



Installation Address

Philip L. Dubois

Fourth Chancellor of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

February 3, 2006

Good morning. President Bowles, distinguished guests, members of the University community, and friends. Wow! What a great turnout. Thank you for being here. You've made me look good in front of my kids—it doesn't get any better than that!

And Dr. Loy Witherspoon, I see from the program that you conspired with John Valerio to both honor and surprise me with the processional composed for this special occasion. Thank you. And I'll deal with you later!

My remarks this morning will take just a few minutes, but I'm not going to tell you how long or the faculty will start a betting pool on how close I might come to my target. But for those of you who might want to read a more extended set of remarks, I have prepared those for the web and for publication in hard copy. For the senior faculty who remember my years as Provost, think of this as another fascinating "white paper."

Let me begin today with a simple statement: ". . . we at Charlotte do not claim yet to have become a fully developed university. On the other hand, let me now make very clear that we intend to build here . . . not only a fully developed university, but as soon as possible a great university; and that in [so doing] we believe we reflect the spirit of the . . . motto adopted by the people of this great state in 1893: -- To Be Rather Than to Seem."

Those words are not mine. They were spoken by Dean Colvard 39 years ago at his installation as the first chancellor. And they reflect a central tenet of our institutional culture that persists to this day. We have never wanted to appear to be something that we are not. But we do have high aspirations and we expect to become a great university, one that not only brings pride to our region but to all of the people of North Carolina.

Our path has been steady and sure, blessed by the visionary leadership provided by our founder, Ms. Bonnie Cone, and built upon by three extraordinary chancellors -- Dean Colvard, E.K. Fretwell, and Jim Woodward. As E.K. himself noted in his installation address, "I feel that I am standing on the shoulders of giants."

My debt of gratitude to my predecessors is profound, but it is especially powerful when I speak of Jim Woodward. As I said in November when we dedicated Woodward Hall, I owe a good part of my professional life and what I think about higher education to Jim. A good part of my antipathy toward external accreditors I owe to Jim. My understanding of why pizza is a better lunch choice than chicken, I owe to Jim. My appreciation for red brick as the gold standard for new construction comes from Jim.

Of course, professional development cannot happen without support from family and friends. My brother, Paul, and my late parents made sure that I took full advantage of what a public higher education had to offer (and my brother made sure I could pass calculus!). And I have been truly blessed with the extraordinary partnership that is my marriage to Lisa Lewis Dubois and the smiles and pride that daily are brought to us by Logan, Taylor, and Ali. As Al Simpson has often observed, I seriously “overmarried.”

I would like to cover several topics this morning, but I know that installation addresses always cause a certain amount of conversation and occasionally some controversy. Of course, I don’t want to cause so much controversy that President Bowles finds it necessary to relieve me of my responsibilities. But I do have a reputation for speaking my mind. And, in all cases, in the words of the late Clark Kerr, former President of the University of California, I want to leave this job as I enter it: fired with enthusiasm!

I will begin with our academic mission. A significant strength of this campus is a well-established academic planning process and an ambitious Academic Plan. The fundamentals of the original 1994 Plan continue to serve us well and, under the leadership of Provost Joan Lorden and our deans, the planning process is much improved.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from our current Academic Plan is that the vision we have been pursuing is the right vision. We should be one of North Carolina’s most significant public research universities, drawing focus and strength from the region we serve. And in working within our region, our watchwords should be “energetic,” “responsive,” and “collaborative.” We should be partners, not preachers.

My time today does not permit a detailed review on our Academic Plan, but I can say that we have a fascinating array of possibilities in front of us. Indeed, one can simply tour the prominent new campus buildings to understand the enhanced academic capacity of this institution to serve this region’s higher education needs.

In the James H. and Martha H. Woodward Hall, we have established our regional and national presence in the biological sciences and information technology. The new Engineering Research Building houses our long-established premier program in precision engineering and the increasingly important motorsports engineering program. Proposed initiatives in construction management and systems engineering, each with importance for the region, hold promise.

Our new Opto-Electronics building will allow full development of that initiative and the new Bioinformatics Research Center will bring us increased recognition in a broad range of applications at the intersection of several disciplines.

All of these efforts will be facilitated and linked to our community by the Charlotte Research Institute, our portal to the outside world of potential research collaborators and industrial consumers of our work.

