Welcome 2007

Welcome to a very special year. This is the year of our Sesquicentennial, a time to reflect on who we are, how far we have come, what we have learned along the way and where we are headed. At the same time, I am entering my third year as your President and I, too, am thinking about what I have learned and what lies in store as we continue this journey together.

Who we are

Winona State University is a community of learners improving our world. We are the shared creation of an extraordinary group of people who care deeply about being part of a community of learners and about the responsibility of putting our knowledge and skill to good use.

• To provide engaging, meaningful and genuine experiences for our students and prepare them to be responsible, creative and open-minded.
• To foster an environment that welcomes and values the talents and energies of everyone who chooses to join us as a student, a faculty member, a staff member or an administrator.
• To open up the world of discovery and inquiry for all who seek to learn and to use what they learn to make the world a better place.
• To infuse all that we do with an abiding moral imagination that views with sympathy the circumstances of other peoples’ lives.
• To draw talented people to our community who become neighbors, friends, co-workers, customers and volunteers.
• To play a role in economic and community development and the fostering of entrepreneurship and innovation, a long-standing tradition in this region.

Winona State University is also a product of this special place along the banks of the Upper Mississippi. We have been an integral part of this community from the very beginning when the citizens of the City of Winona

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1 The concept of moral imagination comes from the work of Martha Nussbaum (2004) Liberal Education and Global Community. Change Magazine Winter 2004 p. 42-47. It refers to the capacity “to view with sympathy the situation of people who live at a distance or who look different from ourselves.” (p. 42) It allows us to take seriously the lives of other people and to be concerned about their well-being.
contributed $7000 to secure the right to establish the first Normal School west of the Mississippi in the same year that Minnesota became a state. According to the Winona Republican for August 17, 1859, the subscription was raised in just a few hours and, the account went on, “the amount will be materially increased at any time, if necessary, to secure the location.” The first building was owned by the city and was loaned to the Normal School Board as part of the original subsidy provided by the City for the establishment of the school. It was not a very elegant facility and was, as bob DuFresne put it, “unprepossessing.” There was one large schoolroom, one recitation room, a library room, and a cloakroom.

The Governor of Minnesota in his address to the Legislature in 1857 connected education to the future of the state by quoting the State’s Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Superintendent wrote

To make a state requires more than the axe, the saw and the water wheel; mind, knowledge, and education are required as well to [prepare us] to govern.

So from the beginning, we were a product of a community seeking to prepare educators for its children and willing to work together to do so.

To keep the dates straight, it was on May 11, 1858 that Congress finally approved Minnesota’s constitutions [yes, both of them!] and awarded the territory full statehood.

So, what is a Normal School and what about WSU today reflects the intentions of our founders and the philosophy they brought to their work?

According to my favorite scholarly source, Wikipedia:

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3 DuFresne, p. 33
4 Minnesota really did have two separate constitutions because during the territory’s constitutional convention in July 1857, the Democrats and the Republicans were so at odds that they each wrote up their own version and neither side would yield to the other even though they were basically identical. DuFresne p. 43
The term "normal school" originated in the early 19th century from the French école normale, meaning "model school". The French concept of an "ecole normale" was to provide a model school with model classrooms to teach model teaching practices to its student teachers. To do this, the normal school provided "model" classrooms in which the teachers-to-be could observe and practice teach the children. The children, the teachers of the children, the student teachers, and the teachers of the students were all together in the same building. Although a laboratory school, it was the official school for the children--primary or secondary.

We opened our doors with a three part curriculum divided into Junior, Middle and Senior Years. In the first year there was a lot of reading and spelling, some map drawing and penmanship and some arithmetic and English grammar. In the Middle Class things picked up and the core of a good liberal education emerged: mathematical and physical geography, meteorology, algebra, natural philosophy, US history, high analysis of language, and geometry. In the Senior Class there was teaching in the model school along with a heavy dose of chemistry, geology, intellectual philosophy, human and comparative physiology, moral philosophy, logic and school laws.

From the beginning we offered a rigorous curriculum and a model that reflected the most advanced thinking of its time. Our forebears were

- as innovative as we seek to be.
- as connected to the community in spirit and purpose as we are.
- as eager to explore the world.
- As advanced in their thinking in the context of their times.
- as committed to the highest standards of their profession.
- as dedicated to their students.
- as shaped by the history, physical setting and culture of this classic river town and the other place west of here called Rochester.

We are their inheritors and we are grateful.

How far we have come and what we have learned along the way?
A lot has happened in 150 years and when you have a chance to read Peter Henderson's history of WSU you will enjoy the journey. Over the years we have grown in size, in complexity, in stature among our peers, and in influence. Our graduates have shaped their professions, their communities, raised above average children—Minnesotan or not---and have brought back stories to tell our current students when they return to campus. An increasing number of alumni and friends participate in our newly established Alumni College where they team up with members of our faculty and teach classes for us before Homecoming Weekend.

