

Spring Convocation  
Minot State University  
January 9, 2012  
8:30-9:30

Welcome

Good morning and best to you in this New Year. Thank you for coming this morning to join me and your colleagues in this spring convocation. As the formal announcements of this meeting explained, the agenda for this meeting will include a discussion of strategic planning, our Centennial, the completion of Vision 2013, and plans beyond 2013.

Focus Today

I don't want to start by mentioning the weather and how unpredictable it is, but I am pleased as you are that the Farmers Almanac's, up to this point at least, forecast of 200 inches of snow this winter will not come true. Thank goodness. This is not the year that we need a lot of snow and moisture after the horrendous year we experienced in 2011.

We are certain of one thing, 2011 in many respects was not a good year for many, and the unfortunate effects will continue to linger for a considerable time. But that's not a reason for us not to move forward in a positive and constructive way to support our vision to make Minot State University one of the premier regional universities in the "great" Great Plains. We've made great progress, and we are well on our way to our goal. And we're not stopping now.

In August, we made a pledge to take care of our people and help our faculty, staff, students, and our community address personal challenges, and I'm proud that we did just that. Our university and our community stepped up in many ways to help one another and to help our community recover. At the same time, I also pledged that we would continue to work to meet our strategic goal, our Vision 2013 objectives, and to contemplate future needs and planning. Discussing that pledge is essentially the main purpose of my remarks today—my New Year's resolution.

New Year's Resolution

This year is the year for all of us to continue, in a positive way, to do our work well and to make good progress toward this central tenet of our mission: Minot State University is first and foremost dedicated to the success of all students: their growth and development as educated citizens, their confidence, and their life-long devotion to the common good and the welfare of others.

That's our essential mission and that's how Minot State University answers the frequently asked question: What is college for? Although many outside and inside higher education express various perspectives on the answer to that question, our answer is clear, just as are our values and mission that guide everything we do at Minot State University are clear:

*The university is proud of its values and long-term commitment to:*

- *Teaching and learning with excellence, integrity, and engagement*

- *Serving students and others respectfully and responsibly*
- *Following high ethical and moral principles*
- *Supporting community and place where all members are valued and respected for their work, contributions, and freedom of expression.*

As the president of this university, I can say without the least hesitation that my work and my decisions are guided directly and unquestionably by these values and our mission.

Today I ask you to work with me, in full recognition of our values and mission, to continue to think strategically about the future of our university and to make this place a university of which all of us can be proud as members and contributors to the quality of our special place, which is, I suggest, an answer to the question of what is college for.

You've heard the expression about a glass half full or half empty. I'm reluctant to use this metaphor, as it deals with water and we've had our share of water, but that pride of our university and our place depends, more than ever, on an attitude that the glass is half full, not half empty. My own New Year's resolution, therefore, is to work with you to continue to build this pride of our university and to think positively about how to continue what we are doing well and figure out how to improve that which we are not doing as well. This depends, I'd say, on a glass nearly-full attitude.

#### Glass Half Empty

In view of the growing amount of negativity about higher education, many cannot help but conclude that the glass is half full and more likely entirely empty. Nationally and in our own state that negativity arises from questions about for-profit institutions, cost overruns on presidents' houses, the need for disputes about university monikers and logos, calls for more efficiency and productivity, concerns about increasing costs, tuition increases, student indebtedness, workforce training needs and, more serious, the skepticism advanced by such studies as Josipa Roksa and Richard Arium's Academically Adrift that conclude that there is not much learning happening in colleges. Listen to the voice of some of our own legislators who continue to doubt if we are doing our jobs or if the tax dollars devoted to higher education are dollars well spent.

#### Glass Half Full

Contrary to all those negative observations, I believe there is great cause to be positive about higher education and positive about the future of Minot State University. We have a lot to be positive about our culture and tradition, a culture distinguished by a devotion to students and their learning and to the welfare of our great place. Our culture is also distinguished by its notable freedom to express one's point of view, to question faulty assumptions, and to expect an adherence to the truth.

The best we do is to show students how to do that well. The effective criticism we teach and practice, I suggest, arises from a positive and well substantiated prospect of solutions, improvements, and discovery, not from ill-informed hearsay, faulty assumptions, self-serving and petty interests and gossip, harmful biases and prejudices, and the negativity so prominent in political debates and commentary. Unfortunately, that negativity and unfounded assumptions can be observed in some public and legislative discussions about the purposes and values of higher education. Higher education's role is to help students to see through it and to do something about it.

Speaking about higher education and what I see every day on our campus, I don't see our glass half empty; I see it nearly full and ready for more. There really isn't much reason to consider the glass half empty. Winston Churchill admitted: "I am an optimist," and he acknowledged that, "It does not seem too much use being anything else." I go along with that.

What I am suggesting is that we make a new year's resolution to make decisions this year and take responsible steps, based on our sense of optimism about our university and our educational profession, to test our assumptions, study our environment, review where we've come, and contemplate priorities and initiatives that will help us extend our vision beyond 2013.

### Reflections on Where We've Been

We should start by getting a sense of where we've been in the last seven years since 2005 when the planning that led to Vision 2013 started in earnest.