In our new College of Education building, we will continue our leadership in the preparation of teachers, particularly in high need areas, and in the preparation of visionary educational administrators. We must continue our leadership in the preparation of teachers, particularly in high need areas, and in the preparation of visionary educational administrators. UNC Charlotte is the state leader in preparing second-career professionals for careers in teaching. We will maintain this distinction and this commitment.

And we will cooperate with our colleagues in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system to explore alternative models for the high school years while continuing our strong partnerships with the 13 school districts of the Southwest Education Alliance.

Next door to Education, we will soon move into a new building for the College of Health and Human Services and the opportunities there are exciting as well. The state probably cannot afford another medical school, but we can work with local healthcare providers to identify the most critical needs for healthcare professionals in fields other than medicine. And the growing research capacity of UNC Charlotte can be married more closely with the hospitals and clinicians in this region to make Charlotte a center for translational research in bio-medicine and bio-engineering.

At our front door on Highway 49 sits the handsome new Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts and, nearby, a renovated Rowe Arts Building. Those buildings only hint at our potential for regional arts leadership, potential we should explore with the arts leaders in this community. And we should look inside our own University as well, to see whether there are creative synergies that might be realized by the creation of a new academic college that would house Architecture and the arts.

The center of any great University is the College of Arts and Sciences, producing nearly half of our graduates and disproportionately responsible for our general education curriculum. Arts and Sciences faculty also are critical to a number of our new doctoral programs including the cutting-edge proposal we have for a Ph.D. in Nanoscale Science. As we think long-term about future doctoral programs, we must include the social sciences and humanities. At the same time, we know that the academic marketplace for graduates in many of these disciplines is oversupplied and we must be able to demonstrate a clear need.

Looking to the center city of Charlotte, we envision a major presence there, a place that will allow us to focus our graduate programs in the Belk College of Business.

Center City Charlotte is all about financial services, and thus UNC Charlotte should be home to one of the nation's strongest programs in finance. And the emergence of a full range of important sports franchises in this city opens the door for a first-rate program in sports marketing and management. I'm hopeful that such a program, if properly implemented by Dean Claude Lilly and his colleagues, should ensure that the Chancellor and his wife enjoy premium seating at some great sporting events. No pressure there, Claude!

Of course, a Center City facility would not just be important to the financial community. It will also house the offerings of several other colleges that address the needs of professionals who work nearby -- in health care, law enforcement, social services, and government.

So, our academic plans are ambitious—but are they ambitious enough to meet the needs of our region? This past fall, we enrolled 20,772 students. The current enrollment target for UNC Charlotte as determined by the Board of Governors is for 28,000 students to be enrolled by the year 2012.

Will 28,000 be sufficient? That question demands our attention. This entire Metropolitan Statistical Area is currently served by two public universities—UNC Charlotte and Winthrop University—with total enrollments of just over 26,000 students. But look at the twenty-three other MSAs across the country that currently house populations of the size that Charlotte is now or will be by the year 2020—perhaps 2 million people or more—and you will find public universities that serve an average of 40,000 students.

It is too early to say what size we might need to be to properly serve this region, but, at 28,000, we might win only the distinction of being the country's metropolitan region most poorly served by higher education. Accordingly, later this spring, I will ask the Provost to lead a task force that will look at this issue. At this point, it is not unreasonable to state that we could end up being the state's largest public university.

Our enrollment planning must include the development of a balanced philosophy with respect to offering off-campus and on-line education for those who live and work at greater distances and, in so doing, we must anticipate the long term implications of the completion of the Interstate-485 ring and the development of light rail up the northeast corridor along Tryon Street.

We need to think hard about the optimal mix we seek in our undergraduate and graduate enrollments, and the extent of the commitment we are prepared to make in attempting to support doctoral education. We do not want to become overextended and we must properly support the graduate students we admit to doctoral study.

As we build our inventory of programs, we should consider new models for the management of our faculty positions. Although we must respond to enrollment demands

in existing programs, we may require a mechanism for the cluster hiring of faculty to quickly expand institutional capacity in new programs or for interdisciplinary initiatives.

These remarks should suggest to you that we are going to continue on the track of building a major research university. We have defined that goal principally in terms of the classification system of the Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching, but that system is under revision and, under President Bowles, I think we can expect a review of institutional missions by the Board of Governors.