As we have passed through the decades we have been shaped by the spirit of the times, tested in many ways and risen to the challenge and grown until we now have more than 8000 students in Winona and Rochester combined and are about to launch our first doctoral program—the Doctorate of Nursing Practice. True to our heritage of doing things in innovative ways, our entry into doctoral status is made possible by a very special four-way collaboration of Winona State University, Metropolitan State University; Minnesota State University, Mankato; and Minnesota State University, Moorhead. The design reflects a philosophy appropriate for our era, the same underlying logic that shapes our Center of Excellence in Health Science Education and Practice. It reflects a genuine partnership between higher education and practitioners. It integrates research, education and practice. It seeks solutions to contemporary problems in collaboration with our colleagues in health care rather than on their behalf. It is adaptive in its approach and moves beyond the old model of expertise (application of well established research to well-defined problems) to a new model that incorporates a cycle of continuous discovery, solution-finding and application.

This model of collaboration also provides opportunity to maximize the human and fiscal resources of the universities for the delivery of a program important to the delivery and improvement of health care. The program is motivated by the increased complexity of today's health care environment and the national call for improved preparation of nurse leaders in advanced nursing practice. It emphasizes leadership in advanced practice, rather than preparation for conduct of independent research, and provides students with doctoral level experiences in evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and organization/systems.
It is worth looking at this development in some depth because it embodies so much about where we are today and where we are heading. Our approach to all of our educational programs is (a) built on a set of common intentions; (b) interpreted in the context of each discipline; (c) adapted to the environments in which learning and scholarship will take place and where scholarship will be applied; and, (d) built on an implicit educational philosophy that traces back in concept to our earliest curriculum. Although we have not spent time as a faculty and staff to make our underlying assumptions explicit, the stories I have heard and the examples I have seen all make sense in the context of national explorations of Liberal Education and America’s Promise, the next generation arising from Greater Expectations. Taken as a whole, we can say that we envision students who are intentional learners who can adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from different sources, and continue learning throughout their lives, thriving because they are

- empowered through the mastery of intellectual and practical skills
- informed by knowledge of the natural and social worlds and enriched by the forms of inquiry basic to an understanding of ourselves and the world we inhabit
- responsible for their personal actions and willing to work toward the public good.

Let me offer a few examples of this deep logic that weaves through what we do. I have simply chosen things that I have seen myself, either in person or through someone else’s eyes over the summer. There are so many of these stories that I had to find a way to limit myself and so I did so by looking back over the e-mails and conversations since the beginning of July.

**Promoting Student Success.** We have stepped up our efforts to attract, support and graduate a more diverse and talented group of students and to set up conditions that will support their success. Our focus this past year has been on helping smooth the way across big transitions in the lives of our students, including the transition from high school to college or from one undergraduate experience to another during transfer. In August, the Annual Report from our office of Inclusion and Diversity landed on my desk. It contained some good news. Black, Asian, Hispanic and American Indian freshmen who participated in our new Family Ties program earned a GPA of 2.82 while similar students who did not participate earned an average GPA of
Clearly a program that pays attention to our entering students and their families and that introduces them to returning students as a community can make a significant difference. This was not the only thing we did differently this past year of course, and it is hard to sort out what is working and what is not when we are moving on so many fronts at once. Over time, though, it will become clear as we develop new and more useful forms of measuring our progress and assessing our efforts. The researcher in me wants to look at this pattern over time, both to follow the progress of these students and to learn more about how best to help our students succeed. We will keep our eye on the most important leading indicator of progress---continuation rates from winter to spring and from spring to the next fall. It is not often in higher education that we can report numbers over short intervals that mean much at all. This particular measure means a lot!

**An Untapped Asset: Generational Differences.** As more and more people pay attention to the changing demographics that will shape our communities, our workplace and our daily lives, a number of studies of generational differences have shown up on my e-mail and in the inbox on my desk. Each details the characteristics of Traditionals, Baby Boomers, Generation X’s and Millennials or Generation Y’s. The articles and reports talk about what happens when these different people try to work or study together and most of the time, the issue is depicted as a problem to be managed, I see the same numbers and stories and see an opportunity waiting to be tapped. At WSU, we have all four generations assembled in a community of learners whose primary responsibility is to make sense of the world around us and put those insights to good use. During the past year, we funded a number of Special Initiative Awards to staff at WSU to study a number of different aspects of student success. Although many of these projects build off the basic question of generational differences, one that has shaped by own thinking is the project on First-Year Exit Interviews conducted by Richard Kotovich. Richard sought to answer a simple question: Why do students leave WSU after their first year? Approximately half of our non-returning students (n= 211) participated in interviews and the results were interesting. Almost all of them (94%) said that WSU could not have done anything differently to change their decision to leave. They also were perfectly happy.