First, I want to take you back a little farther and share with you a voice from the past, a voice from nearly 100 years ago when our institution was founded. Our institution's first year book, The Magician, described the ideal and the spirit of the new school in its first publication in 1916:

*The personality of Pres. A.G. Crane and his consistent upholding of the ideal of 'Service First' have been dominant factors in vitalizing the spirit of the school. The progress thus far stands as a monument to the spirit of co-operation [sic] which has prevailed among the students and faculty and has been reinforced by the people of the entire north-western [sic] section of the state.*

As we get closer to our Centennial year and reflect on our tradition of service, we should recognize the extent to which this positive "spirit of cooperation" still animates what we do. If one looks closely at the central tenets of service in our mission and vision and our core commitment to caring deeply about our students and their learning, our pledge to serve students and others respectfully and responsibly, and supporting our community and place and valuing the contributions of others, you'll see the spirit of cooperation and spirit fully in those words and in our actions. So, too, you'll see the connection to the role we play in contributing to and sustaining the quality of our place—in good weather, cold weather, in good economic times, and, yes, in unexpected emergencies. The test of course is to see if we practice what we preach.

### What we Learned in 2005

As we contemplate where we should be going, we should return for a moment to the assessments we made of MSU during the strategic planning reviews nearly eight years ago to see how far we've come.

The focus groups, surveys, and reviews of current assessment information revealed strengths and many challenges in 2005. When asked how the focus-group participants would describe MSU to someone not familiar with our university, the selected comments revealed that Minot State University is perceived as a supportive community, safe, caring, flexible, and interested in individuals, not numbers. One-on-one work with professors was seen as an advantage, as are the small size of classes and the competitive tuition rates. Some focus-group participants explained that they would want to mention to someone

unfamiliar with MSU the low wages in North Dakota, the cold weather, the remote location, and the inconsistencies in student preparedness.

At that time, too, focus groups and surveys revealed these perceived weaknesses:

- The university's mission was not well understood or easily articulated.
- Support staff, administrators, and faculty described the university as a closed campus, lacking in customer service, with inflexible and often inaccessible staff members.
- The lack of marketing was cited as a serious weakness needing to be addressed in both the short term and the long term.
- Parents, students, chamber members, and part-time faculty expressed criticisms of campus life and its limited activities scheduled on campus, particularly on weekends.
- Restricted hours of campus operation were seen as a significant weakness.
- Faculty members expressed concern about insufficient opportunities for students to interact and participate in campus life. Faculty noted that students' lack of involvement was commonly due to job and family conflicts.
- Faculty worried that this lack of interaction resulted in a close-minded, non-creative student body that lacked diversity awareness and cultural tolerance.
- Concern was repeatedly expressed that students felt disconnected from campus, that many students learned to operate in a "silo-mode," complete their general education courses, and then transfer.
- Students referred to their experience at the university as a continuation of high school—not the demanding experience they had expected or the adult-level university experience they anticipated finding.
- The lack of internships and job opportunities was cited as a weakness, resulting in additional disconnect with the community and the surrounding area.

To address these issues, participants suggested needs:

- For improvements in campus infrastructure, marketing and communications, student service and support, recruitment and retention.
- To improve the university identity, and change the status of the university.
- To dedicate more resources to marketing and to hire a full-time marketing director who would help increase the visibility and prominence of the university.
- For improved campus infrastructure, primarily specific facilities and housing, and student services and support.
- For more support for faculty and staff, improved campus life, and a system to evaluate and assess needs.
- For the evaluation of current programs and assessment of student and societal needs, based on broad input from many stakeholders, were recommended as important means to identifying new and competitive programs and to determining how current programs can be improved.
- For new niche program, centers, and distinctive programs identified through evaluation and assessment.
- To strengthen current programs to enhance the university's identity, status, and reputation.

- For a Greek system, a move by the athletic program to NCAA Division II conference, better relationships with local high schools, a child care facility, improved student employment, and much better support for first-year students.

Participants pointed to a number of threats arising from internal issues, and others from funding and legislative support. The internal issues referred to attitude: apathy, lack of pride, lack of team playing, resistance to change, and lack of campus focus. Internal threats included the perceived lack of space to expand, a perception that larger schools are better, and the observation that some of the university's programs are stagnant. The lack of a clear sense of the university's mission or purpose contributed to differing attitudes about the university's statewide image.

Inadequate financial support from state legislature, rising tuition, low faculty salaries, and restrictive budgets were cited as significant threats. External threats, such as the state demographics, declining population, lack of well salaried jobs, "rural-ness," the slumping economy, rising energy prices, and the possibility of Minot Air Force Base closure were also noted.

#### Assessing Vision 2013 in 2011-2012

Fast forward up to today. You have been given a copy of a report showing selected achievements for each of the seven strategies of Vision 2013 (see appendix). You can see examples of what was accomplished in response to the objectives and action plans developed to address issues and needs identified in 2005. Many of the perceived weaknesses and issues have been addressed; some require additional work and attention. The need for a child care facility, for instance, is one of those critical needs that have not been met, but we need to keep focused on that critical need. Please take a few minutes, though, to review the priorities and initiatives identified in the Vision 2013 document to see that we have indeed met most of those objectives in each of the seven strategies. We've come a long way, and we have a great deal to be proud of in a glass-half-full way.