That review is both timely and appropriate. However, as I said at the University Convocation this past fall, our ambition is not the result of some abstract academic arms race. It is, instead, a recognition that public research universities have been central to the development of most of the large metropolitan regions of this country, even in states that have traditional flagship and land grant institutions as well. Our view of higher education in North Carolina must not be frozen in time.

One thing that I can say is that, as we contemplate our growth, we must remember the old adage that “big is not necessarily better.” Quality does matter. UNC Charlotte’s reputation as an outstanding undergraduate teaching institution came about because of the commitment of the administration and the faculty to provide teaching arrangements that guaranteed the deep involvement of faculty in the undergraduate experience. For this reason, we need to develop a set of annual “dashboard indicators” that will help us monitor the consequences of growth and the health of our undergraduate mission.

Before I leave the broad topic of our academic future, let me address the important topic of how central the achievement of cultural diversity is to that future.

Walking around campus over the past seven months, it is evident to me every day that UNC Charlotte is a more diverse place than when I left it in 1997. The goal of creating an inclusive campus community is already embodied in the University’s institutional plan, reflecting this campus’ long-held understanding that diversity isn’t just the right thing to do—it is an educational and business necessity.

In response to this imperative, UNC Charlotte has not been standing still. All of our institutional plans include initiatives that recognize the importance of diversity—and internationalization—as integral parts of our curriculum, the student experience, and the daily life of the campus.

Notwithstanding our evident commitment, there is frustration with the pace of progress, the apparent lack of coordination among our various programs, and the absence of effective mechanisms for tracking and evaluating our progress.

So, as a first step, we will reconstitute the Council on University Community composed of all of our vice chancellors and others -- reporting directly to me -- to ensure that the entire senior level of our administration has its eyes focused on the target. The first task of the Council will be to assemble for the first time a comprehensive University

Diversity Plan that forces us to assess, with brutal reality as our guide, what is working and what isn't.

Because I do not intend for the Council to function as an overload responsibility of our senior administrators, we will staff that body with a full-time administrative assistant to keep our work moving forward to bring coherence, visibility, and accountability to our efforts. And we will create a \$100,000 Chancellor's Fund to create challenge grants to seed the development of the many good ideas that exist on our campus to promote the daily value of diversity in the intellectual life of UNC Charlotte.

At the same time that we build our programs and enrollment, we must expand our presence in the greater Charlotte region and distinguish ourselves in the higher education marketplace with an identity that is both recognizable and respected. Such an identity, expressed as part of a strategic marketing plan which addresses all forms of the media and the worldwide web, is critical to student recruitment, the development of student internship and job placement opportunities, private fundraising, and the formation of university-private sector research partnerships.

Establishing an institutionwide approach to our brand and marketing will not be without pain and it will offend traditional notions of academic autonomy. Moreover, successful organizations have found that an effective identity is not simply a slogan or a tag line. Our constituents -- whether our students, alumni, research partners or the public at large -- must actually experience what we say we are.

It is for that reason that I do not subscribe to the view that raising UNC Charlotte's presence either regionally, in the state, or nationally is simply a matter of changing our name. It is the academic reputation -- the brand equity, if you will -- of "The University of North Carolina" system that helps to attract the best faculty, staff, and students. In short, we won't be looking for a "quick fix" to the challenges of institutional identity.

Whatever we may do in branding and marketing cannot end with the public relations staff or the web page. UNC Charlotte must actually become better connected to the region we serve.

I have already taken important steps to organize our efforts for this approach with the creation of a new Division of University Relations and Community Affairs headed by Vice Chancellor David Dunn.

I also asked David to chair a new University Relations Economic Development Council to facilitate regional awareness of our principal enterprises relating to economic development, including the Charlotte Research Institute. But economic development cannot be our only linchpin to this community. As I suggested earlier, we may have a larger role to play in the cultural landscape of Charlotte through our programs in the fine and performing arts.

And we have other important connections, through entities such as the Charlotte Community Design Studio, the Institute for Social Capital, and the Urban Institute. The Charlotte region offers us one of the premier urban laboratories in this country. We're large enough to have one of almost every kind of present or emerging urban issue, and yet we're still small enough to address those issues in productive ways. Our role is captured by the words of the President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities: "Public universities are stewards of place." Whenever the Charlotte region struggles with where it wants to go, it should look to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to help figure it out. And on those occasions where it seems appropriate to do so, we will lead.

