Our History

It is always wise at the beginning of a new phase of one's life to take time to learn the history and culture of one's new home. For me, that has been a delightful experience and an inspiring one. I have learned about this wonderful place from faculty, staff, students, alumni, emeriti and retirees, friends of Winona State and fans everywhere. This University came alive for me in their stories. Their hands, their minds and their devotion have shaped us. I have come to a place where relationships matter, where people really listen to each other, where families support each other's kids and neighbors reach out to those in need. Well, here in the home of the Minnesota hot dish, where every sentence begins with the word well, where catsup is considered a piquant sauce and where every phrase ends with the word now, I have felt welcomed and embraced—now. Today we are celebrating our community of learners improving the world. Tomorrow we will celebrate our men's basketball team who brought back a national championship to Minnesota and took care of the perennial question: "Where IS Winona anyway?"

We already have a complex story—the years of struggle from our founding until around 1900; our evolution from our normal school beginnings to a full-fledged state college; the growth of our institution into a comprehensive University; the creation of a community of learners improving our world and the building of an extraordinarily beautiful campus and sense of community under the leadership of Darrell Krueger. How shall we write the next chapter as new generations join our Community of Learners Improving Our World? To answer this, let's begin at the beginning.

Our Beginnings

Before the white men came, many generations of American Indians made their home here on Wapasha's Prairie. The mound builders left their mark on the banks of the Mississippi and, after them, a branch of the Sioux. Today we are engaged in reconciliation with the Dakota and are rebuilding our special sense of history and place and the movement of people here on "the homestead," as the Sioux once called this sandbar.

White settlement began on the grassy sand bar beneath the bluffs, in 1853. Winona is a classic river town, "a city continually guided and influenced by the compelling presence of the Mississippi River. The river was the force that led to the town's development, giving birth to Winona's flour mills and its lumber fortunes. Early residents depended on the Mississippi for their livelihoods and for news of the outside world in a time when steamboats provided the only major form of transportation….Winona still finds its identity in the river (Introduction)." Shaped by traffic on the river, by the early days of the railroad and by the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, Winona reflects the character, the experience and the many disruptions of life caused by the rapid changes that swept across our country during and after the Civil War. Today's demands are just as powerful. Like the large social changes of the past, the demands of our own time will reshape the very workings of our key institutions, our working relationships and our sense of place.

From the beginning, Minnesota has valued public education. Schools require teachers. In 1858, the Legislature adopted the Minnesota Normal School Act that called for the establishment within five years of an institution to educate and prepare teachers for the common schools—to be called a State Normal School. For this first school to become a reality, the sum of $5,000 would have to be raised and "donated to the state in the form of money and lands, or in money alone, for the erection of the necessary buildings and for the support of the professors or teachers in such institution, but when such sum is donated for such purpose, a like sum of $5000 shall be, and hereby is appropriated by the legislature…for the use and benefit of such institution. (DuFresne p. 18)"

Winona rose to the challenge and donated $7,000—not just $5,000—-to the state. Then, as now, the community supported us. On August 16, 1858, a year after the passage of the Minnesota Normal School Act, Dr. John D. Ford presented a resolution to the Normal School Board recognizing the donation from the
Winona community and officially locating Minnesota's first Normal School here. We became the 14th Normal School in the nation and the first west of the Mississippi (well, just barely west). The community saw this as a necessary step in building our future.

We opened our doors in 1860. In 1917, we began offering our first nursing classes in Rochester. We have grown since then and have a promising future there. We will skip lightly over the trials of our first one hundred fifty years and the many stories of our journey to the remarkable institution that we are today, but I will pause to point out the elements in those first years that will shape our future as powerfully as they did in our earliest days.

1. We enjoy the support of our community and have grown in stature over the years as a result of the confidence, investment and belief of the people who live in this community and who value higher education. Every good thing that has happened that has shaped Winona State took place because someone cared and chose to invest in us.

2. We are shaped by our experience in Southeast Minnesota---here on our sandbar on the banks of the Mississippi as well as in Rochester--- and we have become a steward of this place.

3. We are a vital part of life in Southeast Minnesota and are, in turn, inspired and shaped by our neighbors throughout the region. As we enter our next 150 years, we are poised to assume an even greater role in building a thriving community for the future.

4. We have become an important intermediary between rural and metropolitan life. Our commitment to the towns that grace SE Minnesota offers us unparalleled opportunities to prepare our students for life and work in the 21st century.

