

Welcome Remarks

August 18, 2008

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This has been a banner year for Winona State University. I am proud to report on our progress during this, our Sesquicentennial Year. As we have celebrated our past, we have also taken a number of significant steps toward the future. It has not been easy to select a small number of accomplishments from amongst the many significant gains this year. I have elected to offer some of the things I know best. These projects and activities illustrate our deep sense of purpose and place and the underlying mission, principles and values that extend back over time and forward into the future as we continue to learn together and adapt to our changing times.

A Community of Learners Improving our World

Before I tell a few stories about the year just past, I want to lay out the underlying framework that is quietly shaping what we do and how we go about building *a community of learners improving our world*.

Our work together today and in the near future is shaped by two overarching themes.

1. Academic excellence and support for student learning and success.
2. Building capacity to support our mission (human, social, financial, and structural)

To make these two themes a reality in our everyday experience, we have four vital assets. They are **dedicated and informed people** who work together in productive **relationships** that generate good **ideas** and imaginative and effective solutions to important questions in a **supportive environment** that fosters

- **Learning differently** in ways that prepare us all to thrive in the 21st century.
- **Working together differently** in order to design imaginative solutions to the emerging challenges we face.
- **Making a visible and compelling difference** in our own community of learners and in the broader community we serve.
- **Leading differently** in order to tap into the energy and commitments of our talented community while promoting a **culture of responsibility** in everything that we do.

Moral Imagination

I want to pause to say a little more about the concept of a culture of responsibility. This idea is closely allied with the principle of moral imagination and good citizenship. Martha Nussbaum in her book on *Cultivating Humanity. A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*¹ captured the habits of mind that are essential for cultivating the moral imagination and a commitment to humanity in today's world. Nussbaum laid out three ideas that have shaped my own

¹ Nussbaum, Martha C. (1997) *Cultivating Humanity. A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. P.9-11.

thinking about citizenship and social responsibility and the role of a liberal education in fostering the practice of democracy.

1. The capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions---for living what, following Socrates, we may call "the examined life."
2. An ability to see ourselves not simply as citizens of some local region or group but also, and above all, as human beings bound to all human beings by ties of recognition and concern.
3. The ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from ourselves, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone different from ourselves and living a different kind of life might have.

We must develop a deep sense of moral imagination, guided by the culture of responsibility that it creates if we are truly to become a community of learners improving our world. That simple but powerful idea must inform everything that we do. Our actions tell the story of our intentions much more clearly than our rhetoric ever can. I am most happy when I see people treating each other with mutual respect and caring. During this Welcome Week, you will see this too. Enjoy it, be glad that we care and do your part to support and encourage others---especially the new members of our community.

Success in the 21st Century

Success in the 21st Century will require adaptive skills and the ability to apply knowledge in new settings and in new ways to address unexpected and unpredictable problems. Success for Winona State University as

well as for each of our faculty, staff and students will depend on our ability individually and together to find creative solutions to complex and ever changing challenges that reflect our own moral imagination and concern for others.

WSU will be a University whose concept of academic excellence incorporates the qualities of a community of learners improving our world. We will demonstrate these qualities in three basic ways...

1. By providing an inspiring and supportive learning environment that is purposefully designed to facilitate creativity, innovation and scholarship. We shall learn differently, work together differently and make a difference through the process of generating and applying knowledge to improve our world. Participation in discovery and application will offer meaningful, authentic and engaging experience for all members of our campus community and for those who partner with us and allow us to demonstrate the connection between learning and responsible action. We shall exercise a sense of responsibility and moral imagination in everything that we do.
2. By preparing students who can creatively, responsibly and adaptively apply their knowledge and skills to important real world problems. Our graduates will be engaged, well-educated citizens who respond successfully to the challenges of their work, their lives and the communities in which they live.
3. By making the University itself a working model of scholarship and creative solution-finding in action as well as a laboratory for the practice of contemporary democracy. The members of the University community and our partners will work together to

contribute to the quality of life and to economic vitality in southeast Minnesota.