The prospects for continued growth demand that we think creatively about the physical evolution of the main campus in the next revision of the Campus Master Plan. That plan necessarily must consider the future placement of academic and administrative buildings and student residence facilities, but also how we will manage campus circulation, transportation, and parking. Our future is in a pedestrian-friendly campus, complimented by an efficient and effective shuttle system.

As a long-term goal, we will take a serious look at how light rail might link UNC Charlotte to the center city and south Charlotte, and consider other ideas that will more closely integrate the main campus to University Place and neighborhood greenbelts. We should also look at how the campus environment might be enhanced with the creation of a mixed use retail and residential village on campus property and within easy reach on foot or by shuttle.

Ambitious academic and facility plans like this, of course, will require additional resources. Yet, as has been the case from the beginning of UNC Charlotte, we know that we will be forced to stretch every person and every dollar as we build our future. Unfortunately, the funding formulas used in our system only address incremental changes in our enrollment. When combined with the General Assembly's tendency on occasion to reduce UNC's budget in amounts that significantly offset enrollment increase dollars available to the campuses, there are days when it seems that Sisyphus might be a more fitting mascot than Norm the Niner!

Certainly we can be grateful that some of the funding needs of UNC Charlotte were recognized this past July with a special state appropriation of \$5 million, with an additional \$5 million coming in 2006. And I know that all of us can heartily endorse the intention of President Bowles to see whether harmful budget reductions can be avoided by placing the University's enrollment growth funding in the state's "continuation budget."

I also know that President Bowles is keenly aware that probably the greatest budgetary challenge facing our institutions is to increase the competitiveness of our salaries and benefits.

So I want to wish the President all the best as he takes on these formidable challenges. And I want to him to know that he has my support and that, while I am an advocate for UNC Charlotte, I am—first and foremost—an advocate of the University of North Carolina system. That system was formed for a reason -- to serve the people of the State -- and not the parochial interests of the campuses.

I also want the President to know that, if he is successful, we will welcome him when he drives the armored car full of new money for UNC Charlotte. But, Mr. President, when you arrive with your armored car, we want to make sure that you can find a place to park it! So, if you will join me here at the podium for a moment, I would like to present you with something that our faculty, staff, and students could easily agree is the most precious and valuable item that one must possess to be successful at UNC Charlotte -- a permit for a reserved parking space. Congratulations!

Until the armored car arrives, we must do what we can with what we have and make sure we are as efficient and effective in the use of our resources.

Thus, before we decide how to spend the second installment of \$5 million, we will initiate a budget re-examination to determine where our dollars are invested and why, and to explore what options we have for how those dollars are deployed and how the functions they support are performed. We will benchmark our academic and administrative staffing levels against comparable institutions. We will look for cost savings, strategic reallocations, and cost avoidance strategies where possible.

We have many budget needs throughout the institution, of course, but two stand out to me as a result just of my first few months here -- departmental support and information technology. Our budget re-examination must give particular attention to the needs in these areas, both of which affect the ability of our faculty and staff to work productively day in and day out. We can also realize some important budget efficiencies by undertaking the difficult job of determining the optimal balance between centralized and decentralized IT services and support.

Our budget re-examination must eventually also include an examination of how we use our instructional resources. A huge challenge, with both academic and financial implications, comes from looking at our graduation statistics. Today, well under 50% of our students complete their degree programs within six years. Each student who drops out of UNC Charlotte and does not finish his or her degree represents a loss to the stockpile of intellectual and social capital needed by our region and our state. But if you are a member of our faculty and staff and you don't find that persuasive, let me put a cold, self-interested economic spin on it. A mere 5% improvement in the annual retention rates of one class of freshmen and transfer students would produce approximately \$2.6 million for our budget in the first four years in tuition and fee income alone.

Student success is related in substantial measure to students' academic preparation, so our continuing work with the schools and our colleagues in the



community colleges takes on another level of importance for us. And we know that we could help UNC Charlotte students graduate in greater numbers if we could substitute additional need-based financial aid for the income they currently earn in the jobs that they require to stay in school. Beyond addressing these issues, we need to continue the collaborative work of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to promote the academic and social connections of students to the life of the university.