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6 To see the list of projects and to read the final reports that have been submitted for those that have been completed, visit [http://www.winona.edu/21stcentury/innovation/](http://www.winona.edu/21stcentury/innovation/) It is an impressive body of work that will be put to good use as we continue to work on supporting genuine, engaging, meaningful student experiences at WSU and supporting student success.
with their experience with WSU but they wanted to study at a four-year institution closer to home. Why? Through phone calls, instant messaging, and e-mail they were in contact with their parents and their friends several times a day. They went home on the weekends to work. They just never really left home in the first place.

This research illustrates an important generational difference that we can address. When I was growing up, I could hardly wait to leave home. Nowadays, many young people are much more tightly connected to their families and friends and have no wish to leave home at all. One advantage of doing these kinds of focused studies is that we can find out a lot more from experiences like this than we can from statistics or surveys. Now we have an idea about what we might do next to help our new students see our campus and the community as their second home and to help them make personal connections here that balance out the ones they bring with them for home.

The resource represented by generational differences, a powerful form of diversity, can enrich our lives, expose us to new perspectives, encourage us to unearth our deeper assumptions and rethink them. What a gold mine of opportunity for us and what potential this has to help us ensure success for all of us. I am watching this happen at WSU as more faculty invite students to participate in research projects. Our first annual research day, held in the atrium of the Science Building late this spring was a lovely representation of the wealth of possibilities opening up for us all. Studies ranging from an exploration of American literature in a course offered in Egypt to analyses of student data to work on the ecosystem of the Upper Mississippi were presented side by side. It was fascinating. The interactions of the student presenters with the visitors to the poster session were wonderful to watch.

To add one more example that illustrates the power of using generational differences in creative ways---in this case to get every child off to a good start---consider the story of our new partnership in early childhood education. In May, we were recognized by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota for the "Partnership for Lifelong Learning" at the Maxwell Children's Center at Madison Elementary School here in Winona. WSU and partners Winona Area Public Schools, the City of Winona and Head Start have been awarded a 2006 Local Government Innovation Award for the Partnership for Lifelong Learning program, which
provides extensive programming from preschool education to senior services. The award recognizes Phase I of this partnership—the opening of the Madison School Maxwell Children’s Center, which serves 30-38 children aged 18 months to 5 years old with an innovative full-service early childhood education program.

The program captures several of the themes that are emerging at WSU as a result of our change initiatives. The program is imaginative. It brings together several partners into a long-term collaboration in an area critical to Winona’s future. It takes advantage of cross-generational opportunities and takes greater advantage of a resource that this community must learn to engage more fully—the energies and experiences of our “Traditionals,” the people born before the end of World War II. Simultaneously, the model supports the youngest members of our community and their teachers while bringing a meaningful opportunity to older members of the community. What used to be considered separate spheres turns out to offer wonderful opportunity to bring different parts of the community together to learn together differently and work together differently. This will make a real difference in the lives of our children.

**Academic Excellence.** In July, we received notice that our volleyball team has won recognition from the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic for their dedication to the sport and their excellence in the classroom. Coach Connie Mettille walked into my office with the letter, which made it even better because I could congratulate her right then and there.

That recognition started a chain of memories. I still remember an encounter on my first walk across campus two years ago. A pattern was set up then that I have enjoyed ever since. No matter when I walk across campus, even in the heart of winter, I encounter someone who tells me an interesting story or even just smiles a welcome. On that particular day in mid-summer, I looked up and saw our Athletic Director, Larry Holstad walking by with our head football coach, Tom Sawyer. Tom reminds me regularly that I barely had said hello before I looked him right in the eyes and said, “Coach, what is your team GPA?” He smiled and said “3.0.” I smiled back, very happy to hear this and feeling my usual concerns about intercollegiate athletics beginning to melt away as I learned more about our Warriors.
WSU is the first institution that I have served where the overwhelming majority of comments that I hear about our sports programs and about our student athletes are glowing and positive. We are extremely fortunate here to be offering such a rich and rewarding experience for our student athletes and for all of us who care about them and cheer them on. This thought led to another memory. I went back in my mind to last spring when the final games in Division II Men's Basketball were being played in Springfield Massachusetts. I talked to several arena staff who said that they enjoyed our men's basketball team because they were always considerate and thoughtful and wonderful ambassadors for WSU. I also remembered the kids in the high school pep band who happily donned WSU purple shirts to play during the championship game and the band director and the school principal who talked about our fans (fun and considerate and full of energy) and our staff (appreciative and supportive).

**Rochester as a Living Laboratory: Cultural Diversity:** Early in August, I had a conversation with Kathy Orth, a member of our Nursing faculty in Rochester at an alumni gathering there. Kathy works with a community engagement experience for our students at the Hawthorne Education Center in Rochester. The stories she shared with me are part of a research project entitled *Breaking Down Biases and Changing Perceptions: Impact of Immersion in a Culturally Diverse Setting on Undergraduate Nursing Students.* This work was presented by five of our faculty at Sigma Theta Tau’s International Research Symposium.

The Hawthorne Education Center is an adult literacy center serving 3000 learners a year, many of them immigrants and refugees who are not literate in their own languages. Their lives have been shaped by war and disease and dislocation. They teach our students more in so many ways about life. Here, by permission, is what one of our students wrote about this experience.