5. We have come a long way toward our dream of distinctiveness and quality. Our core identity as a community of learners is built around a sense of place and a sense of purpose, both inspired by the communities we serve.

6. Winona and Rochester are very entrepreneurial places and increasingly connected to the rest of the world through business partnerships and operations. As our own sense of place and purpose grows ever clearer, we are becoming increasingly connected to places around the world that are shaping the world order. We can learn from the experience of the remarkable entrepreneurs in SE Minnesota and can partner in new ways with our community to bring the benefits of scholarship and expertise to the building of a shared future that plays out in a global and increasingly interconnected world.

As we stand today looking into the future, there a number of questions we must answer. They will shape my remarks today.

1. What knowledge and skills will be required in the 21st century and what kind of educational environment must we provide to help our students acquire the capacity to do well in a changing world?

2. What does it really mean to learn differently, work together differently and, together, make a difference? How will these things change our University and how will each of us change as we work together in new ways?

3. What skills and experiences will people need in order to be innovative, both at Winona State and in the community?

4. How must Winona State itself change to meet the challenges of a new era?

**Entering the Conceptual Age**

These questions are not new. They must be asked again and again as the world changes around us. "Economic history is best understood as a set of fundamental transformations from one kind of economy to another" during which the dominant forms of production stagnate, innovation wanes and a new production
system emerges that, after some hesitations, leads to "a new period of robust growth and innovation." As each wave has reached its peak, we have adapted our approach to education to meet the demands of a new age. As we meet here today, another wave is forming and it, too, will shape this University and the communities we serve.

Across the sweep of recorded history, humankind has experienced several major technological revolutions, each with a characteristic approach to technological innovation and its own needs for educated leadership. Today, we appear to be embarking upon a new wave, sometimes called the knowledge economy or the conceptual age, this time based on new forms of knowledge production and a revolution in information technology and shaped by the interconnected world made possible in Cyberspace. The new wave demands new thinking, new relationships, and new expectations of higher education.

This new wave has two unprecedented features; first, the accelerating and previously unimaginable speed at which knowledge is created and accumulated and second, how rapidly this asset will depreciate. One of the consequences of these trends is that context matters less than it once did. Intellectual work can be transmitted electronically to any place where knowledge workers reside. At the same time, and not as paradoxical as it seems, place matters more!

Local educational systems and investments in human capital can influence where knowledge work is done and where innovative people want to live. The capacity to compete economically will rest increasingly on the extent to which a region or a nation has invested in education and in the research enterprise and whether employers can attract and employ workers with "21st Century Skills."

It is important to realize, however, that the new economic wave is not confined to the knowledge-intensive parts of our economy. The knowledge or conceptual age will affect how work is done throughout society and how we should educate for work and for life. The well-educated person of the future will see the connections across all disciplines and move more easily across intellectual boundaries that we now hold dear.

**Educating for the 21st Century**

The disruptions induced by technological change give rise to arguments about how to educate the next generation. We are building our approach to Learning for the 21st Century in a way that resembles closely the concept of A Whole New Mind, to use the language invented by Daniel H. Pink, author of a book by that title.

The cardinal virtues of workers of the past were strength and fortitude.

"The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind---creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. These people---artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers---will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys. (p. 1)."

Now, we are entering a new era where material abundance has unleashed our hopes for a better and more meaningful life, where globalization and a more connected world is taking jobs overseas that can be done better by computers and technically trained people, and where powerful technologies are eliminating certain kinds of technical work altogether.

To do well in the emerging world order, we have to ask ourselves some simple, yet painful questions.

1. Can someone overseas do it cheaper?
2. Can a computer do it faster?
3. Is what I am offering in demand in an age of abundance?

As businesses face these questions, we in higher education must do the same. There is much to learn from exploring the business strategies of the innovative companies that are all around us here in SE Minnesota. Following the thinking of a conceptual age and the path set by Thomas Friedman in The World is Flat, our local entrepreneurs have gone, for the most part, after niche markets around the world where they can produce products that are better than their customers expected, available sooner than they expected and at a
better price. They are relying on design, innovation, and careful listening to their customers and their own employees.

We are entering a new phase that can be called the Conceptual Age where "the capacity to detect patterns and opportunities, to create artistic and emotional beauty, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new" will be the hallmarks of success (Pink 2005, p. 2-3). These capacities will be expressed by people who can empathize with others, understand the subtleties of how we humans interact with each other and tap the deeper feelings and hopes of others in pursuit of purpose and meaning. Our approach to Learning for the 21st Century is designed to prepare graduates who can thrive in a Conceptual Age.