Theme One---Building Capacity to Achieve Our Mission

Financial Capacity: Advancement. FY 2007 was a record year, up 12% over 2006. FY 2008 promises to be even more remarkable. Our initial reports indicate that total cash donations are up 49.5% over FY 07 and total donations including pledges and in-kind contributions are up 54.9% over FY 07! We also enjoyed some additional exposure and opportunities as a result of our hosting the broadcast of *A Prairie Home Companion* in February 2008. A good time was had by all.

Later this week, we will announce the public phase of our first-ever campaign. The campaign has three prongs: the private component of the funding for our Wellness Complex support for the National Child Protection Training Center and the expansion of our scholarship support for students. These three goals bring together the familiar (scholarships) with the truly original innovative (the Wellness Complex) with our highest sense of purpose (National Child Protection Training Center).

Sustainability: With the encouragement of our faculty leadership, Winona State became one of the early signatories to the College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. We have completed our carbon footprint analysis, developed a unique regional approach to sustainability involving several partners (called Sustain Winona), and been recognized for our significant and multi-faceted approach to reducing our energy consumption and environmental impact. An

especially powerful aspect of our approach is the degree of student commitment to sustainability and a green future. We won second place in the National Campus Energy Challenges with an 18% reduction in energy utilization in our residence halls.

Enrollments: Interest in WSU remains robust. This year we received the highest number of undergraduate applications in the history of the institution. We are expecting a record enrollment this fall and we continue to see improvements in both the level of preparation and the retention of our students. We anticipate that our residence halls will run at 105% occupancy! To prepare for the demographic challenges ahead as well as to support enhanced collaboration with our colleagues in the two-year sector, we have made a number of improvements in our transfer admission process and support for transfer students. We will continue to work on ways to enrich the experience of all of our students, whatever their personal and educational goals.

Diversity: We have continued to intensify our efforts to diversify our campus community and to expand our international programming. Our minority population increased from 3.9% to 4.2% during FY 08, with a total of 335 students of color enrolled at WSU. This increase resulted from a number of coordinated efforts undertaken by many people on campus in the past two years. We have also enhanced our efforts to work with other organizations to prepare all young people to graduate from high school and succeed in college. We are very serious about increasing our diversity, both international and domestic and providing pathways to success for all of our students, both those of traditional age and returning adults, in Winona, in Rochester and throughout Minnesota in cooperation with our sister institutions in the state.

New Environments that integrate research, education and practice:
New ways of doing things require different kinds of environments. Our Winona campus is gradually being transformed to support new programs, new support structures, and new approaches to academic excellence and professional practice. The **Darrell W. Krueger Library** was the first major landmark in this transformation---fully networked, equipped with 1800 ports and configured in ways that support individual and group study and projects, our library is providing a contemporary learning environment and support for scholarship and for student success. The partnerships that have developed between our librarians and their colleagues in our colleges, reinforced soon by the faculty and staff support center that will be opened in Maxwell, will support approaches to our academic disciplines and to instruction that will further enhance our ability to be a true community of learners.

The next major development was the creation of the **Science Complex** from an integration of Stark Hall, a total renovation of Pasteur Hall and the design of a new Science Building that ties the two older building together.

A similar blending of creative use of older spaces and well-designed additions that enhance the value of the whole is **East Hall** in Kryszko Commons which replaced a poorly used outside courtyard that filled up with leaves in the fall and snow in the winter with a wonderful gathering space and conference rooms.

We have just opened a completely remodeled **Maxwell Hall**. Those of you who have had the opportunity to visit that space or who work there

know what a remarkable environment we have created. As an anatomist who also taught physiology, I have to comment on the special blend of structure and enhanced function that you can experience in Maxwell. First, it houses a completely new concept of support for student success and the environment of the student experience and it is the culmination of years of study, exploration and working together in new ways. I will return to this topic later but for now, I shall say that when you walk into Maxwell, you are walking into our future. The work going on there illustrates all of the basic ideas that are shaping WSU today--working together differently, integrating scholarship, education and the enhancement of professional practice, differences made visible and compelling. We have much to be grateful for today. Our accomplishments are the result of the dedication of many people who cared enough to be willing to set aside their tried and true ways of doing things to embrace new ideas, new expectations and new working relationships. I love everything about Maxwell---what is happening there, what it represents, what it will mean for all of us and for our community.