To highlight a few on your handout, I would draw your attention to our objectives to:

- set performance objectives based on aspiration peers' indicators and our progress toward meeting many of our peers' average performance indicator scores;
- developed and implemented a first-rate comprehensive program to support first-year students and have in place a successful program in CETL for engaging students in the integration of theory, practice, and sense of place
- developed a competitive and successful program for reaching compensation goals through a shared governance process focused on a goal to raise significantly salaries to market salary goals
- established a first-time ever faculty sabbatical program
- established partnership with Native American colleges and strengthened our own commitment to Native Culture through our Cultural Center and its activities

- increased international student recruitment and support, exchanges, and cooperative agreements with international universities across the world; and nurtured a campus atmosphere devoted to multiculturalism and inclusiveness
- established a student success center, secured a major Title IV grant to establish an effective student support service center, secured a Title III federal grant to establish a cutting edge teaching and learning center, hired an advising coordinator to improve academic advising, established a veterans' center, and established an effective mentoring program for students
- reorganized and focused our career service program directly on counseling and training
- supported and promoted many civic engagement and training activities
- consummated strong collaborative partnerships and efforts with educational, business, government, and health care organizations
- established a full-time office for institutional research and assessment to monitor our performances
- developed and supported a strong and responsive integrated marketing program and public information office
- increased four-fold our support and direction for recruitment and retention services, resulting in significant increases in the last three years until the flood, in enrollments and in first-year retention rates and six-year graduation rates
- proposed and initiated a Grow North Dakota plan to increase the recruitment of out-of-state and international students
- established new scholarships for academically gifted students
- enhanced the operation of our honors program
- managed effectively and prudently our financial resources and directed funds toward progressive improvements of our campus
- secured legislative support for major capital projects, such as Swain Hall, and significant increases in dollars for compensation, equity initiatives, deferred maintenance support for our buildings, special funding for initiatives such as STEM, and increases in affordability funding to keep our tuition rates low
- and completed a campus master plan that is resulting in remarkable campus and facilities improvements and growth.
- And many more...

### General Assessment of Vision 2013

Vision 2013 remains relevant and dynamic as a guide for the future. In my view, that guide has helped us set the bar higher, to think about meaningful and quality improvements of what we're doing for the good of our students and for the good of our campus. I can say confidently that this document represented the best and most honest thinking of our campus and our community, and it has been used, not shelved, for the past six years to guide our efforts to "create and promote a distinctive mission, vision and premier institutional character based on curricula and services known for high quality, engagement, relationship to place, and the integration of knowledge, theory and practice."

Our university mission of place and engagement is distinctive and guides our budgeting and strategic directions. Our campus is open and focused on customer service, flexible and accessible, and well publicized and marketed in the community and greater region. Our campus life is full and rich with activities, even on weekends. Our hours of operation have been extended and improved. There are many opportunities for students to interact and participate on campus now, and our campus is more diverse and culturally tolerant thanks to our Native American Cultural Center, international efforts, and diversity initiatives. Students are now more connected, engaged, and active on campus and student organizations. Now many students come to Minot State University as their destination campus and do not, as the old myth portrayed, just get generals out of the way before transferring. With our efforts to improve general education and raise our academic standards and provide more scholarships to attract a wider range of students, our students are not as apt to see MSU as a continuation of high school but a place with intellectual rigor, dialogue, and challenge. And in response to the recommendations we received, our campus infrastructure has improved dramatically, our marketing has increased widely and significantly, and our student services have reached now a level of support that meets and exceeds the services of our premier peers, with services for students at risk, Veterans, and others demanding higher levels of engagement in their classes. All of this comes from our goal to make our campus and its academic programs deserving of the reputation as a premier regional university in the Great Plains. We've moved dramatically closer to that goal.

### What Now?

Are we then finished with Vision 2013? No, but we are well underway to realize fully each of the strategies, raise our performance standards in line with our premier peers, including for example our retention and graduation rates, and meet our goal to be a premier regional university in the Great Plains.

The strategy for civic engagement needs special effort and support to more fully integrate into our curriculum and throughout our campus life. And to that end, I am going to devote special effort to supporting and promoting civic engagement, service, and effecting meaningful community change.

The workshops and presentations by George Kuh in 2007 and this fall have helped us define and understand the meaning and value of civic and intellectual engagement. Our Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning, our Community Research and Service Center, our Sustainability Initiatives, our commitment to action to support our environment as is represented in our new Studies in the Community and the Environment Program, and our pledge in the President's Climate Commitment, our North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, and our Rural Crime and Justice Center are notable examples of the institution's effective contributions to civic engagement and the welfare of the common good. There are many examples of civic engagement and service in our own classes and activities, as has been recognized by the national honor of receiving the President's Award for Civic Engagement, and many of the commendable and responsible initiatives undertaken in our social work program, such as with the highly successful Freezin' for a Reason program.

## What is College For?

Even more than continued work on those strategies, I think we should stop for a moment and reflect on an essential question that should underlie our mission and vision of place and engagement, and that is: What Is College For?

I am not seeking pithy quotations about the value of education, such as Malcolm Forbes' remark that "Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one," or Herbert Spencer's comment that the "great aim of education is not knowledge but action," or Dan Quayle's questionable claim: "We're going to have the best-educated American people in the world." No, I am asking us to reflect on the philosophical underpinning of our own purposes related to place and engagement.

Over the break I read Wendell Berry's book Life is a Miracle: An Essay against Modern Superstition, and an assortment of related essays, one of which John Lemons shared with me by David Orr titled "What is Education for?" Orr's essay is an intriguing challenge to what he calls the "foundations of modern education," all of which he says are myths that we accept without question. And he's essentially right. I am as much to blame for fostering these myths as I do what I can to assign to higher education (a term that David Iverson recently wrote in an email to me "hire" education) "higher" purposes, such as that we can solve the problem of ignorance, that increasing knowledge leads to human goodness, or that education's purpose is to help students move up in the world and achieve success. The plethora of "striving for or achieving excellence" claims out there doesn't do us any good whatsoever, because few, particularly legislators, believe them.

