

Public Universities and the Innovation Economy in Florida: What the Mind Believes, the Body Achieves!



**Presentation to the Board of Governors
Gainesville, FL
January 26, 2006**

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Thank you for the honor of being named as Chancellor. I consider it a privilege to work with you, to represent our Board and our public universities. I want to thank you for your public service. We should be indebted in particular to Carolyn Roberts for her singular investment in our public university system. Madam Chair – thank you very much.

I also want to thank so many others for their support and encouragement: Senators and Representatives and their staffs in the Florida Legislature, members of the University Boards, Presidents and Provosts, and new and old friends in the Executive Branch.

I am particularly grateful for the welcome that I have received from the Commissioner, and Chancellors Yecke and Armstrong, and from the Governor’s Office and the Governor himself.

I want to thank our staff in the Board of Governors as well! They took shape under the leadership of Dr. Debra Austin who I want to thank, and they are ready to move forward as we continue to establish ourselves consistent with the will of the voters expressed now in the Constitution of the State of Florida.

We are here because of a popular vote for Amendment 11 in late 2002. The citizens of the State have given us an unprecedented Constitutional mandate to move forward with the creation of a new governance system for our public universities.

As you know, there was an earlier system – the Board of Regents. A number of you served with distinction on that Board. We will embrace that which the Board did well.

This is a new era, one in which we are graced with strong local boards, burgeoning urban and rural needs/opportunities that must be addressed, a global environment that makes public universities major actors in community well-being, and public demand for access to higher education services that absolutely cannot and will not subside anytime in the near future.

At no time in Florida’s history has access to public universities been more important as the state, region and nation grapple with the multiple challenges raised by globalization, citizenship building and quality of life issues.

This afternoon, I want to share with you my approach to the challenges and opportunities that we face.

My theme: we must seek out partnerships and collaboration if we are to be successful in helping our state confront the challenges of this century.

I. VALUES

My efforts and those of the professional staff in the Board will be informed by a commitment to **three major values:**

1. **Quality:** We strive to be best in class. Our commitment to public service must be matched by our commitment to quality in teaching, research and public service. We cannot accept average as a goal.



2. **Global Competitiveness:** Our students graduate into a global labor market. Our faculty must prepare them for a world that is Flat. A flat world? Digital. 24/7. Hyperlinked. Web-Based. Iconic. Graphic. Ontime in realtime. Just in time. Supersized. Customized.

One commentator recently stated “the scale of the global community that is soon going to be able to participate in all sorts of discovery and innovation is something the world has simply never seen before.” I believe that.

We must be vigorous in our efforts to ensure competitiveness—for our students, for our faculties, our universities and the system of universities, our staffs and our facilities.

3. **Accountability:** I define this as responsibility, efficiency and transparency in a context of performance. Our public universities must be the most credible public institutions in their respective communities and in our state.

II. EXECUTING ON OUR CORE VALUES

A recent analysis by the National Academy of Sciences points to the era we are now in. Listen to their warning:

“The dominant position of the United States [in the last century] depended substantially on our own strong commitment to science and technology and on the comparative weakness of much of the rest of the world.

But the age of relatively unchallenged US leadership is ending. The importance of sustaining our investments is underscored by the challenges of the 21st century: the rise of emerging markets, innovation based economic development, the global innovation enterprise, the new global labor market, and aging populations with expanding entitlements.”

The National Academy of Sciences goes on to point out that many countries around the world are making “innovation based development a central economic strategy.”

A companion study by the Council on Competitiveness stated that “innovation will be the single most important factor in determining America’s success through the 21st century.”

In this century, the seminal driver of innovation is knowledge. Knowledge is key to innovation based job creation. Given that universities are major producers in the global knowledge economy, they become pivotal in this race to maintain a viable economic base that can sustain a high quality of life.

What is our contribution?

1. Public universities are at the forefront of the knowledge explosion—the volume of information is now doubling every five years.
2. Thus, in any given field, the volume of information to be absorbed, known, or considered may double in as little as five years. It suggests a daunting task, yet know that:
 - a. our faculty are the ones who teach from the leading edge of the knowledge explosion;



- b. our faculty carry out the research, write the text books, design the lab experiments, and create the software that is used in classrooms throughout the country and globally.
3. Public universities are major catalysts for the research and development feeding the innovation economy.
 - a. They not only train people to take good jobs, they train people to create good jobs. This will be key to Florida's quality of life in this century – home grown for-profit and non-profit companies and organizations surviving and thriving in the global economy.
 - b. They are major sources of cutting edge research and development, and they are major trainers of researchers and developers.
4. Most importantly, in the volatile 21st century economy, public universities have permanence.

They are major social and economic development assets. Companies may come and go as a result of mergers and acquisitions or changing market forces. Public universities have a resilience that makes them significant assets in any community.

5. But we are not just about jobs and competitiveness.
 - a. We are about the life of the mind and its full potential in aesthetics, ethics and human compassion.
 - b. We are about leadership training, diversity understanding and the nurturing of democratic societies.
 - c. We are about creative performance and imagination.
 - d. We are about human energy, debate and discussion.
 - e. We are about human need, whether it is at an individual or group level. We are about upward mobility.
 - f. We are about aspirations for a better tomorrow for those we serve, and those we lead.

We cannot forget these vital dimensions of a good society – not just one that does well – but one that does good for all its inhabitants.

Who are we?

The Board represents a diverse set of public universities. Without a doubt, they play a vital role for our state.

- We graduate annually about 60,000 students.