On September 25th, we will celebrate the groundbreaking for the **Integrated Wellness Complex**. I hope that you will be able to attend. This facility will be an even more fully developed working environment than the wonderful projects we have already completed. Winona State is committed to creating opportunities for all those who live, learn and work on our campus to improve their physical, emotional, and social well being and health. The theme of wellness was included in the study and exploration that accompanied the discovery phase of what was then called The New U or the Winona Experience. We built upon the themes and goals of that work in 2005 as we began to implement the wonderful

ideas and recommendations contained in those original reports. For those of you who are new to WSU, I would commend to you the material posted on our WSU homepage under the title Learning for the 21st Century². I recently went back and looked at some of that work and was delighted to see how much of it has come to pass. Those of you who were part of the original discussions about wellness must be celebrating as you see your vision coming true five years later! We will also look outward and continue to build on that initial vision to contribute to the health and wellness of the people in our community.

The Wellness Complex works on four levels at once.

- Individual Health. The Wellness Complex will house a very different kind of student health service that is designed to bring together our current health service with our counseling center and wellness and fitness. In addition, spaces that support recreation, fitness programming and intramural sports will promote active, healthy lifestyles. The model flows directly from the work of the original wellness study group but grows beyond the original conception to embrace a more expansive conception of wellness and fitness.
- Community Health and Fitness. The building will house components of three academic programs, all of which have rich relationships with communities in Southeast Minnesota. The Department of Recreation, Tourism and Therapeutic Recreation (RTTC), Health, Exercise and Rehabilitative Services (HERS), and

² This site can be found also at <http://www.winona.edu/21stcentury/>

Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS) are engaged and committed to working closely with people throughout this region to get young people off to a good start and to promote healthy lifestyles as well as to help people with health and fitness challenges regain as much capacity as possible. New classroom and research spaces will support innovative teaching and research, the integration of the two and an expansion of programs in the health sciences---signature programs for WSU and programs that will surely expand in the future.

- Health of the Environment. The building itself will be designed and built to LEED Silver standards and will be engineered for minimum impact on the environment. This approach is consistent with our recent adoption of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment.
- Healthy Collaborations. The challenges facing our health care system are complex and urgent. As we develop greater capacity to help our own campus community and the people of the region understand and practice the principles of well being, our mission encourages us to work with our regional partners to find shared approaches to building a healthier society. We have always had partnerships but I am talking about a deeper, enduring and mutually supportive kind of committed collaboration that—like any other healthy relationship---will help WSU grow and prosper while helping our community at the same time. We enjoy that kind of relationship with Winona Health, our community hospital.

This is what **community engagement** means. These kinds of partnerships are (1) mutually beneficial; (2) entered into for the

long haul; (3) built upon a genuine sharing of resources; (4) designed to facilitate mutual learning and the application of that knowledge in productive, innovative and responsible ways to accomplish the goals of the collaboration; and (5) supported by trust, open communication and a willingness to adapt to each other and to changing circumstances.

Long-term commitments require the university faculty and staff participants to link their scholarship, teaching and learning to the experience of the community and to build upon the insights gained from practice in ways that are nowadays labeled as public scholarship or engaged research and teaching. They also offer our students an opportunity to experience engaged or community-based learning. These are the kinds of efforts that our new Center for Engaged Teaching and Scholarship supports.

Partnerships like this often yield unexpected and remarkable results. We are very pleased to announce that WSU and Winona Health are partnering on an electronic medical record service. It's the first of its kind in the nation between a hospital system and a university! Effective today, August 18, WSU Health Services and WSU students will be able to access medical records electronically, which will greatly enhance the continuity of care for students, improve medical access to information, and provide greater access to medical history.

Finally, we will be breaking ground for a **new residence hall complex** next spring. The new residence hall (yet to be named) is being designed with today's students in mind. The top priority is to create a desirable space for students to live, learn, study, and socialize. We are employing "green" standards (LEAD Silver level) and are exploring ways to make

the space more energy efficient. The design is a suite-style arrangement with the majority of students in single rooms with shared common spaces. The exterior design will complement the natural environment and beauty of the WSU campus.