What Orr suggests instead to help us understand what we do, are principles, like these:

- that the goal of education is not mastery of subject matter but mastery of one's self
- that knowledge carries with it the responsibility to see that knowledge is well used in the world.
- that we can't claim to know something unless "we understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their communities."
- that we profess the importance of "particulars" and the power of examples over words.
- And that the way learning occurs is as important as the content of particular courses.

That final observation underscores our own vision's claim for the value of place and engagement. Our experience this past summer demonstrates that principle in spades, just as our campus realized that value and the importance of our efforts and effects of our knowledge on real people and our community. Higher education should carry with it a moral and ethical responsibility to our students and our place.

William Berry questions higher education's commitment to these principles and educational systems for our own "self-interest." He believes that "nobody now trusts the politicians or their governments," and that "people are withdrawing their trust from the professions, the corporations, the education system, the religious institutions, and the medical industry" because of this self-interest. To address this, he calls for "intellectual engagement among the disciplines, across the lines of specializations—that is to



say ‘real’ conversation.” He warns that “without such a vigorous conversation organization in the universities and emanating from them, we get what we’ve got: sciences that spread their effects upon the world as if the world we’re no more than an experimental laboratory; arts and “humanities” as unmindful of their influences as if the world did not exist; institutions of learning whose chief purpose is to acquire funds and be administered by administrators; governments whose chief purpose is to provide officers to members of political parties.” (p. 94). Berry’s bleak assessment of what education thinks college is for can explain “...the decline in education from ideas of service and good work, citizenship and membership, to mere ‘job training’ or ‘career preparation.’”

What Berry highlights as the reason for the decline in education is, essentially, the defining difference between the position that maintains that the purpose of higher education is predominately vocational as contrasted to that position that says that college is for service to others. Remember our own purpose defined in the 1916 Magician and compare that to our own purpose defined in our current mission and vision. From a common legislative interpretation, college is for workforce training primarily. In that perspective our purpose is utilitarian, not ideal.

That’s why there is such a preponderance of calls for higher education to collaborate with business, emphasize career training and workforce development, and to increase economic development of our state. In that perspective, terms of efficiencies, productivity, effectiveness, access, and affordability abound. Some might accuse this line of reasoning as creating a false dichotomy, that service and critical thinking can exist right alongside vocational curricula. I am not so sure it is that easy.

What is interesting is that most of these terms and expectations seldom mention, as Orr and Berry would answer that question, learning, service, civic responsibility and participation, higher order thinking and analysis, and culture. Those should be our special focus.

#### The Higher Education Environment in 2005 compared to Today

In 2005-2006, our population in Minot was not increasing from its 37,000 population. Ward County was remaining stable, but many counties in Western North Dakota as well as small towns were declining precipitously in population. People continued to appreciate the role of the MAFB in our community but worried about losing it. The quality of living was positive, although salaries and wages stayed low. The air traffic into Minot was limited and difficult. The university’s enrollment was growing in its online offerings but that’s about it.

North Dakota generally, as we explained in Vision 2013, was concerned about economics, vocational/career training, stopping or reducing the outflow of people from North Dakota, addressing the predicted 30% decline in high school graduates by 2017, the high cost of higher education, the number of higher education institutions in North Dakota, low pay, population declines in rural communities, need for economic growth to bring more revenues to the state, and the need for economic development and corporate partnerships. All of that is not surprising in view of North Dakota’s population declines, economic challenges, and limited resources. What higher education was for was seen as a means to drive economic development.

On a national and international level at that time there was a decline in the financial support for higher education; increased competition for fewer available students in the Midwest, growing pressure for students to earn a college degree, increased student debt, conventional paths to a degree were changing, students shopping for courses and institutions, significant increase in online courses and programs, pressures on institutions for assessment and accountability, and concerns about student preparation for college.

In 2011-12, Minot and our general area has experienced drastic changes, remarkable increases in airline traffic, hourly wages, traffic on Broadway alone there has been an increase from 21,000 vehicles per day to 34,000 vehicles, limited-to-no hotel availability, significant increase in energy workers in Minot and the region, increases in drilling and activity due to the fracking technology on the Bakken, near non-existent unemployment, very large state budget surplus, strident attitudes about the role of higher education, and huge population growth in Minot and in western North Dakota.

In higher education, we have recognized strident political attitudes and oversight of higher education, a new Chancellor will be appointed this year, the new SBHE chair is advancing a new proposal to assure legislators that we are working efficiently and responsibly, growing and intense interest in funding higher education based on performance measures such as graduation rates, a projected plan to establish a flat budget for higher education and approve any new increases based on demonstrated efficiencies, and our own emergency this summer that has had a serious impact on our enrollment and affordable housing.

On a broader level, we'll anticipate

- Strong emphasis on productivity and efficiencies
- Low enrolled courses and programs will come under greater scrutiny
- Intense pressures on universities to increase graduation and retention rates
- Predicted large increases in minority students, such as Hispanics
- Continued questions about the extent to which higher education helps students improve as critical thinkers
- Faculty keeping up with rapid changes; and needs for professional development
- Increased and rapid growth and competition from for-profit institutions
- Significant increase and expectation for the use of technology
- Needs to develop programs for adult learners and part-time students.
- Emphasis on convenient schedules and deliveries for working adults
- Increased competition from regional institutions, particularly community colleges, for limited number of traditional-aged students
- Programs for underprepared students
- Increased attention to graduation and plans for completion

## NOW WHAT? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

### Campus Perspectives on the Needs we Face:

#### University Cabinet (January 2011 retreat)

1. Continue to work on Vision 2013 strategies.
2. Address imminent challenges, in funding, declines in ND graduates, housing on campus and in the community, salaries, faculty skills, growth of the university.
3. Remain cognizant of the most significant threats in the political fallout, mission changes of sister ND institutions, support to diversity on campus; dealing with underprepared students
4. Pursue greatest opportunities in faculty retention/recruitment, serving adult students, working with energy field, childcare needs, and engaging more students.