**The way ahead is clear.**

Success in the 21st century will require adaptive skills - the ability to apply knowledge in new settings to unexpected and new questions. Therefore, Winona State University will prepare individuals for life, work and leadership in a rapidly-changing, competitive, and complex-but interconnected-global society. Individual success requires knowing how one learns, embracing cultural competencies, having respect for different ideas, and being an engaged, responsible citizen. Winona State University will prepare citizens who will take responsibility for their own actions, who will actively promote and act to ensure a high quality of life in their communities, and who can think globally and act accordingly. Winona State graduates will experience a true learning community and will be ready to improve the 21st-century world.

**Learning for the 21st Century**

Much of our work for the past two years has been focused on defining what it means to be well-educated and exploring how we can provide an educational environment that prepares our students for life and work in the 21st century by Linking Learning to Life in our curriculum, in our relationships with the community and in our approach to scholarship. Our approach to education is built firmly upon a liberal education, a philosophy of learning that draws inspiration from challenging encounters with important issues and with difficult differences that make us question our ideas and assumptions about life. We ask our students to join us in exploring the complexities of the human condition. Together, we advance knowledge and put what we learn to good use in service to others. We do our best to model the essential traits of an educated person: open-mindedness, informed judgment and empathy. We seek to exercise moral imagination and to view with sympathy and understanding the experience of people who live at a distance from us, or who look different from ourselves or who have different values and cultural experiences. It allows us to take seriously the lives of other people and to be concerned about their well-being. In a world connected now in new and intimate ways, the qualities of empathy and moral imagination are more important than ever and our efforts to expand the international dimensions of the campus community and the scope of our international programs reflects our commitment to preparing our students and ourselves for the Conceptual Age.

To articulate our educational philosophy, the education we offer our students must prepare them to be intentional learners who are:

- empowered through the mastery of intellectual and practical skills
- informed by knowledge about the natural and social worlds and about forms of inquiry basic to these studies
- responsible for their own actions and concerned for the public good.

The New University Phase. WSU spent two years engaged in a process of study and experimentation to explore the implications of its mission and to define what it will mean to be educated in the 21st century and, most importantly, what kind of environment we must create to support an education for a new era and how we must educate for a new time and place.

The Expansion Phase. After two years of planning, the Winona Experience -- now known as the Learning for the 21st Century initiative -- was ready for implementation. To mark this transition, the phase we entered this fall is called the Expansion Phase.

Building a University for the 21st Century
To prepare our students to be successful in a Conceptual Age, Winona State University must itself exemplify these qualities in the everyday life of the institution, in how we work together and in the roles we play in Southeast Minnesota, in the State of Minnesota and in our relationships with institutions and regions all over the world. The term for this is engagement. The concept of engagement applies to our scholarship, our curriculum, our aspirations for our students and the intention and design of our partnerships and collaborations in the community. We must explore what we can do to support economic and community development, contribute to the enhancement of professional practice and the workplace and sustain civic life and democracy in Southeast Minnesota and in the State of Minnesota. All fields of knowledge—the arts, humanities, social sciences, as well as the biological and physical sciences and professional fields—have undergone significant transformation as a result of research findings and paradigm shifts. Such developments in new knowledge will continuously transform how we understand and how we shape our physical, economic, and social worlds.

**Learning in a 21st Century Institution: Change as a Scholarly Act**

As we implement our own approach to Learning in the 21st century, WSU is modeling the qualities of education put to good use—the concept of a university as a laboratory for exploring coherence, scholarship and citizenship and the qualities of a 21st century education. We are currently witnessing deep social, cultural and technological changes that are affecting where people learn, how they learn, where knowledge is produced, and how the economy works. These changes will surely shape us in unexpected ways as we seek to meet present and future needs and expectations of the students and communities we serve. We can already see some of those changes in the daily life of Winona State and in the experiences of our partners.

To respond to our times, we must be a true learning organization where change itself is both intentional and a scholarly act.