Theme Two---Academic Excellence and Support for Student Learning and Success.

Curricular Reform: We have made considerable progress in providing high quality educational programs attuned to today's professional environment and responsive to societal expectations. Among our accomplishments this past year were the inauguration of a Doctorate of Nursing practice that incorporates multiple delivery options and a distinctive four-institutional collaborative design. We also have supported the development of an associate degree program with SE Technical College that will allow students enrolled there to pursue an associate of arts degree that will be conferred by WSU and that articulates with upper division coursework here or at any other four-year university. This will allow SE Tech to pursue its technical college mission while, together in partnership, we can serve the needs of a new group of students.

We have also addressed a number of challenges in health care by developing new degree completion options for RNs as well as innovative approaches to the needs of the incumbent professional workforce through the research and development funded by Health Force Minnesota, our Center of Excellence in Health Sciences. Our Nursing faculty have just put together a completely redesigned undergraduate curriculum that reflects the profound changes that are taking place in

the nursing profession. We are well along in expanding our medical technology program into a contemporary Clinical Laboratory Sciences (CLS) model and expect to achieve accreditation for our program within the next two years. With the support of a Department of Labor grant awarded to our MnSCU colleagues in the Twin Cities area, we are adapting our CLS program to address the pressing need for certified clinical lab scientists for Minnesota's health care providers. We also continue to work on our collaboration with the UM Center for Allied Health Sciences (CAHS).

Public Scholarship: WSU is a member of a national network of institutions called *Imagining America* whose members are seeking to promote the role of artists and scholars in public life. Our interest in promoting this agenda matches up closely with our growing investment in the coordination of campus arts and cultural activities that grew directly from the original recommendations of the Campus Activities Coordination Group. The flourishing of the arts in Winona, the development of a number of lecture series, the expansion of our collection of art and cultural materials, all add to our shared experience at WSU and are contributing to our capacity to support scholarly and creative work in the arts and humanities. For us, public scholarship contributes to our own sense of what *Imagining America* calls "civic agency," their term for civic engagement and social responsibility---what we would call a community of learners improving our world. Students today want to make something and do something. They want to build institutions, not just study them. Situated as we are, with the institutional history that we have and the stimulating environment that we enjoy, we are especially prepared to respond to the sense of urgency and commitment that our nation's young people

are bringing to their college experience. Imagining America is a "community of artists, designers, humanists and interdisciplinary scholars centered on questions of culture³." We can employ that energy to infuse our sense of responsibility and moral imagination with cultural competence and the ability to create opportunities to shape our shared culture and to change how we generate and use knowledge to make the world a better place for us all. This summer, Dean Peter Henderson and Associate Dean Ted Reilly of our College of Liberal Arts attended the summer meeting of Imagining America. We will continue to participate in this network and will both contribute to this important agenda and draw ideas and support from this association of like-minded institutions.

Rethinking the nature of the professions: Across many disciplines, a new way of thinking is emerging about the nature and practice of a profession. The ideas that are emerging today about professional practice and public scholarship are based on the recognition that knowledge always has consequences and that as educated people we must exercise our influence and apply our knowledge responsibly and with concern for the impact of our work on others---yet another way to talk about a sense of responsibility and moral imagination.

In practical terms, this means that we can and must prepare graduates who not only know the core of their disciplines and professions but who also possess the skills needed to join with others to improve those environments. Teachers must not only know the content of their

³ Ellison, Julie and Timothy K. Eatman (2008) *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University*. Published by Imagining America, Syracuse University, p. x..

subjects and how students learn (i.e. pedagogical content knowledge) but also must understand what forces and influences shape a school and its relationships to the community it serves. A nurse must not only deliver excellent care but also understand how a clinical care setting works and how to ensure that the needs of patients are served. An engineer must understand the social context of his or her practice...and so on.

There are many ways to create experiences that will prepare this new kind of professional. Our growing collaborations and partnerships are allowing us to tap into the very considerable resources of our region--- its people, its professional communities, its social and cultural strengths, its distinctive environment and ecosystem. Increasingly, the boundaries between our classrooms and the world around us are dissolving and we are enriching the experiences of our students as well as opening up rewarding opportunities for our faculty and staff.