#### Planning and Budgeting Council (February 2011)

1. Commitment to strengthening current initiatives (CETL, Student Success Center)
2. Pursuing critical needs: funding higher education, housing pressures, clarifying and pursuing prioritization support for Compensation Task Force and goals, recruitment and international recruitment, research and grant writing, addressing information gap to demonstrate value of higher education to detractors and cynics.
3. Reference to “College 2020” report and identified trends impacting higher education.

#### Planning and Budgeting Council (minutes from November 2011)

1. **What should we be doing to move ourselves up a notch – beyond 2013?** Focus on adult learner groups. Determine life experiential model. Increase services to adult learners and format curriculum to accommodate adult learners.
2. Look at methods to assist part-time learners. How do they pay for it when financial aid is not available to PT learners?
3. Students will expect more conveniences regardless of age. People will still want face-to-face interaction – more opportunities for adult learners (evenings/weekends/Base, etc.).
4. **Student Services:** good support or remedial services for students, advising – distinctive; need childcare on campus, students will expect housing to change – not willing to live in dormitory style housing
5. **Academics:** Need to have a better sense of where students need to go to get services – have to have a better way; faculty needs to have a technology support center on campus to better use current technology and applications; maybe this could be a service of CETL – need resource people to handle this
  - a. If we want to be a support for adult learners, we need department to make this a part of their focus
  - b. Need to get graduation rate up to 55%

- c. Need to consolidate and integrate degree programs on campus – need to know what are the set of skills needed for the degree – maybe there is too much overlap – more interdisciplinary work
- d. General education program needs revision
- e. CEL is not just here for extended learning – it is a campus initiative – pick what you want to focus on
- f. Stop viewing ourselves as a traditional aged campus – respond to the outside
- g. We have a lot going for us – good faculty, staff, programs and we need to make sure to sustain the good things
- h. International partnerships - may need to require select students (based on degree) or maybe all students to have a global experience before graduating

#### Capital Campaign Draft Initiatives (2011)

- 1. Student Scholarships: \$6 million
- 2. Athletic Facilities (Dome, Herb Parker Stadium, Bubble and Signage, Athletic Hall of Fame): \$9.5 million
- 3. Programs: (technology, energy, CD, Nursing, Alternative Energy, Entrepreneurship, SCE, CETL, Honors, art): \$9 million
- 4. Academic Facilities (Health/Nursing, art complex): \$8 million
- 5. Student Services (Learning Community, Child Care): \$2 million
- 6. Enhancements (Centennial, Master Plan, Veterans, Gallery, 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue): \$2 million

#### President's Staff Retreat (January 6, 2012)

- 1. Consideration of new financial model to support programmatic growth
- 2. Differential tuition model
- 3. Complete sophisticated enrollment targets and projection and finance models; short-term and long-term projections.
- 4. International recruitment plan and initiatives
- 5. Increased graduation rate to average of premier universities
- 6. Use Centennial year as launch pin for new strategic plan: Beyond 2013
- 7. Autonomous outreach program model for state-wide and national outreach
- 8. National program to replicate at other military bases
- 9. New weekend and evening program
- 10. Enhanced and improved grants and contracts office
- 11. New Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies
- 12. New academic initiatives: Service learning, civic engagement, American Democracy Project, Non-Profit Alliance participation
- 13. Establish institutional enrollment and retention plan
- 14. New Interdisciplinary program
- 15. Enhanced support for multicultural and international
- 16. Professional Development

17. Support for high performing programs (resources and faculty)
18. Reorganize and clarify governance of student services functions (CETL, SSC, Power)
19. Dynamic and intrusive advising system on campus; consider professional advisors
20. National and regional marketing to highlight Grow North Dakota
21. Maximum credit-hour for programs
22. Four-year degree programs
23. Degree audit system training and integration in new advising model
24. Analysis of: low-enrolled courses, programs, high enrolled programs, needs for additional faculty in high-enrolled programs.
25. Development of new housing plan to address housing issues
26. Opening 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue
27. Child Care facility and partnership with YWCA
28. Renovation of first floor administration and one-stop student center

### Other

Civic Learning and Democratic engagement

Here's what education can do:

1. Provide and sponsor forum to share perspectives on issues, such as ground water contamination claims on the water used in fracking.
2. Continue to organize to assist people needing assistance from flood.
3. Involve students in debates about political issues; sponsor forums.
4. Allow students to keep abreast and knowledgeable about local and state political issues and national issues.
5. Engage students in environmental discussions about the cleanliness of coal
6. About the depletion of the ozone layer: ask students to conduct research
7. Get students to be more active and express opinions about local housing issues, impact on infrastructure, etc.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW BEYOND 2013?



“Ummm.”

Where we’ve come and where we are going?

**A. Strategic Planning Preparation**

2004-2005

Fall: Review history of institutional planning; addressing HLC concerns

Spring: Planning and Budgeting Council established. Strategic planning processes defined; environmental scanning; focus-group work commences

2005-2006

Fall: Focus group results compiled; Open Atrium event with Minot community held on October 27, 2006; results compiled.

Spring: Drafts of strategic plan circulated and reviewed by council and campus; results shared and approved by campus senates.