- We are the only hope for thousands of minority, first-generation, older return-to-education, single-parent and place-bound students who can neither afford costly private education nor the luxury of full-time study.
- We generate annually over \$1 billion in sponsored research expenditures – much of it coming from prestigious federal sources as a result of our faculty’s commitment to excellence.
- We provide hundreds of thousands of community service hours through clinics, field practice, voluntary service and service learning.
- We have graduated nearly 60,000 teachers in the last 16 years and over the next 10 years should graduate at least that many more.
- We are the captains of industry, and mayors of cities. Our state and federal legislative leaders come out of our public universities.
- Without a doubt, the futures of our Florida communities, large and small, are tied to cutting edge instruction and research provided by our public universities.

III. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

In the Near Term:

We must affirm our commitment to excellence, and in so doing, take a number of specific steps. One of the first is to clarify our working relations with our partners:

1. **The legislative branch has prerogatives that it understandably intends to maintain.** We must show respect for those prerogatives even while we are consistent with the will of the voters in 2002. We must deepen our relationship with both the Senate and House and insist that partnership is the only means by which we can improve Florida’s well-being.
2. **We appreciate the opportunities that the Governor has given to us in recent weeks:** we are knee deep with Governor Bush in several new initiatives to strengthen the public universities’ roles in minority access and in the preparation of additional teachers for our school system. The Governor will soon announce another important program in which we will play an important role. These initiatives illustrate the power of partnership.
3. **We must deepen our working relations with the community colleges – they are critical partners.** Do you know that they send to us nearly 50,000 students a year in our shared quest to provide access for quality public education? I want to thank Chancellor Armstrong for his open communication with us.
4. **Commissioner John Winn and I have been working on a set of common concerns – we must improve our ability to be responsive to the needs of our elementary and secondary schools.** We must identify the value-added contributions that our system is making to prepare and retain qualified teachers and school administrators. The Commissioner and the State Board of Education have responded to a number of suggestions that our Deans of Education have offered.



And we want to be better partners – we are moving in the right direction – and I too desire greater acceleration in this movement.

5. **It would make sense to have a fresh discussion with the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) – a major player in undergraduate education in our state.**
6. **I have a sense of urgency as well in assuring our University Boards of Trustees (UBOT) that their role is vital.** Having been one of the founders and stewards of a local UBOT, I know how much time is donated by board members to local university management and the value added that they provide in terms of direction and accountability. Local support and management are critical components of a successful university system. Better communication is a must. We will find the appropriate balance and we will find a vehicle for meaningful two-way dialog and idea exchange.
7. **We must find a means to continue to increase our share of Federal research dollars coming to Florida.** Federally funded research is a major driver of innovation and job creation. The Florida Congressional delegation has been instrumental in channeling research support to our public universities. I want to acknowledge in particular the leadership of Congressman Young, whose commitment to system-wide projects has enhanced inter-university collaboration.
8. **We must increase dramatically private support for our public universities through philanthropy in line with our strategic objectives.** We have an excellent product that can get even better through additional matching funding and enhanced Courtelis match funding.
9. **Finally, in the near term, we must all work together in support of our legislative agenda.** I want to thank our Boards and Presidents for working to establish a budget cycle process that makes sense. I want to thank our university lobbyists for their spirit of collaboration.

Our staff is keeping their eyes on the prize – full enrollment funding, support for our targeted program initiatives – including more need based aid, research funding and cost to continue. We are seeking additional support for facilities construction and we are very concerned about skyrocketing utilities costs.

We are concerned as well about supporting our current faculty and staff through a merit based evaluation and reward system that is also sensitive to cost of living, and replacing the hundreds of faculty who will be retiring or otherwise leaving our system. We are optimistic about the forthcoming legislative session, largely because so many of our diverse components are collaborating and working together.

With full funding and support, in 2007 we will graduate nearly 70,000 students. We will have taught millions of student credit hours, we will see a rise in minority, particularly African American enrollment, and we will have articulated with thousands of community college graduates. We will generate nearly \$1.5 billion in sponsored research, we will increase our teacher graduation rate, and we will have implemented new initiatives to enhance the pool of qualified nurses and engineers for our state.



In the Long Term:

In the long term, our Board must sustain three fundamental qualities to advance our system and its universities:

1. **Courage**—to do the right thing. The decisions that we are making will determine the course of our public universities and the public university system for the next thirty years! We must be driving our state into the innovation economy. We must respond to regional economic development opportunities and needs. Without public universities, our state cannot generate the high paying jobs and solve the myriad social problems that accompany a state gaining nearly 1,200 new residents a day.

We must charge into the future. Like Rosa Parks, a national hero who refused to be relegated to second-class status, we want our system of public universities to be at the front of the national bus of public university systems; we want best in class for our universities in the context of their diverse statewide and regional missions; we want every institution to have an improvement strategy that is consistent with state needs and opportunities and that can be nationally benchmarked.

2. **Vision**—this is the art of seeing the invisible, believing that it is possible, and knowing how to pursue it. You must have the courage to see the invisible in the same way that the founders of our eleven universities saw the invisible years ago.
3. **A Plan**—finally, we must go on the offense with a robust multiyear plan that builds upon the foundation already set in place by the Strategic Planning Committee.

So, in short, to advance from where we are today, to get beyond the tyranny of the short-term, we need courage, vision, and a plan.

IV. WHAT THE MIND BELIEVES...

My 19-year-old son Benjamin wears an inspiring T-shirt. It says:

“What the mind believes, the body achieves!”

I choose to believe that we can and must have a leading public university system that prepares and leads our state into the challenges—economic, social, health and ethical—presented by the rapid change of the 21st century.

I choose to believe that you are at the right place at the right time and that together—through partnerships and collaboration—we can produce results that individually are impossible.

I pledge to do my best to represent our public universities before our many constituencies and to enhance our state university system as the critical driver of Florida’s success in the innovation economy of this 21st century.

I deeply appreciate you giving me this opportunity to work with you in this noble endeavor.