There are so many examples of this kind of engagement at Winona State that I hardly know where to begin. I shall pick just two examples that have shown up in my e-mail box in the past couple of weeks. Both illustrate collaboration across disciplines. Both involve important partnerships with our community. Both offer opportunities for our students to put their growing knowledge to good use. Both provide examples of what it means for educated people to use their knowledge wisely and responsibly and to learn with others as they do so. Both examples give personal meaning to our four-part strategy of learning differently, working together differently, leading differently and making a visible and compelling difference. And both are stories that

illustrate what it means to approach scholarship and teaching in an engaged way.

1. WSU Partnership with the Maplewood Townhouses Housing Authority. I heard last week from Carol Long and Carol Marchant (Special Education) that we are starting a new collaboration with Maplewood Townhomes. Maplewood is located in the west part of Winona and serves 80 low-income families, many of diverse ethnic backgrounds. The WSU Special Education, Nursing, and Educational Foundations, Research and Technology (EFRT), department's, Therapeutic Recreation program, and the Inclusion and Diversity Office are coordinating efforts to provide after-school programming for the 200+ children who are residents.
2. Our Water Commons. This project is a "collaborative year-long project designed to inspire stewardship of our public local water and promote a broader understanding of regional, national and international water issues." This package of activities is supported by Minnesota Campus Compact through a grant from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and it represents a partnership that brings together our two sister institutions St. Mary's University and SE Technical College, the City of Winona, Winona County, the SE Minnesota Water Resources Board and the heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre of Minneapolis.

Joan Francioni, who is director of our Center for Engaged Teaching and Scholarship and a professor of computer science, tells the story best. As she wrote in an e-mail this week,

"To me, the beauty of this project goes beyond the fact that it is successfully working together across multiple disciplines, institutions and organizations to educate our students and community about water issues. What we are also doing is building this bond of collective responsibility and energy to engage our fellow community members in understanding and celebrating a precious resource. That is the best."

The whole thing ought to be a lot of fun as well as instructive. I hope you will find ways to involve your students in one or more of the activities in this year-long event. The theme perfectly matches our institution-wide commitment to sustainability and our climate commitment and is shaped by the special environment along the Upper Mississippi.

Water Project Events:

1. **Adopt-a-drinking-fountain.** A Winona city-wide event, where groups will adopt a drinking fountain in their building and decorate it in early April.
2. **Common Book.** *The Blue Death* by Dr. Robert Morris, WSU's Common Book for 2008-09, offers a fascinating history of water-borne diseases and humankind's quest for safe drinking water. Dr. Morris will be here October 22-23 and in March.
3. **CLASP.** The theme of WSU's Colleges of Liberal Arts and Science Programs lecture series this fall will be water. Lectures are held on Wednesday evenings, starting on September 17

4. **Frozen River Film Festival.** "Drinking water" will be one of the themes of the Fourth Annual Frozen River Film Festival in January 2009.
5. **HOBT Residencies.** *In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre* (www.hobt.org) will offer two week-long residency programs—at WSU in the fall; at SMU in the spring.
6. **Lake Park Drinking Fountain Contest.** Local artists will compete for a \$12,000 prize to decorate the outside drinking fountain at Lake Park.
7. **Earth Day 2009.** Join community members and K-12 students in a water-themed Earth Day Celebration on April 17, 2009.

HealthForce Minnesota: We are in the third year of development of our Center of Excellence. We now have taken a leap forward and now have projects and partnerships across the state. Our model is based on collaboration "without walls" that takes place through a core of industry and education partners who provide leadership for the Center and through competitively awarded projects that address the goals of the Center and the needs of health care providers. This year we established a Minneapolis Office in association with the City of Minneapolis to address the pressing health care workforce needs in the metropolitan area and have significantly expanded our collaborations with several of Minnesota's major health care providers.

Support for students: Our renovation of Maxwell Hall is complete and the integrated academic services center, called the Warrior Hub, is in full operation. Unlike other one-stop student services models, our

Warrior Hub is truly integrated. Staff members rotate through the Warrior Hub and the call center and gain experience with the broad range of questions posed by students and applicants. We have brought together Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Accounts, Advising Services, Career Services, Disability Services and the Warrior Hub one-stop service counter and integrated call center all located in one supportive building environment. This integration is facilitated by new forms of staff development and training.