## **B. Vision 2013**

2006-2007

Fall: Mission and plan approved by senates; new mission approved by the State Board of Higher Education. Vision 2013 plan completed and approved.

Spring: Seven teams of faculty, staff, and students were nominated by their respective senates to identify and seek input from campus on action steps for each of the strategies of the plan.

2007-2008

Fall: Action plans draft completed and reviewed.

Spring: Action plans distributed at spring convocation on January 8, 2008; George Kuh presentation on engagement at convocation.

2008-2009

Fall: Institutional reports on action plan achievement distributed in August.

Spring: Premier universities identified and performance indicators shared with Campus; three-year funding identified.

2009-2010

Fall: Action plans distributed and reviewed; performance indicator measures reviewed.

Spring: Action plan and funding reviews; performance indicators monitored

2010-2011

Fall: Action plan funding reviews; performance indicators.

Spring: Open forum in April to assess Vision 2013; share directions from University Cabinet and Planning and Budgeting Council.

## **C. Vision 2013 and Beyond Preparation**

2011-2012

Fall: Minot Flood and recovery

Spring: Convocation and announcement of new planning; assessment of Vision 2013; identification of process to set new objectives focused on 2015-2016; real conversation

2012-2013

Fall: Identifying key objectives from conversations; developing plan.

Spring: Working to pursue new objectives; unveiling new plan.

2013-2014

Fall: Centennial year  
Capital Campaign

Spring:	Centennial celebration
2014-2015:	New strategic plan continues
Fall:	Pursuing objectives.
Spring:	Assessing objectives and results
2015-2016:	
Fall:	HLC Steering Committee appointed; begin formal preparation for HLC;
Spring:	Assessment of Vision 2013 and Beyond

**D. Higher Learning Commission Preparation**

2016-2017	
Fall:	Self-Study Preparation
Spring:	Completion of Self Study
2017-2018:	
Fall:	Higher Learning Commission visit
Spring:	

**CONCLUSION**

General Assessment in 2011

Despite the significant changes and growth during the nearly 100 years of existence, the university remains steadfastly focused on its original commitment to students, to service, and to its place in Northwest North Dakota. The university’s ideal of “service first” has indeed been responsible over these years in vitalizing the special identity of Minot State University.

If these accomplishments are any indication, I can say very sincerely that we are in good shape. We’re nearing our centennial and are set to continue our tradition well into our second 100 years.

We have a clear sense of our mission and direction; our facilities are clean and up-to-date to provide the best environment for teaching and learning. We have faculty and staff, who continue to gain national attention for their scholarship and professional work, with notable dedication to our students and university.

Our academic programs tout many regionally and nationally respected programs and professors. Our Centers of Excellence programs, the Rural Crime and Justice Center and the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, continue to garner national attention and considerable grants and contracts.



We've added many new and responsive programs, such as our energy, economics and finance major, athletic training, and special education.

We're pursuing new and cutting edge interdisciplinary curricula in Studies in the Community and the Environment as well as supporting an innovative learning community program for first-year students and curricula and campus engagement in the highly successful Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning.

Our faculty is working deliberately to create a highly effective general education program, informed by the liberal arts and highly regarded professional standards for engaged learning and service.

We're adding a new and innovated geothermal system that will allow us to reduce significantly our utility costs and to explore the possibility of a cutting edge curriculum in alternative energy

We've made notable progress on our faculty and staff salaries and raised our average compo-ratio market rate at 96.7% and moving toward 97.2%. That's notable in view of the fact when our compensation task force work began five years ago we had 160 employees below 85%. Now we have no employees below 85%. The CTF process also addressed significant pay compression for our full-professors and addressed low market rates for our clerical positions and corrected other anomalies.

For the first time in our history, we now have a fully MSU Title IV program for students at risk, and we recently developed for the first time a Veteran's Support Center. Our Student Success Center, which was envisioned as an action plan for Vision 2013, is functioning well to provide advising, career counseling, and internship support for students.

We're in the final stages of our move from an NAIA conference into the NCAA Division II, with approved membership in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, highly regarded as one of the most successful Division II conferences in the nation.

We've fully renovated Swain Hall into one of the show places for teacher education. Our Student Center is now fully renovated as an inviting and engaging facility for students, including the Beaver Dam, a renovated Buckshot's food venue, a recently renovated \$1.3 million beautiful Beaver Creek Café, a multicultural center, international education center, a welcome center, a welcoming student center atrium, a fine bookstore, and the student success center and new student government offices.

We have a beautiful new athletic field and stands, and our \$12 million dollar student wellness center is progressing well toward its spring completion.

Those are a few of many the features that have helped us move to and stay firmly in great shape as a university, which are more than a cause for optimism. There are many more, but I have to tell you that there are features of our university that demonstrate even more remarkably our quality. From my vantage point, like many of you who attend student activities and stay particularly informed about what goes on at our university, I can share with you countless examples that assure me and you that this university is doing what a premier university should be doing and that is thriving with quality academic, student service, athletic, and facilities.

Here are a few examples: those of you who witnessed recently our band, choral, and jazz performances and our full house performance of the Christmas Carole, the Prairie Public honoring of Walter Piehl, and our NotStock event, will know exactly the culture in which these types of things spring. These and so many other student demonstration and performances reveal without a doubt that we're a part of a first-rate university, with first-rate faculty and staff, and first rate students. Anyone who witnesses what our students, faculty, and staff do, will not come away with anything but optimism and pride.

We're also in great shape because we are located in a wonderful place, in a state with immense resources and surpluses, a startlingly low unemployment rate, a quality of living second to none, a place with good people and heritage, support of the value of education, a positive and collaborative and mutually respectful relationship with the city and region.

