

University of Minnesota, Crookston
April 17, 2007 Campus Assembly
Chancellor Charles H. Casey

Welcome to the Spring 2007 University of Minnesota, Crookston Campus Assembly. It's hard to believe, but in just a few weeks we will be focused on final exams and commencement on Saturday, May 5.

Looking back, the 2006-07 academic year has been busy, but busy is not the performance measure that matters. What matters is that the 2006-07 academic year has been productive----extremely productive.

To that point, I will begin my remarks by expressing my appreciation to the faculty and staff for remarkable commitment, exceptional work, and distinguished service to the University of Minnesota, Crookston. Together we are steadfast in our support of students and their success, and our student surveys tell us that our effort is paying off.

Thank you for making the effort, focusing the effort where it makes the most difference, and being here today to reflect with me on the progress of the past year as well as the challenges we face in moving forward. We see progress in the expansion and improvements of academic program offerings, both onsite and online, and we see challenges in shifting demographics throughout the region.

A special thank you to students who are here today. Your contributions to the University of Minnesota, Crookston matter. Recent examples include the Spring Break Pay It Forward trip to Washington DC, and the Support the U Day at the Legislature in late March. Both on and off campus students represent us well. Thank you.

My comments today reflect issues important to me, and I trust important to all of you. Last November, the final report of the Strategic Positioning Task Force was submitted to Central Administration. The recommendations are the collective work of faculty, staff, students and community members who served on the Task Force. The recommendations are the framework for initiatives I have taken, and decisions I have made to move us toward our goal to provide exceptional educational opportunity, serve the region, and

help the University of Minnesota be among the top three public research universities in the world.

My remarks today will focus on five points:

- First, I'll talk about special recognitions worthy of our celebration.
- Second, I'll comment on contract negotiations.
- Third is a summary of the compact process.
- Fourth, I'll comment about students on campus.
- Fifth is an update on community engagement initiatives.

First, I'm pleased to acknowledge the initiative that many have taken to nominate faculty and staff for University of Minnesota system-wide awards, especially David Crawford and members of the Faculty Awards Committee. This often takes sustained effort, so I encourage you to re-nominate people who may not have received the awards this year.

This year, we are pleased and proud that Pam Holsinger-Fuchs is one of four recipients of the prestigious John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising at the University. She will be recognized at a reception in the Twin Cities on April 20. We will recognize Pam's award and her service at the University of Minnesota, Crookston at a reception on April 26.

Mark Huglen has served as Chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee and Stephanie Helgeson as Chair of the Staff Executive Committee, both with distinction.

I also want to recognize the leadership that Rich Stangle is providing to the Crookston Student Association. He and other members of the Student Senate have been advocates for students and represented the University of Minnesota, Crookston very well.

Thanks to all of you.

Second, a comment on negotiations. Voting will end tomorrow regarding the University Education Association contract with the University of Minnesota. Contract negotiations have taken a long time – as do most first contracts. There is agreement on many issues, but obviously not on all. What I am proud of is that negotiation team members on both

sides continue to be professional, and respectful. I encourage all members to vote.

Third is an update on the compact planning process. On March 7, Dr. Baldwin, Eric Johnston-Ortiz, Pam Holsinger-Fuchs, and I presented the Crookston Campus Compact to Senior Vice President Jones and others. We made a strong case, based on solid input from across campus. Funding requests are consistent with Strategic Positioning recommendations including funding for:

- Recruitment and retention of students. Items include a request for an honors program, retention and orientation project funds, a counselor position, and student mentors
- Academic program support including faculty positions, a teaching and learning coordinator, research support, and laboratory equipment
- International programs, including program support, scholarships, and travel support for faculty

Our \$ 3 M compact request is aggressive; it's defensible and consistent with our priorities.

My fourth message is about our students.

We have almost tripled the number of international students on campus over the past year, which translates into both opportunity and challenge. On balance, the opportunity far surpasses the challenge, given how important it is that we actively engage in the exchange of ideas important to living and learning together in a global society. Our aspiration is to provide every student with an international experience, whether the student be from Korea or Karlstad, China or Chaska, Brazil or Benson.

And so, now is the time for each of us to find a way to fulfill our individual and collective responsibility to help students be successful in the global economy. Faculty and staff have a unique opportunity to build understanding of different cultures, and I'm pleased that more and more faculty are interested in participating in international experiences.

Paying attention to diversity is a good idea on its own as we discover new ways of doing things and share perspectives. At the same time, the demographics of our region give us another very practical reason to promote International Programs on our campus. The January 28 *Grand Forks Herald*

helped us understand the challenge. A comparison of enrollment numbers from schools in North Dakota and Northwest Minnesota showed a 15-20% decline between 1998-2006. In addition, the number of high school graduates in North Dakota is expected to decline by more than 20% by 2017. The decline in Minnesota over that period may be less. Still, the trend is clear. Another *Grand Forks Herald* article on March 22 showed significant population decline in counties in Northwest Minnesota between 2000 and 2006. These are all important factors as we plan and implement.

A related issue I'd like to address is our investment in athletics – a decision I made only after a thorough review of the findings from the Athletic Review Committee. It is my view that making an investment in athletics now is in the best interest of the campus because the risk of losing student athletes and the associated financial implications are real. With the investment, I have made clear to the athletic staff that they will be held accountable. Additional investments over the next few years are expected.

Student athletes add to the diversity on campus in many respects. Students from Florida, California, Wisconsin, Georgia, and other states help students from our region gain perspectives about other parts of the country and different pathways for success.

Diversity on campus is good. Diversity at the University is good. Diversity in Crookston is good.

My fifth point today is a brief comment about engagement and partnerships with the community and region. We have reason to be proud of the many ways our students engage with the community. Service learning and internships are great models – They show how the University adds value to the region and give us a unique niche in the higher education marketplace.

Other partnerships are underway. It took a while, but Crookston is now the official site for the Northwest Minnesota Area Health Education Center, in cooperation with RiverView Health. I expect this to have a positive impact for the region. The Minnesota Rural Health Association establishing their state office on campus is another positive model for community engagement.

Another potential model is being explored as we partner with Bemidji State University to develop a proposal for a Small Business Development Center. If approved, it would result in a Small Business Development Center

Counselor being located in Crookston. This position in Crookston will better serve individuals who want to start or expand a business in the region. It will also provide an opportunity for our students to be involved in projects and consulting opportunities for faculty who are interested.

In closing, I want to thank faculty, staff and students for their commitment to the University of Minnesota, Crookston. We have reason to be proud. On May 5 we will again experience the joy of commencement, and the promise that the *University of Minnesota, Crookston is a place to aim higher, reach further, and dream bigger dreams.*