At the same time that we question how we will spend our money, we also need to focus very sharply on how we do our business. We start from a very strong position. Under Chancellor Woodward and our superb Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, Olen Smith, UNC Charlotte owns an earned reputation as one of the best managed campuses in the UNC system.

Going forward, we need to be careful that our growth as a research university does not outpace the capacity of our administrative procedures and business operations. We also need to move aggressively to minimize redundant operations and replace paperwork with digital recordkeeping and electronic transactions.

Perhaps more than anything, we need a cultural shift that moves toward embracing some level of risk-taking as part of the calculus of how we do our business. To quote a national commission on public universities, it is unfortunately the case that many of the “policies and procedures designed to keep bad things from happening are increasingly keeping good things from happening.”

Let me shift gears briefly to talk about another important set of challenges ahead to help us deepen the resource base we need to strengthen our institution.

Although we are, first and foremost, the public’s university, we also depend upon the private generosity of friends and alumni. As anyone who knows me will tell you, friend-raising and fundraising go hand in hand. After all, what are friends for?

UNC Charlotte has been especially fortunate to have benefited from the generosity of individual and corporate members of this community who are not alumni but who have understood the importance of the Charlotte region being served by an outstanding public research university.

They’ve done their part. They pushed us off the starting line. To run the long race, however, we must activate our closest friends – our alumni -- the ones who were helped along by the encouraging words of a faculty mentor or were able to achieve their dream of earning a college degree because of the helping hand provided through a privately funded scholarship fund.

We can best build this approach from the bottom up, by strengthening support for fundraising by our colleges and departments, and by making better and more effective use of college advisory committees.

At a campuswide level, we already have taken steps to restructure the board of the UNC Charlotte Foundation so that we can enlist more effectively the next generation of Foundation leaders.

And, we mature as an institution, our Alumni association becomes even more important. We must reach out to our graduates in this region, in other parts of the state, and in major cities outside of North Carolina where our alumni now live and work

Certainly one important additional way to strengthen UNC Charlotte's ties to its alumni and friends is through our intercollegiate athletic programs. Athletics is certainly not more important than academics, but it can be a big part of raising our visibility. As my basketball coach at Wyoming used to say, basketball isn't more important than physics or philosophy, but it is more likely to be covered on ESPN.

It is no secret that I am a big fan of college athletics, so I have had no trouble moving from brown and gold to green and white. But my Niner pride does not come solely from counting our wins and losses. Under the leadership of Judy Rose and with the support of our 49er Athletic Foundation, UNC Charlotte's athletic programs are a model for higher education institutions. We play by the rules. We stay in the black financially. Nearly 90% of the student-athletes who have exhausted their athletic eligibility earn their college degrees.

Even with this record of success, we can always improve. A top priority is to get all of our men's and women's programs fully funded. And we have a lot of work to do to raise the visibility of UNC Charlotte athletics locally. My dream is for the following conversation to be heard around the water coolers of Charlotte: "Say, did you hear that Carolina beat Duke and that State beat Wake last night?" And the response: "Gee, I must have missed that—I was at the 49ers game." (By the way, we play tomorrow at 2 p.m. right here in Halton Arena. Go Niners!)

Let me close by quoting Dean Colvard again: "We do not wish to seem to be that which we are not, but we do seek the opportunity to progress reasonably toward that which we are expected to become—a university of which this state can be proud and to which it can turn with appropriate expectations."

Like many higher education institutions in the modern era, we often find ourselves caught between seemingly incompatible viewpoints. Concerned as they should be about the quality of our academic mission, some faculty members think that university administrators care too much about the "business" side of our institutions, worried more about "the bottom line" than the education of students. In contrast, some outside observers think that university leaders don't understand business principles and fail to give sufficient attention to how we can make the university more efficient and cost-effective.

Neither is true. The university is a large economic entity and we must be good stewards of the public investment made in it. But we also need to pay close attention to

the quality of the educational experience we provide. These perspectives are not incompatible.

And, at the end of the day, there should be no confusion about what we do in higher education. Our business is opportunity. Our currency is human capital. We deal in the most fundamental and renewable resource of this or any century -- knowledge. And our balance of payments is always in the black, helping to convert those with potential and promise into productive citizens who form the backbone of our economy and our democracy.

I thank all of you who share our passion for the enterprise of higher education and the vision that this institution -- UNC Charlotte -- can be among the nation's best in the business.

Thank you very much.