As is reflected boldly in our new monument sign on Broadway, we are proud of Minot State University and pleased to know that it is great to be at Minot State University.

Thank you for your attention and for all you do on behalf of our students and Minot State University.

David Fuller  
President  
January 9, 2012

**Vision 2013**  
**Institutional Initiatives and Achievements (Selected)**  
**2006-2011**

**Strategy 1: Creating a Distinctive Mission Focused on Engagement and Place**

Create and promote a distinctive mission, vision and premier institutional character based on curricula and services known for high quality, engagement, relationship to place, and the integration of knowledge, theory and practice.

- Published Vision 2013 abridged and unabridged plans and presented to campus; wide distribution of final plan to internal and external constituencies
- Vision 2013 Action Plans identified, reviewed, and published
- New marketing director position appointed, new budget established, marketing plan developed and initiated
- New Great Plains Exceptional scholarships awards requiring high GPA and ACT scores, as well as demonstrated civic engagement and contributions to place
- Identified premier, regional universities in the Great Plains to track and compare MSU performance indicators
- Vision 2013 action plans, costs, and oversight were approved and distributed
- Vision 2013 one-time awards announced to support initiatives
- Chronicle of Higher Education feature article on MSU's faculty and staff compensation plan appeared in 2010 summer edition
- Vision 2013 Faculty Staff Achievement Awards (May 2009)

**Strategy 2: Fostering Engaged Learning and Place for the Benefit of Students**

Raise academic standards and expectations exceptionally high for quality teaching and engaged learning; create and sustain a dynamic place and engaged campus atmosphere and design conducive to high-quality learning and student support.

- Completely remodeled Crane Hall into four-person suites
- Renovated old Ballroom, restrooms, hallways, and general area, including a new activity center called the "Beaver Dam" in the Student Center which also includes an outdoor patio area for students to assemble
- Invited as a member of the Foundations of Excellence for First-Year Students; completed full-year self-study identifying new first-year student initiatives
- New first-year student mentoring program
- New mandatory first-year and transfer student orientation
- New mandatory housing policy for first-year students
- Renovated Buckshot's dining area
- Renovated Beaver Creek Café
- Nationally known speakers made presentations on Assessment Day and Spring Convocation relative to student engagement, critical thinking, and student competency
- Instituted new assessment measures for engagement and critical thinking
- Reinstated a new marching band since it was discontinued in the early 80s. Recruitment, direction, and the purchase of new uniforms are underway
- \$1 million donation to establish the Severson Entrepreneurship Center
- Slaaten Center for Learning completed in Old Main
- MSU Title IV Trio program funded and new Power Center established

### **Strategy 3: Valuing Faculty and Staff within an Engaged Community**

Recruit, retain, and support well-qualified faculty and staff as valued members of an inclusive community, dedicated and devoted to the institutional mission, to engaged learning, and to student support and success.

- Funded faculty-staff tuition reduction program for family members of faculty and staff
- A new advisory council (University Cabinet) established to improve communications and shared decision making; meets monthly to discuss campus issues
- A system of shared governance endorsed, involving senates, the University Cabinet, President's Staff, and all departments/areas.
- Established Compensation Task Force (CTF) to study and set five-year goals for raising salaries to a competitive level
- Professional development workshops for faculty and staff in the areas of harassment, customer service, first aid, and CPR
- New orientation program for new faculty
- Beaver Praise program implemented to recognize and appreciate work of faculty and staff.
- Fall kickoff event for all faculty staff coordinated by Staff Senate to promote a collegial and friendly campus
- Monthly recognition at University Cabinet of faculty and staff deserving special commendation; individuals recognized receive a communication expressing appreciation from the president
- Faculty and staff receive the Board of Regents Achievement awards on annual basis.
- Faculty sabbatical proposal developed and funded beginning 2009-2010
- Institutional and community task force charged to review possibility of joining NCAA Division II voted to recommend the MSU enter into exploratory status with the NCAA
- NCAA Division II membership committee voted to approve MSU's application into candidacy status
- Applied and accepted for membership in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Athletic Conference for membership

### **Strategy 4: Building a Diverse and Multicultural University Climate**

Develop and support a diverse, multicultural, and inclusive campus community.

- National consultant visits campus and conducts open forums for campus to discuss results of the Diversity Climate Survey results
- Established Native American Advisory Committee
- Expanded and redefined the mission for the University Diversity Council and funding
- Hosted a university and community Martin Luther King celebration on campus in cooperation with the Minot Air Force Base
- Signed partnership agreements with Native American colleges: Ft. Berthold Community College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and United Tribes Technical College
- Hired and funded new director for international programs; established new budget to support initiatives
- Signed agreements with four international universities: Telemark University College in Norway, Ostfold University in Norway, Kristianstad University in Sweden, Aalborg University in Denmark, Sias International University in China; Kadir Has University in Istanbul, Turkey; Pai Chai University in South Korea; and National Economics University in Vietnam
- New Study Abroad program initiated and supported
- Enrollment Services moved and expanded to support new recruitment initiatives
- Cohort of the MSM Intercultural Cohort Program, with Sias International University in China
- Established a new "multicultural center" in the Student Center
- Assigned staff to program multicultural events on campus including a Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, Trinidad and Tobago Celebration, History of the Star Quilt Presentation, Native American Historical Trauma Presentation, Featured Faiths Series, Soul Food Celebration, Women's History Month, Cinco de Mayo Celebration, Native American Awareness Week, and the Spring Powwow and Honor Dance
- Native American artist painted murals in the Student Center; one depicting American Indian life and others displaying notable and recognizable structures from throughout the world

- Collaborated with the Norsk Hostfest to promote Scandinavian events, including a theater performance of Ibsen, the Suoni Wind Orchestra from Norway on campus, and hosting of many Scandinavian dignitaries
- Negotiated the development of a new ESL center (The Language Company) on campus
- Signed partnership with Briercrest College in Canada to support a joint program in teacher education

### **Strategy 5: Focusing on Student Success and Future Achievements**

Provide students with a strong and engaging academic experience for intellectual and personal growth, formation of sound character, and development of abilities and skills required for success in future careers and endeavors.