We have launched a Behavioral Assessment and Intervention Team (BAIT) to identify and work with troubled students. While it is too early to assess the impact of this approach, our impression is that we have already helped a significant number of students who might otherwise have left WSU or who might have continued to engage in harmful activities, including serious alcohol abuse. We lost a student to alcohol poisoning this year despite our serious efforts to address underage drinking and alcohol abuse but our tragedy has strengthened our partnership with the City of Winona and intensified our efforts to address this life-threatening challenge to the health and safety of our students.

Our experiment with supplemental instruction and early identification of students in academic difficulty is beginning to pay off. More students are taking advantage of tutoring and supplemental instruction (the number has risen from 1,111 students in FY 05 to 12,635 in FY 08!) and the impact has been significant. The average GPA of students who participate in supplemental instruction is 2.76 as compared to similar students who have not elected to participate, who have earned an average GPA of 2.26. We hope that many more faculty members will

participate in our program this year---the efforts really do pay off for students.

Intercollegiate Sports: For the second time in three years, our men's basketball team captured the National Division II Championship. For the fourth year in a row, WSU was awarded the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) ALL-Sports Award with four teams taking championship titles in FY 08 (men's basketball, women's soccer, men's golf, and football). Our softball team won the conference championship and earned a second place finished in the NCAA regional tournament. Our Gymnastics team finished sixth at the NCAA Nationals and maintained a team GPA of 3.71. Our 350 student athletes achieved a team average GPA of 3.14 and an individual GPA average of 3.11. As of June 2008, 12 WSU student athletes had earned ESPN, The Magazine academic honors and 4 were named to the Academic All-America Team. For the second year, a student athlete has received an NCAA postgraduate scholarship, a very high honor indeed.

Rochester: WSU-Rochester was selected as a winner of the 2008 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, one of nine winners in the Rochester area. We continue to explore ways to collaborate with both RCTC and the UM-Rochester. Our partnership with RCTC advanced again this year as evidenced by continuous improvement of shared student services (one application fee and shared transcripts, a shared computer lab and a unified learning center), the design of a new Welcome Center and staff development focused on improved service skills and several new as well as updated two plus two academic collaborations in environmental sciences, human services, special education, CIS, computer science, bioinformatics and

psychology. Community-based partnerships have also been expanded to include a Minority Recruitment Program to increase the number of teachers of color in the Rochester area, a collaborative leadership fellows program for approximately 20 individuals a year and a substantive contribution to the Work Force 2020 initiative being advanced by the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. We also are a partner for a DEED FIRST Award in the Rochester area.

Looking Ahead

This year, we have decided to divide these opening reflections into two segments. Today, I talked about the Year Just Past---***A Look Back***. On Wednesday morning we will hold an all-university conversation and engage in ***Looking Ahead***. This conversation is intended to serve two purposes.

1. It will begin the all-university reflection process that will lead to the development of our self-study for the Higher Learning Commission as we prepare for reaccreditation in 2011.
2. This discussion will also allow me an additional opportunity to talk about what is happening in Minnesota and in the world and how these changes may affect our own institution during the next 2-3 years. We have some challenges ahead as well as some wonderful opportunities and it will be our goal to convert challenges to opportunities and opportunities to success. Through these listening sessions, you can take a hand in defining my goals for the next 2-3 years and shaping my own Work Plan. I invite you to help set my agenda!

Please plan to join us in Somsen Auditorium for the start of this conversation. We will begin at 8:30 am on Wednesday, August 20th. I hope you will be there and that you will share your ideas with us then.

Enjoy the experiences of Welcome Week. Every year at this time, I get a little extra spring in my step, hope in my heart and the fresh feeling of a new year full of new possibilities. That is one of the joys of being an educator---to greet friends and returning colleagues, to catch up with what everyone was doing over the summer, to welcome new people to our community and to dream about the year ahead. What will we learn together? What will we accomplish this year? How can we make the world a better place? It is time to begin.

Welcome to our 2008-2009 academic year.