button inhibit you from stopping by. In the near term I'm more than likely going to be out visiting the mayor or other community leaders, connecting with important potential donors and in general working to have our university seen as a source of strength in the area...but if it's important, my team will always know how to reach me.

- So what is to come....., I wanted to share with you that I am planning on having regular breakfasts scheduled on campus with staff, luncheons with faculty, teas with students in the afternoon, and receptions and dinners at the house as soon as we can get these scheduled. I hope that this will facilitate communication and give us more opportunities to share. I have also broadened the membership of the cabinet and asked our new general counsel and our AVP for Human Resources to sit with us.
- By the way, we listened to some of your comments and are no longer calling our first year students “Freshmen”. After all, at an institution where we predominantly enroll women, it seems we should embrace a more gender neutral term and one that is now much more standard and that is FTIC or first year students.
- I know by now you must be on information overload but I thought you might be interested in having a glimpse into our incoming class for this fall.
 - Enrollment data
 - Budget info re compensation plan

In closing, I’d like to read this quote from one of the windows in the Little Chapel in the Woods (image) “No two people or group of people can come into an affectionate relationship with each other unless they carry on a mutual task.” I hope that you are willing to carry out that mutual task with me...

Well, it was my job to talk and yours to listen, and I hope we finished at the same time!! Thank you for your attention and enjoy the rest of the day....