- Reorganized and separated career services and recruiting offices
- Appointed full-time vice president for advancement position, which allowed vice president for student services to concentrate fully on student services
- Completed and submitted a Title III grant proposal focused on improved student services and support
- Freshman Moving In Day where faculty and staff help students move into residence halls demonstrating the university's commitment to assisting students
- Orientation/registration, known as CONNECT, became mandatory for all new students; previously first-year orientation was voluntary
- ND State Board of Higher Education approved MSU request to create the CASCLS program and center
- Completed self-study for the Foundations of Excellence for First Year Students
- Institutional study of graduation and retention rates to identify causes of attrition and strategies to improve
- Contracted with consultant to write a Title IV federal Student Support Services grant to assist students at risk
- Revised admission criteria to address student preparation for college, improved graduation and retention rates, and provisional admission qualifications to assist students in succeeding
- Contracted with Noel-Levitz to focus attention on improved retention and graduation rates
- Contracted with Hobson's International to review international programs and recruitment
- New Studies in the Community and Environment program; new director hired in fall 2011
- New initiatives to improve academic advising in concert with the retention committee, the new advising coordinator, and the executive committee of the Faculty Senate
- A new Veterans' Service Center implemented, with a new director hired
- TriO Center established and new staff appointed for the Power Center
- General Education committee continues to review options for an improved general education program
- Plans developed for a new One-Stop-Student Service Center

### **Strategy 6: Creating a Commitment to Civic Engagement, Service, and the Common Good**

Enhance and strengthen the university's mission and purview to include civic engagement, experiential learning, and activities focused on collaboration, partnerships, community relations and involvement; complementing the institution's educational function through a concerted and deliberate effort to connect higher education and the common good.

- Hosted the Great Plains Service Learning Conference
- Institutional membership in AASCU's American Democracy Project, a civic engagement consortium of universities and the [New York Times](#)
- Joined the National Society of Experiential Education Organization; a campus cohort attended a workshop in Chicago (2007)
- Faculty and staff participate in services clubs such as Optimist, Rotary, Lions, Boy Scouts, Sertoma, and Kiwanis. (ongoing)
- Exploring the development of a child care program with the YWCA
- Hosted Business after Hours on campus providing community awareness of programs and facilities
- Signed the President's Commitment to Sustainability and identified campus priorities
- Minot State University received the President's Honor Roll for Community Service Award. MSU was the only institution in the state of North Dakota to be recognized with this honor

- Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning focused on engagement activities and service
- MSU was awarded a \$950,000 federal grant to establish the Community Research and Service Center, which will identify projects, issues, and problems about which the communities and the university can work in concert to address
- MSU co-hosted the second energy impact symposium for the region
- June 2011 flood to Minot and the greater area called upon MSU to provide direct service and support to people and agencies impacted by the flood. The university demonstrated its ability to focus on supporting the common good during this emergency (June 2011)

### **Strategy 7: Ensuring Future Institutional Viability, Vitality, and Growth**

Ensure MSU's future viability, the vitality of its campus proper, and its success and competitiveness

- Grow North Dakota flat tuition rate approved by on-campus senates, Board of Regents, and the State Board of Higher Education
- Preliminary consultation with Bentz Whaley completed to make plans for a feasibility study for a comprehensive capital campaign
- Swain Hall renovated
- Welcome center has been opened in the Student Center providing a positive environment to first time visitors
- Building signage has been installed on campus providing a more welcoming environment.(2007)
- Completed a campus initiative to become a "smoke-free campus"
- Campus master plan and landscape plan presented to the campus; and approved unanimously by the full steering committee
- Architectural firm completed full landscaping analysis and plan (e.g., plan for university and Broadway campus sign, campus landscaping plan; opening 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue; collaboration project with Lutheran cemetery; 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor)
- Student Center renovation in atrium
- Welcome banners and other enhancement installed across campus
- Engineering firm contracted to conduct feasibility study for a geothermal heating and cooling system on the MSU campus
- Ground breaking for the MSU monument sign held on May 1, 2009
- Installation of new athletic field and renovation of the existing stadium, involving installing a new field and replacing the current stadium and seating
- Initial planning for renovations of the Administration Building to incorporate a new student service center on the first floor
- Wellness Center bids awarded, with construction beginning March 1, 2011 and the building to be completed by May 2012
- Moved the recruiting, admissions, and enrollment management services from second floor of Student Center to the east of the administration building; space renovated and updated; offices designed for recruiters and visitors; the number of recruiters was doubled, and a new director of recruiting services position established
- Reorganized and enhanced Public Information Office. Relocated and renovated office to allow for efficiencies due to staff addition and increases in resources (2006)
- Completed two year inclusive self study process in preparation for Higher Learning Commission team visit in April 2008
- The HLC visiting team and report indicated that MSU met all criteria for accreditation, with a new review to occur in ten years in 2017
- Outsourced bookstore and contracted with Barnes and Noble