Provost Remarks
Board of Trustees Meeting
June 19, 2013

Retire-Rehire

- Thank you for your support of my continued leadership
- We will accomplish what we have set out to accomplish, not because of what I will do but via the support of my colleagues in this room and across the campus
- Essential component of excellence and success is accountability
- We will be accountable for the very best Akron Experience

Academic Excellence

- Akron experience is not only about students but it is about staff and faculty
- Share some comments in a card I recently received from a faculty member after 1-y at UA
  - Thank you for the warm welcome…into our vibrant university community
  - First-year experience is enriched by the cultural and natural resources in the region-CVNP and Metro Parks
  - As an econ professor, special events such as the “Freakonomics” lecture was special
  - As I look forward to a summer’s work, …thank you for making our university community a welcoming home, it is an appreciated component of my Akron Experience

- Excellence also achieved through collaboration such as that emerging with Summit Education Initiative
  - Personnel actions asked to name Matt Deavers as Director of Regional Educational Attainment
  - One of the regions finest experts in using data to predict and improve student performance
  - He will have access to broader student data related to the cradle to career continuum
  - Help formulate more predictable pathways to student success, not only county-wide; but at and to UA
  - Point out the position is fully funded via SEI

Retention Initiatives

- Create a culture of accountability with an ability to measure results
  - Identified 24 retention initiatives and have measured progress to date for nearly all
  - Each initiative has a coordinated action plan to address student needs and our proactive responses
• We know directly admitted students achieve our goals of 80% first year retention and 60% graduation rates (62%)
  o We can most directly affect the success of the thousands of pre-major students with our Retention Plan
  o We will engage the colleges as much as possible

Our Method of Approach

• It is not what we’ve done, but what we will do
  o No complacency
  o Perhaps our successes could be expanded even further – no more “good enough”

• Examples:
  o No longer in the business of excluding students: In the business of helping all succeed
  o No more compartmentalizing students to a unit: In the business of treating them all as our own
  o No longer wait for students to apply to innovative programs: Seek them out and get them into the programs we know will help them achieve even greater goals in life
  o No longer slowing the educational process with late grades: Getting them in on time, every time
  o No more waiting for students to be cleared for graduation: Colleges taking an active role in the process
  o No longer enroll in one course at a time; will enroll for semesters or even years at a time

Removing Our Obstacles

• Changing our approach to student support will remove the financial obstacles we face in the future
  o Instead of preparing for the potential enrollment declines of 2-7% as we are this year, we will be concerned with accommodating a growth of 2-7% in students
  o Instead of preparing contingency plans for budget cuts, we will be planning on further investments in the innovative programs that makes Akron such an outstanding place

Academic Excellence

• End where I began student success is our success
• Will happen via vibrant Akron Experience for all
OAA Personnel Actions

Dr. Mark Winston, PhD, to be named Dean of University Libraries. He currently serves as assistant chancellor and director of the John Cotton Dana Library at Rutgers University. As Assistant Chancellor, he has been responsible for campus-wide academic initiatives, including faculty development programs and the strengthening of the campus’s engagement with its urban community in teaching and research.

Dr. Winston will join The University of Akron on Sept. 1, 2013. In addition to his responsibilities as dean, he will develop a strategy to enhance institutional effectiveness.

Dan Deckler, Ph.D, P.E., to be named interim dean of Wayne College. Dan currently serves as interim associate dean of Wayne College, and has a unique combination of industry and higher education experience, having worked on space shuttle and space station programs before joining Wayne in the early 90’s.

Susan Clark, Ph.D., J.D., to be named interim dean of the College of Education. Both Mark and Susan have accepted the offers, subject to your approval. Susan, a professor of Educational Foundations and Leadership also brings a wealth of experience as both an educator and administrator. I have attached biographical sketches for your information.

We are excited that we are working in a truly unique partnership with a county-wide education research and advocacy organization. Many of you have heard of Matt Deavers, a senior research associate at the Summit Education Initiative.

He is one of the region’s finest experts in using data to predict and improve student performance. We have worked with Matt in a community setting at SEI on better preparing students in K-12 for academic success on their way to a college experience.

Recently, Matt’s work received attention in the Akron Beacon Journal for helping students at Tallmadge High School improve their performance on the Ohio Graduation Test. The way Matt collects and interprets data can help educators formulate and implement targeted interventions for students, with proven positive outcomes.

Now, by joining OAA here at the University, Matt will have access to a broader student data sets to work with on the cradle to career continuum. We anticipate his work will help us formulate more predictable pathways to student success not only county-wide; but at the University of Akron.

His title will be Director of Regional Educational Attainment, and his job will be focused on student preparedness for college attainment and using data to improve college student performance, retention and graduation. I should note that his compensation is being fully funded by SEI.
This is a unique opportunity to connect the work of SEI to our Pathways strategy approach, and SEI is happy to support this unique and mutually beneficial collaboration. We welcome Matt on board and look forward to great accomplishments as part of this ongoing collaborative.