"Prior to this experience, I would purposely avoid situations where I might not be able to understand someone. Now I realize that being a nurse means helping anyone, of any ethnicity, at any time. Every week a new door is going to open and I am going to peak in and see how this is going to help me become a better nurse. I know this experience is really about getting involved with our community but I truly see this as a way to expand my nursing knowledge so I can care for all."
There are many more examples of the opening up of Rochester as a classroom and laboratory for many of our programs that can advance their educational and research interests by working with the youth-serving community, local businesses and economic development organizations, health care providers like Mayo and Olmstead County Medical Center, and technology companies like IBM. We have only just begun to explore the possibilities awaiting us there.

**A Sense of Place.** This spring, Pat Mutter from *Visit Winona* approached us to talk about opening up our University on the River educational series to visitors to the Winona area. The August issue of the Winona Area Chamber insert in the *Winona Daily News* tells the story, written by our own Andrea Mikkelsen. In partnership with Visit Winona and the Winona island Café (the source of my favorite local ice cream), we sponsored a series of University on the River classes on our 64 foot houseboat, *The River Explorer*. The series was immediately oversubscribed and we added two more classes. Those filled up too. On this “real live classroom,” the participants learned about birds, scenic photography or the impact of human activity on the river.

This summer, a new website showed up in our L21 portfolio that nicely captures our sense of place, the site for the Center for Mississippi River Studies, “...dedicated to creating greater understanding of the broad multifaceted nature of the Mississippi River and the people and places it touches.”

As the narrative says, “We seek a greater understanding of the history, environment, literature, natural and social sciences, folklore, visual and performing arts and economics of the Mississippi River through research, teaching and outreach. 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.”

**A Sense of Purpose:** There are many ways to talk about a sense of purpose. I shall just use two examples, both connected to our National Child Protection Center. The first is the story of Matty’s Place, a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) that we plan to establish in Winona in partnership with the County Attorney’s Office, the Sheriff’s Office, the Winona Police
Department, the City of Winona, the Winona Area Public Schools, and the Winona County Human Services along with local service clubs and a number of our very dedicated faculty members. Our CAC will serve the needs of children and families in the counties of Winona, Wabasha, Houston and Fillmore.

This effort is part of a much larger national and international strategy aimed at ending child abuse in three generations. The plan, called Unto the Third Generation has generated a lot of interest and commitment around the country. The other component that I want to mention is the creation of an interdisciplinary Child Advocacy Studies minor, called CAST. Designed by a cross-disciplinary team of WSU faculty, CAST is now being offered here and as time goes on, throughout the nation. Our goal is to prepare the nation’s law enforcement officers, social workers, nurses and doctors, prosecutors, judges and other child protection professionals who will be asked to respond to cases of child abuse. The program is unique in its design and captures the qualities that a 21st century education must embrace: theoretically grounded, practical in its orientation, innovative, collaborative and interdisciplinary. In this program, as in so many of our other offerings, students learn to work with people they have never met before on a problem they have never seen before that continues to evolve as they engage the issues. That is not an easy experience to model. It can only be done in an authentic way when real conditions are in play and real consequences will ensue.

**Becoming Global Citizens:** Last spring, a delegation from WSU went to Egypt to explore the possibility of opening up collaborations with several universities in the Middle East. This is part of our effort to expand our international programs, increase the opportunities for every member of the Winona State University community and our neighbors in the region to work with people from other parts of the world and move toward “internationalizing” our campus in Winona and in Rochester. My own favorite example this summer was the wonderful visit of a group of students from MISR University in Cairo, accompanied by Professor Maha, Dean of Foreign Languages. This intense trip was made possible because of the energy and commitment of Ruth Forsythe in our Department of English, a committed internationalist, who was a member of our March delegation to Egypt. The young people were delightful but they conveyed, in the way that only young people can, the deep value of working together across boundaries of
experience, tradition, culture and geography. One young woman speaking at a luncheon about her experience said that she had been afraid to come here because she had heard that Americans were angry people, violent people and people not to be trusted. She found the courage to come anyhow and now she knows that we are all fellow travelers on this earth, caring about friends and family, enjoying good food, laughter, and an opportunity to explore new places. I must admit that my eyes began to mist over as I thought of what a mere two weeks can do to open up a world for all of us. Every minute that I spent with our visitors was engaging, energizing and very special.

Many other people were able to share similar experiences, both on campus and around the world. We fielded thirteen travel study programs this year, involving 257 students. A new set of programs is on the drawing board as faculty and staff work on new programs that may include Taiwan, Argentina, Belize, Arizona, Guatemala and England (outside London). Our past trips have gone to Chicago, London, the India Himalayas, Rome, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Atlanta (GA), Alabama, Mexico, New Orleans, Shanghai, St. Croix, Costa Rica, Australia and New Zealand, and Tanzania, among other places.