There are four critical patterns of change in our daily work that we are learning during this time of innovation and growth:

1. **Instill a discipline of reflection and a culture of evidence, insisting that everyone back up their opinions with real information, not just perceptions.** (expanded accountability, benchmarking and assessment, evaluation built into the design of projects and proposals, assessment workshops)

2. **Create new patterns of conversation that encourage and support the involvement of everyone in defining the issues that will be important in building the organization.** (learning communities and communities of practice, listening sessions and other strategies for talking with students, faculty and staff)

3. **Adopt a philosophy of experimentation and the active management of reasonable risks.** (challenge grants, competitively awarded project funding, support for the scholarship of learning and teaching)

4. **Create new ways to facilitate access to information so that everyone can make informed choices.** (the open notebook—an electronic institutional portfolio)

It is easy enough to see the challenges that lie ahead but not so easy to decide how to meet them. The areas most often addressed in discussions of the future of Universities are (a) the need to collaborate in new ways with industry in order to ensure that companies have the people, ideas and tools that they need to be competitive in a world gone "flat;" (b) the changing student population and the need to diversify who we educate and how we educate in order to ensure a well-prepared workforce and responsible citizenry to build our communities and support our economy; (c) the demand for new approaches to learning that engage students in new ways to prepare them for the realities of a knowledge-based society; (d) the critical importance of moving beyond strict disciplinary and campus boundaries in order to address the complex problems of today that do not come nicely packaged in academic or disciplinary form; and (e) the expectation that universities will interact in new ways with the communities of which they are increasingly an integral part and that they become open to the community and its needs, expectations and opportunities in new ways.

It is our special good fortune that our own environment, our sense of place, and the culture and pattern of life around us all are compatible with the expectations we have for a 21st century education. As our relationships with the community expand and as the patterns of exchange become richer and more
meaningful and more long-lasting, we will have the very environment we need to prepare people for life and work in a Conceptual Age.

Stewardship of Place

Winona State is not simply located in Winona and Rochester. We are stewards of this place. Stewardship applies to every aspect of University life—our curriculum, the scholarly interests of our faculty and students, our physical structure and relationship to the neighborhoods that surround the edges of our campus here in Winona, and our core role in society. The result is a demand for a complete overhaul of the classic pillars of university life—research, teaching and service—to create a new triad of innovation, learning and shared leadership. These cannot be separate functions. They must be blended and integrated. In this emerging model, we will embrace our new responsibility for being a strong partner and entrepreneur in our own right, supporting innovation in both community development and in the economy.

To do so, we must rethink our core purposes, our basic infrastructure and our relationships with the community. This will not be easy but we are well underway. The reorganization of the administration is directed very specifically toward creating the capacity to become a steward of place in Southeast Minnesota and toward becoming an innovative enterprise. The kind of innovation I am talking about is as much concerned with using new ideas as it is about discovering new ideas. Historically, idea generation through basic research (the "scholarship of discovery") has attracted the most public attention and funding support. More difficult—and less recognized—is the translation of new ideas, technologies and business models into successful solutions for local challenges. This approach (the "scholarship of application" or "translational research" must be seen as equally critical for public universities to be relevant to the unfolding economic and social environment."

(Making Place Matter, p. 9)

Fortunately, Winona State University, as a university within the Minnesota State College and University System, is dedicated to practical research, solution finding and the scholarship of application. To build additional capacity we must make some fundamental changes in our core philosophy

• From teaching to learning in order to create a genuine learning society where the acquisition, creation and application of knowledge are essential to our health, happiness and prosperity as a society.

• From research to innovation where we can play a central role in the process of turning good ideas into new industries, making old industries more competitive and finding solutions to community challenges.

• From service to shared leadership where our focus shifts from ourselves as the center to a commitment to investing our significant human, intellectual, financial and social capital in a sustained commitment to the economic, social and cultural vitality of SE Minnesota.

How will we build this sense of place and a distinctive institution to match our distinctive place?

WSU is already much engaged and the stories of what we are learning and doing are too numerous for a single telling. I will simply be arbitrary and capricious and highlight some of the examples I have run across in the past few weeks. There will be much more when we launch our Open Notebook and Institutional Portfolio and lay out the many things we are doing to build a University for the 21st Century.

River Studies

We have launched a Center for Mississippi River Studies, and have a curriculum, a research agenda, a growing portfolio of alliances and partnerships with other groups that study the river and a University on the River program to be offered on our new boat as well. Our faculty and students will focus on aspects of the river and its surroundings, such as: literature related to the river, the economy of river towns, history of the region, and the biology and ecosystems in and near the river. Our list of partners grows longer steadily: the Mississippi River Citizens Commission, Xcel Energy, the St. Paul Riverfront Commission, the City of Winona, the Minnesota Maritime Museum of Art, Living Lands and Waters, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, the University of Minnesota, UW- LaCrosse, the Seven Rivers Alliance, and the Riverview Learning Community. There are probably more.