As our Travel Study program grows and as more people become engaged, the model continues to evolve. One emerging pattern is made possible by our more intensive involvement with local industry. One of the unusual features of the Winona area is the presence of a surprising number of companies with global reach and a long-standing tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship. These companies are reinventing how business will be done around the globe and they offer a window into the realities of a Flat World, using language advanced by Thomas Friedman, author of *The World is Flat*. The Travel Study program to Shanghai this past year allowed our business students to learn from the operations of companies like RTP, Fastenal, Benchmark and Ashley Furniture in Shanghai.

These examples fail to capture the growing portfolio of international programs and relationships that are emerging at WSU as we invent new forms of exchange and shared program design and delivery. Every time we send a team abroad, they return with fresh perspectives, wonderful new relationships and new insights on how the world order is changing. Another report showed up in my inbox this summer from the NASULGC Task Force on International Education that provided an interesting validation of our reasons for pursuing a more intense emphasis on international experiences.
and global citizenship. The task Force identified some outcomes we should expect from these investments, for ourselves and for our students and community partners.

- A diverse and knowledgeable worldview that informs how we look at the world—both its history and the unfolding of current events.
- An ability to understand the international dimensions of our own major field of study and expertise.
- An ability to communicate well across cultural lines.
- A capacity to show sensitivity and to exercise flexibility and adaptability in unexpected situations, both in our own country and abroad.
- A deep interest in international issues and a propensity to continue global learning throughout life.

**Celebrating the Arts.** The fourth season of the Great River Shakespeare Festival ended in July with much rejoicing because we had no red ink on the budget sheet. I hope that many of you were able to attend the plays. I enjoyed both productions, in one case escorted by my grandson Zach. Young Zach took in the plot of Macbeth and began to ask me some tough questions about leadership and human nature. I assured him that I had not murdered my way to the presidency and he seemed relieved. Our lively discussion is just one way to show how wonderful it is to see so many arts and cultural programming emerge here, supported and extended by the connection each has to WSU. Recently, I wrote a piece for the Positively Winona series about the idea of a CommUniversity and reflected on what it is like finally to see what really happens when the delineation between a university and community becomes so blurred that it is impossible to say where the edges of the university end and the community begins. That is starting to happen here and it is opening up new possibilities for our faculty, staff and students. I have talked about this before. It is what I mean by the term “engaged university.”

**Linking Education and Practice.** At the annual WSU Foundation Board of Trustees dinner in July, I met four of Pat Paulson's students who have done projects for a local bank over the past year. The story captures the power
of engaged learning when the educational goals of our curriculum match up with projects and studies that will be useful to the business community. To quote from the e-mail I received from a senior official of the bank:

"Last Friday we had a wonderful conversation with Pat Paulson as he prepares his curriculum for the coming year. Our primary topic of discussion was identifying projects/topics that would be useful in the business world that his students could learn from and participate in. We discussed additional research topics as well...I share this with you as it so perfectly demonstrates the need to connect and interaction with the community. It enhances the image of WSU at the same time. The concept underscores your message of building and partnering with the community. Furthermore, it prepares the students for the real world and allows them to bring such richness into the workplace."

We are building on these ideas by setting up joint ventures with several local companies that will support our students and offer them hands-on experience in a contemporary and challenging workplace and provided faculty-in-residence opportunities. Some of the elements of this are already in place. Two of our statisticians, Chris Malone and Tisha Hooks held residencies this year at Mayo and at Gunderson-Lutheran respectively. Student internships are being designed on a cooperative education model at Fastenal and RTP and will probably expand to other global companies in the area within the next year.

Just one more promising example. Every year, economics professor Don Salyards teaches an Entrepreneurship and the Economy course. Last semester he added a new component—a class project that engaged his students in putting together a summer entrepreneurship camp for high school students. The kids who signed up were all from the Alternative Learning Center in Winona and according to reports, they all really "got into it," which suggests that something like this might really be what these students need to link learning to something that captures their imagination.

These new relationships are different in some essential ways from more familiar internships or residency programs or partnerships. They signal the emergence of a new, deeper kind of relationship that will characterize our future community collaborations and commitments. They are mutually beneficial. We will enter into our collaborations with a commitment for
the long haul. We will build these programs through a genuine sharing of resources and through the use of complementary knowledge and skill. We will design them to facilitate mutual learning and we will develop an ability to adapt to each other and to changing circumstances. In short, these new programs have at their core our growing ability to learn together differently and work together differently, both within our own campus community and in cooperation with community partners.

**Our Climate Commitment.** Last spring, the Faculty Association asked me to sign the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. I was pleased to do so not only because I am personally committed to sustainability—the expectation that each generation shall leave for its children and grandchildren a world as rich in resources and as supportive of life as we inherited from our own forebear—but also because this such a natural thing for us to do. The logic is compelling. As the Climate Commitment document says (in part):

“We, the undersigned presidents and chancellors of colleges and universities, are deeply concerned about the unprecedented scale and speed of global warming and its potential for large-scale, adverse health, social, economic and ecological effects. We recognize the scientific consensus that global warming is real and is largely being caused by humans. We further recognize the need to reduce the global emission of greenhouse gases by 80% by mid-century at the latest, in order to avert the worst impacts of global warming and to reestablish the more stable climatic conditions that have made human progress over the last 10,000 years possible.

These colleges and universities will be providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the critical, systemic challenges faced by the world in this new century and enable them to benefit from the economic opportunities that will arise as a result of solutions they develop.

We further believe that colleges and universities that exert leadership in addressing climate change will stabilize and reduce their long-term energy costs, attract excellent students and faculty, attract new sources of funding, and increase the support of alumni and local communities.”
We will undertake our Climate Commitment this fall, with the leadership of Cal Winbush, who has agreed to serve as our Sustainability Coordinator. We will begin by meeting the requirements of our commitment

- Create an institutional structure to guide the development and implementation of our Climate Commitment plan.
- Complete a comprehensive inventory of all greenhouse gas emissions and set up a process for updating that inventory annually.
- Create a plan and implement it.

In keeping with our growing connections to our community, we have elected to expand this model to a larger sustainability agenda that we will pursue in close collaboration with the City of Winona and Winona County, both of which have signed comparable climate commitment resolutions. Our plan is to prepare for and obtain joint international Environmental Management System ISO 14001 certification as a partnership. As far as we know, we are the only community where the three largest public entities have come together like this and it is an exciting prospect to work out how we can focus our combined efforts to support the goals of ISO 14001—to support environmental protection and to prevent pollution in a manner compatible with the social and economic needs of our community.

While we concentrate on our Climate Commitment, we will not neglect the other components of sustainability. Many of the elements usually associated with sustainability efforts are already underway and we will continue to use our own self-organizing environmental community to explore these options and expand our efforts. Sustainability as a philosophy and as a shared agenda is emerging naturally and spontaneously at WSU and I have no wish to impose any order on this aspect of our work. We only need to be fully organized and explicit where the specific requirements of our Climate Commitment are concerned. I shall be bringing a Climate Commitment Task force proposal to our campus constituency groups early this fall.

- Fostering energy conservation and efficiency
- Generation or purchase of renewable power
- Transportation systems that require minimal carbon emissions
• Purchasing that emphasizes local, recycled and sustainable goods.
• Increasing our efforts to reduce our production of waste and intensify our recycling of what we do produce.
• Use of locally grown produce in our campus food systems.
• Investments in longer-term climate solutions.
• The incorporation of climate science and policy into our curriculum as well as the expansion of research and development on campus with an emphasis on engaging our students in R&D as well as in the implementation of our strategies.
• Grow our partnership with our local community and local employers who share our concern for sustainability and who can complement our efforts and expertise.

Making Ideas Visible. Maxwell and The Wellness Complex The next major building project on the docket is a wonderful example of why WSU is so special. We are, as I am fond of saying, large enough to have sufficient resources and small enough that we actually can use those resources wisely and in an integrated fashion. The Wellness Complex captures in a clear and compelling way what it means to be “just right”.

The plan for this approach has its origins in the earliest phase of our Winona Experience days. I went back to the original description of the Wellness Implementation Work Group and reread the New University Proposal. That document, embellished with a butterfly and a bright purple cover, was included in the materials that were sent to the presidential candidates. It is because of that document and what it represented in clarity of vision and purpose that I wanted to come here. The first concrete signs of that plan—literally speaking---are captured in the repurposing and restructuring of our old library building, Maxwell Hall. Maxwell will house our Integrated Academic Services, a major rethinking of how we can support student success and a concept developed during the Winona Experience phase of our development from 2003-2005. I went back and found my folder with all of the concept papers prepared by the different study groups and was delighted to see how the innovative thinking that emerged from the interaction of the people on that original team has continued to evolve and
will soon be visible to all of us when Maxwell Hall reopens next spring. Listen to the opening sentences of that report.

The Student Services Study Group's overarching big idea is that WSU adopt the integrated student services model to provide seamless services that promote student learning, and create a "culture of caring that reflects the university's commitment to civility and diversity." In order to have integrated student services, the University must commit itself to being a learning-centered institution. As matters stand presently, our assessment data shows us that both bureaucratic structures and in some isolated instances, personnel, hamper the delivery of quality services.

The report went on to say:

To consider a new, learning-centered model, we must look at the university from the student perspective. Students tend to think holistically and of course have no knowledge of the university's bureaucratic structure; currently, a bewildering maze of offices and job titles confront the student who has a problem. Hence the first change that needs to be considered is how to best inform a student as to where they can find the answer to their questions.

As I read further into the document, I felt again the same excitement that captured me when I read it the first time, sitting in Washington DC and imagining what it would be like to join a community of people who could think like that, and better yet, actually act on that thinking. Here we are today, poised to see this vision become a reality.

The full realization of the philosophy, values and hopes captured during the Winona Experience phase of our change efforts will be embodied in the Wellness Complex. Here is what the New University Proposal said about Health and Wellness.