The Director of our Center captured the feel of our approach in a recent e-mail to me. He said, "Winona State University's Center for Mississippi River Studies is dedicated to creating greater understanding of the
broad multi-faceted nature of the Mississippi River and the people and places it touches. Our hope is to transform both the meaning of the river and our relationship to it. As scholars and as people who live and work near it, we see the river as a laboratory, a canvas, an archive, a stage, a text, a great complicated thing worthy of contemplation, explication, interpretation and protection." We now have our own craft, the River Explorer, that will ply the waters of the mighty Mississippi.

**National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC)**

The National Child Protection Training Center at Winona State University was founded in 2003 through a $993,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program. The Center is working to virtually end child abuse within the next three generations.

Last year, we launched a unique undergraduate curriculum on child advocacy that will be used as a model at undergraduate institutions across the nation. This curriculum will better prepare future child protection workers, law enforcement officers, nurses, teachers and other child-serving professionals. The courses are being taught in an interdisciplinary mode by nursing, criminal justice and social work faculty. The design recognizes that the students will eventually work together as professionals. So, as one of the participating faculty said, "...it makes sense to educate them in teams. We want the students to understand the roles each of the disciplines play in the process."

This year we have been making substantial progress in getting first authorization language and, we hope, a stable funding base for the Center. We have begun a research program in partnership with the American Prosecutors Research Institute (APRI) that allows us to contribute to a national agenda and help put Minnesota in the forefront of professional practice in the field of child protection.

**The Arts**

One of the defining features of a creative place is the presence of the arts. We have helped build the Great River Shakespeare Festival and now the Frozen River Film Festival and are positioning the arts as a core feature of campus life, both in Winona and in Rochester. In a conceptual age, the arts take on a fresh and even more central role in our exploration of the human experience.

**The CommUniversity**

Winona State enjoys a wonderful campus environment that supports a campus community experience that is attractive and engaging. It is time to examine what happens along the edges of our campus boundaries in the neighborhoods that extend in all directions from our Main Campus. We have worked with the City of Winona to link our own campus planning with the strategic plan for the City in order to develop a shared approach to revitalization of the neighborhoods around both Main and West campus.

**The Center for Integrated Health Science Education and Practice**

Last fall, Winona State received funding for a center of excellence focused on health care. Our Center is a collaborative partnership of education, industry and community that is focused on ensuring that Minnesota's health care industry has a well-prepared, innovative, and diverse workforce, providing the capacity to transform the delivery of health care and positioning Minnesota as a global leader in healthcare education, practice, research and innovation. What is most important about our Center is the opportunity it affords us to learn new ways to work with our partners and to explore new approaches to adaptive knowledge to new uses and implementing much-needed enhancements to our health care systems in a collaborative mode.

Winona as a field station for the exploration of human history, natural history and geological time.

Winona has a very special sense of history and enjoys several very distinctive and fragile environments with rare prairie communities and the ecology of the River. There is a record here of how people have used the land and the marks of their presence, and the lingering effects of that history offer a special opportunity to provide a living history and a cultural heritage that can attract visitors as well as students. As we work together to restore Garvin Heights and reclaim the waterfront and as we add cultural events like the Great River Shakespeare festival and the Frozen River Film Festival, we can offer a very special experience and an opportunity to reflect on people, community and a working landscape. We will see an example of this when WSU's River Explorer plies the waters this summer.

**The Region as a Creative Center**
In a world where regional economies compete with each other for prosperity and success, there is increasing evidence that what Winona and Rochester need are smart people, new discoveries, and integrative thinking all of which contribute to an innovative economy, livable communities and social inclusion. Stewardship of place demands a new way of looking at the world and a new way of doing business and calls us to play a new role in providing the people and ideas that are needed to compete in a world that is both global and intensely regional.

Regional growth and competitiveness are as much about the creative process and innovation as they are about creating jobs. We need to be a creative place.

Creative people are drawn by the Quality of Place, that unique set of characteristics that define a place and make it attractive. The cities and regions that offer these features are thriving hubs of creativity and attract young entrepreneurs and serve as homes to thriving entrepreneurial enterprises.

- **Lifestyle**: what people expect from the places they choose to live - technology, the arts, sports and natural environments.
- **Social interaction**: third places, neither work nor home where people can come together - cafes, coffee shops, good restaurants, bookstores where people can gather.
- **Diversity**: diversity of thought, open-mindedness. Reflected in the demographics of a community, the quality of its schools, its openness to people who are different from each other in important ways.
- **Authenticity**: historic buildings, established neighborhoods, a unique music scene or specific cultural attributes, the blending of the old and the new.
- **Identity**: the combination of where we live and what we do has replaced the continuity that organizations and the companies we used to work for once provided.

**WSU in Rochester**

Rochester and the surrounding communities in Southeast Minnesota are already recognized as centers of entrepreneurship and creativity. In order to continue to expand its knowledge-based industry in the future, Rochester will need a diverse and talented workforce. The health of the economy of the region will require a growing number of people educated in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Much remains to be done to ensure that the increasingly diverse population of our region succeeds in preparing to enter an increasingly sophisticated workforce.

We look forward to the opportunity to do our part to ensure that SE Minnesota has the educational and research capacity it will need to remain competitive and innovative in a changing world and to serve the best interests of the Rochester community by cooperating with the University of Minnesota and our colleagues in the Minnesota State College and University System and, where appropriate, with other higher education institutions that offer programs in the Rochester area. Our efforts will benefit not only Rochester but also communities throughout the region, including most especially Winona. As opportunities expand in the Rochester area, new possibilities will open up for Winona State University to serve a growing population of students in new and effective ways, both those who study in Rochester and those who study primarily in Winona.

**The Emerging Role of WSU in Southeast Minnesota.**

I propose to position WSU as a major philanthropic contributor in SE Minnesota. Our current institutional budget is $104 M. It would require an endowment of over $2 Billion to generate that annual expenditure. If we devote even 10% of our efforts to fostering social and economic innovation, we would be a significant investor in the region. If we also assume a role as a leader in fostering entrepreneurship both in the community and in the economy, we can acquire new capacity to accomplish our own mission as "a community of learners improving our world," prepare our students for life and work in the 21st century and contribute significantly to ensuring that Winona and the surrounding region retains its capacity for innovation, both in economic and community development.
We can create opportunities for venture philanthropists to invest in the community through and with WSU and to foster innovation in both economic and community development in order to ensure that Southeast Minnesota remains a creative and innovative region.

**Summary**

We enjoy a special place and a special time. We stand on the threshold of a new phase of Winona State's story as we prepare for our 150th year. There are common themes running through our story from the earliest days of Winona that are as rich and rewarding as they were then. I thought about that as I watched the purple-clad fans go wild as our men's basketball team traveled along the path to a national championship. As I held that trophy in my hands for a few precious moments, I realized all of the work that got us there, all of the people who cared about our team and who supported them, all of the strength and character that buoyed our players as they represented the best of intercollegiate sports in action, all of the hopes riding on what we do.

A glance at the list of events on the WSU Today calendar for that weekend would tell you an even richer and deeper story—the students who spent their spring break helping the people of New Orleans, The Winona State University chapter of the American Marketing Association who won three awards based on performance at the annual meeting of the American Marketing Association this past week in Orlando, Florida for Best Chapter Plan 2005/2006, Best Fundraising and Best Community Service, the freshman softball pitcher who pitched a no-hit game, the announcement of our launching of a volunteer service website in cooperation with the Winona Community Foundation. There was much more.

You can see these things for yourself during the reception following our ceremony today—WSU is the story of many wonderful people who together are creating a Community of Learners Improving Our World. For me, this is the culmination of a life's work, a capstone, a time of joy because I have been granted a rare and wonderful gift. This is where I want to be. This is what I am called to do. Your warm welcome, your spirit and your courage inspire me and your confidence and expectation of a shared future enrich my life and guide my days.

I am honored to be President of this remarkable University and I will do everything I can to earn your trust and honor your spirit and the history of this place. I promise to ask myself several difficult questions daily.

1. When I encounter difficult or controversial issues, can I model the qualities of an educated person? Can I be open-minded, informed and empathetic?
2. Am I willing to accept the vulnerability of seeing that which is good in everyone I meet?
3. Do I listen carefully for the strong points in someone else's arguments and look for the weaknesses in my own?
4. Am I representing Winona State University with honesty and integrity and am I acting in its best interests?
5. Am I committed to fostering the public good? Am I imposing my own ideas about what that means or am I listening carefully to others before setting a course for the future?
6. Am I honest with myself and with others? Am I willing to admit my own mistakes and learn from them and allow others to do the same?
7. Am I doing what I can to bring out the best in others and give them a chance to do what gives them the greatest satisfaction and reward?

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to pursue a life's dream.

**Bibliography**