Health and Wellness: Develop a long-term plan to integrate wellness more fully into our community. Plan for a common space for health care, counseling, and pharmaceutical services. Launch a pilot of the student wellness plan, helping students learn to relate physical fitness and mental health to personal, academic, work, and lifestyle issues.
The original idea has evolved until now it provides what an architect would call the form-giving goals for the design of a new facility that will house new combinations of activities that reflect our three-fold goals of learning differently, working together differently and making a difference. The Wellness complex will be an expansion of our current Memorial Hall and will combine a number of functions---health and wellness; academic programs associated with health promotion and rehabilitation, recreational space, opportunities for collaboration with health care partners in the community.

Furthermore, the idea of wellness has been expanded to include the health of our environment as the campus community has begun to embrace the imperative of our climate commitment as well as our growing connections to the region and our mutual interest in community well being. We are concerned about how individual health, the health of a community and the condition of our physical environment tie together, all advanced through healthy collaborations. Our new Wellness Complex will address all three as well as the connections among them. As we say in the brochure that we developed to support our fund-raising for this facility: “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. We will also look outward and create collaborative experiences that contribute to the health and wellness of the people in our community.”

To accomplish this, we are thinking about health across four levels.

- **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 two academic programs, both of which have rich relationships with communities in Southeast Minnesota. Both Physical Education and Recreation and Health, Exercise and Rehabilitative Services are engaged and
committed to working closely with people throughout this region to get young people off to a good start as well as to help people with health and fitness challenges to restore 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 designed 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. This is what engagement means: (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; (5) supported by trust, open communication and a willingness to adapt to each other and to changing circumstances.

**Modeling the qualities of a 21st century environment: Change as a Scholarly Act.** Proposals for the next annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities were due at the end of July and we submitted two program ideas. I hope they are accepted because each one illustrates the remarkable contribution that we are starting to make to the challenge of creating an engaging educational environment and modeling the qualities we hope to instill in our own students. One proposal was entitled *Winona State University: Unfolding, Reading and Navigating our Road Map of*
Change, I won’t quote the entire abstract but it was delightful. We are in the fourth year of a change initiative that we call Learning for the 21st Century. If you are new to this community of learners, you can go to our home page at www.winona.edu and click on Learning for the 21st Century in the gray box on the left-hand side of the page and see the story for yourself. Our proposal promises to show how we have drawn and then redrawn a map to guide us through the changing educational landscape as we seek to prepare our students for the 21st century. We promise to tell about “the road we have traveled, how we have studied change at all levels and what we have learned to help us with the rest of the trip. My only quibble with the narrative is that I think we have our own version of the never-ending Story that shifts as we learn more and as we interact with each other and with our partners. However, since I did not have to do any of the work, I probably shouldn’t be a carping critic.

The other proposal is about how to navigate on the road. To put it simply and to quote the abstract, “On many campuses, assessment is about collecting data. Piles of surveys, stacks of notebooks, and color-coded charts showing national comparisons gather dust in offices across campus. Few people have access to these documents and fewer still have any idea what it means or how to use all that information. The short description is priceless. As it says, “It’s time to dust off all those reports on your shelf and figure out what all that assessment data you’ve collected actually means. This hands-on session will give participants the opportunity to look for patterns in their assessment data that can be used for improvement of student success and the quality and impact of our programs.

These two proposals are my exhibits to make a point. We are doing some very creative things and we are starting to get some real traction in our efforts to figure out where we are, where we are going and how we can get there together. What we are learning and how we begin to use these new insights will be of national importance. Approaching our change initiatives in a scholarly way will also be invaluable as we gear up to prepare the Self-Study that is required as a part of the institutional accreditation process and the Higher Learning Commission visit that will be scheduled for 2011.

Learning Differently and Working Together Differently. Remedial Mathematics. There are so many examples of this at WSU that I shall revert to type and pick an example that I think is especially worth noting
since one of my most intense interests is science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. This particular project illustrates not only our on-going emphasis on learning differently and working together differently but also our growing engagement with partners in the community, including other institutions in the Minnesota State Systems of Colleges and Universities (MnSCU). The story goes back away but I shall begin it with an invitation that I received last year from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to serve on a presidential task force on science and math education. One thing led to another and the decision was made to focus on mathematics because it represents the most important element in college success and in promoting an interest in STEM education.

To begin the study of mathematics readiness and what it means to be prepared for college-level mathematics, AASCU planned an invitational workshop that was held in July in Austin-Texas at the Dana Center. We were invited to send a team. According to Dean Jeff Anderson, our current participants have come from the College of Science and Engineering, the College of Education, Winona Senior High, Century High School, and Normandale Community College.

In addition, a team of mathematics faculty and technical staff has begun development of algebra modules in collaboration with the Carnegie-Mellon Open Learning Institute. Similar work with chemistry will take place in the near future. We intend to continue exploring collaborative exchanges in math and sciences through the emerging partnership group, which will ultimately expand to include our other regional institutes (e.g., RCTC, MN Southeast Technical College, and the Rochester Area Math Science Partnership) as well as other universities such as recent potential collaborations with Southwest Minnesota State University.

This package of projects represents a preview of where WSU as a whole is heading. I will capture that in more abstract form when I talk about where we are going next but as a segue to that final component of my welcome today, let me summarize some of the elements that this family of projects will contain.

I shall start by quoting from the proposal that we submitted to the Office of the Chancellor for funding for the initial project, with my own emphasis added.
WSU is committed to strengthening educational partnerships throughout the Southeastern Minnesota region toward promoting effective programs in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) teaching programs. There is a need to draw upon the available strengths within P-12, two-year colleges, area center of excellence, and university personnel. At a recent STEM conference hosted in Rochester by the Minnesota Secretary of Education, this same level of commitment was similarly expressed by regional high school faculty and administrators, parents, students, higher education faculty, and area industry individuals. The proposed plan intends to follow-up on such dialogue by more intentionally drawing together several of these people towards developing and sustaining collaborative and innovative STEM teaching programs.

This model represents a next generation collaboration and a deeper engagement. To review what such a commitment entails, the relationship that we will form will be

1. Mutually beneficial and based on complementary knowledge and roles as well as shared responsibility for the results and outcomes.
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;
5. Supported by trust, open communication and a willingness to adapt to each other and to changing circumstances.

This is the core of a 21st Century University. This project offers a nice transition to what lies ahead because it embodies many of the qualities of a truly engaged university, a 21st century university. It captures what is happening as we become more open, collaborative, interdisciplinary and global in our intentions and in our interactions as we take engagement to a new depth and intensity.

Success in the 21st century will require adaptive skills-the ability to apply knowledge in new settings and in new ways to unexpected and unpredictable questions. 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 every-changing problems.

WSU will be a University whose concept of academic excellence embraces the qualities of a community of learners improving our world. Learning for the 21st Century will be manifested at Winona State University in three fundamental ways:

• By providing an inspiring and supportive learning environment that is purposefully designed to facilitate creativity, innovation and research - with the goals of learning differently, working together differently and making 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 experiences for all members of our campus community and for those who partner with us.

• By preparing student’s who can creatively, responsively and adaptively apply their knowledge and skills as engaged, well-educated citizens and respond successfully to the challenges of their work, their lives and the communities in which they live.

• By making the University itself a working model of scholarship in action and a living example of the practice of contemporary democracy in which the members of the University community and our partners work together to discover, integrate and apply knowledge to the challenges of preparing our students and ourselves for life and work in the 21st century.

• By contributing to the quality of life and to economic vitality in Southeast Minnesota both by the way we prepare our students for life and work and through lasting and committed relationships with
fellow educators, community leaders, community groups and enterprises, large and small, both private and non-profit.

By doing this we will take our core mission and add new dimensions to the way we approach being a community of learners and enrich what we mean when we say that we are changing the world. Supporting this vision, there is a rich history and a wonderful set of stories of courage and conviction, and a shared belief that through scholarship and learning we can make the world a better place. As we look forward to our next 150 years, we will remain faithful to the core values that shaped us in the past and will guide us in the future.

We will be:

- Innovative and open to learning.
- Connected to the community in spirit and purpose.
- Eager to explore the world.
- Informed by a culture of inquiry, open-mindedness and willing to explore new ideas and revisit old ones.
- Committed to the highest standards of our profession.
- Dedicated to our students.
- Shaped by the history, physical setting and culture of this remarkable place and wise stewards of this special heritage.

To achieve these ambitious goals, each one of us must do our share. Each of us has something important to contribute and we need to make sure that our community welcomes and is receptive to what we each have to bring. Every day, I ask myself a few simple questions, just to make sure that I am doing my own part to create a supportive environment. You may want to develop your own set of questions and do the same.

1. Do I trust people I work with? If they abuse my trust, do I have the courage to talk with them honestly about it?
2. Do I engage in open discussion of difficult issues and support healthy disagreement?
3. When I deal with difficult or controversial issues, am I open-minded, informed and empathetic and do I listen thoughtfully to what people have to say?
4. Am I willing to accept the vulnerability of seeing that which is good in everyone I meet?
5. Do I listen carefully for the strong points in someone else’s arguments and look for the weaknesses in my own?
6. Do I notice when someone does something extra or goes beyond what I might expect? Do I thank them?
7. Am I willing to challenge myself to do the best I can? Do I expect others to do the same and do I do my best to help them be successful?
8. Am I honest with myself and with others?

We are fortunate to be together in this, our Sesquicentennial Year. Take time to learn more about the history of this institution, explore the lessons of our past and the promise of our future, enjoy each other’s company and take the time to notice when other people do wonderful things---large and small. By noticing small acts of generosity and kindness and by sharing our hopes and dreams, we can watch the flame leap higher and celebrate the story we are writing together. Welcome to a new academic year.