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SPEECH TO CAMPUS COMMUNITY - 11/11/92

PRESIDENT LUBBERS

"We look before and after and pine for what is naught
Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught."

These lines from Shelley's Ode to a Skylark, memorized when I was a junior in high school, have stayed with me all these years, and came to mind when I decided to address you about my views of our University and the conditions that affect our aspirations and operations.

When I address you I am always inclined to "look before and after." Where have we been recently, and to what should we direct our attention? I certainly pine for what to the present day is naught. I want a science building for Christmas, and Santa Claus is less than 75 miles away. I wish for once he would respond favorably to my supplication.

As for laughter, I rank a sense of humor high on the list of necessary human characteristics, along with loyalty, kindness, courtesy, and integrity. To laugh at foibles and implausibilities restores balance to the feelings of intensity and discomfort that often derive from making difficult decisions with their incumbent pain. So in our daily lives we laugh considerably, the recession in particular forces us to make decisions that have more pain than usual, yet we constantly look toward an improving university. If we pine for enough, we may receive a portion.

I have taken note of developments at our University that will, I believe, shape the character and affect the operations of the next few years. You can compare my observations with yours and together we may establish a profile for Grand Valley.

First: The founder's generation among the faculty is retiring in increased numbers. Though each year several faculty, still relatively young and definitely vigorous, receive 25 year medallions, 141 faculty, which is 43% of the total regular faculty, have been here less than five years, replacing those who have retired and adding to our numbers as a result of enrollment increases. The blending of the old and new generations in ways that stimulate our intellects, yet contribute to the harmony of our lives, is eagerly to be sought and worth a price, for only with intellects that are alive and lives unrent by discord and discourtesy can this University make the progress in the ensuing years that it has in the past decade.

I, as one of the older generation, hope my assessment of the new generation is shared by my veteran colleagues. In my opinion, the future for our University is considerably brightened by those who have been persuaded to come here in recent years. In the fullness of time, perhaps, they too will hold the same loyalty to this place and the same commitment to making it a special University. If significant numbers of you who are in the formative years of your career remain here, the long range future for Grand Valley is indeed bright.

Second: The past four years have seen the quality of our freshman class surpass our highest expectations. With the statistics available to us I believe last year our freshman class was the fourth best in the state based on ACT test scores and high school grade point average. This year our score and grades exceeded those of last year so I am confident we maintained our position. We can make some claim on being a special place with a student body of the caliber we are attracting. Let me suggest some reasons for this phenomenon of the last few years.

- 1.7 Excellent instruction and an attractive curriculum
- 2.7 For a university of our size and resources, an unusual concern for the welfare and happiness of each student
- 3.7 A beautiful campus in a relatively safe location
- 4.7 A good financial bargain - good quality for a reasonable price
- 5.7 An excellent admissions staff, supported beyond the call of duty by Faculty, staff, students and the computer center
- 6.7 Attractive housing for freshmen
- 7.7 We decided to limit the number in our freshman class

I call these to your attention because they are significant front line achievements. They have lifted us higher in our own estimation and in the estimation of others. They cannot be taken for granted. They must be watched, tended and at times revitalized. They are not exclusive. There are other programs, facilities, and characteristics that we can add to the list. This I will address later.

Third: The working relationship between the Student Government and the other university governance representatives is, in my estimation, a model for colleges and universities throughout the country. I observe that the students' government acts for the students' interests. Their representatives are neither weak nor adversarial, but strong and cooperative. They want what is best for students and for the University, and they seek with administrators and faculty to make those interests common to all.

Our student government has an impact on our community life that is pervasive and positive. When they passed an assessment of \$5.00 per credit hour to increase the enclosed space on this campus for learning,

study, services, and recreation, they demonstrated that. There is a challenge to the Legislature, the Governor, alumni, and friends of our University to do their share in assisting this new, dynamic University. The students are doing their share.

Fourth: The recession years have seen student demand for our curriculum increase while the state has not provided space or program dollars in any measure to meet that demand. We have turned to private donors and bonding to help the University, and the landscape has changed. The Water Resources Institute, with its modest building, has established itself beyond our expectation. Au Sable Hall, enlarged and enlarged again, relieves some of the pressure of growth. Three new living centers increased our student housing capacity on campus by 225 beds. Remodeling projects too numerous to mention change our buildings within their existing walls.

The Cook-DeWitt Center has added a new cultural dimension to campus life, and an attractive, relatively quiet place for each of us to retreat when we desire a time for reflection or quiet discussion. The Meadows Golf Course we believe will be a better investment than corn fields and an enhancement for students and others in our community.

Since the state last provided us with a new building, the Eberhard Center, and private donations paid for more than a third of that project, we have spent more than 20 million dollars to improve our campus. It is not enough, but it nudges us along to our goal of making GVSU a special place.

The four observations I have made deal not with completed policies and projects, but with ongoing themes. Those themes have been dominant

long enough to characterize our university. The passing of a pioneer generation, the fusion of faculty of long standing with new faculty bringing their ideas and aspirations, a student body of higher quality, student involvement in the improvement of the total university, and a changing campus landscape adding function and beauty are what we are and what we will be for some time to come.

I turn now to unfinished business before I suggest an agenda for new business. In my last address to the university community it appears that I caused trouble by asking for the Faculty to review and, if they chose, to revise the academic structure of the University. I extend to the members of the Commission on Institutional Structure my appreciation for their work and report. I also offer some sympathy to them for the controversy that their report engendered, and accept my share of responsibility for that because I asked them to do the work. Reports have come to me that the cynics predicted I had some unspoken agenda and that it surfaced in the commission's report. That is not fair to the commission members who labored fully independent of me except for the thoughts contained in my address, on November 13, 1991, and a written charge to the commissioners when they were appointed. The several papers that have come forth and the open discussions, as well as the closed ones, have delineated the different views on the subject of academic structure clearly.

To clarify for those who are interested, I will attempt to state clearly where I stand on the various aspects of academic organization.

There are two reasons why I asked the faculty to review the organization of our schools and departments. The first was in response to individuals on the faculty who for several years thought we should

explore the possibility of recreating a College of Arts and Sciences. The second was my concern about the standing of our professional schools in their professions, and the difficulty encountered when searching for leadership of such a school when it is not led by a Dean nor has any degree of autonomy. This was apparent in our search for a Director for the School of Education. We are grateful that Allan Ten Eyck finally agreed to accept the position. I am convinced that the future high quality of our professional schools requires recognition of them within our organization similar to that accorded schools or colleges at most universities. In my opinion, three of our professional schools are ready for such recognition and one, the Seidman School of Business, already has it. The three are the School of Education, the School of Nursing, and the School of Social Work. All qualify, I believe, because of their successful record in graduate work, the number of students enrolled, the number and qualifications of faculty, and their status within their professions.

I can support the commission's recommendation to include the Health Sciences and Physical Therapy with Nursing in a College of Health Professions. If such an arrangement was agreed upon, I would hesitate to delete faculty or curriculum from the existing School of Health Sciences, and reassign them. It works the way it is.

The recommendation for the establishment of a College of Human Services is one I do not support. My preference is to see further development in Criminal Justice and Public Administration before they are considered for college status. They possibly could be joined in one college eventually. Though I can understand the theoretical basis for joining the three disciplines into one college, at our University each

of the departments has established a direction and a course for itself. That course, I believe, mitigates against that theoretical basis, pulling them together in a happy, intellectual, and personal relationship. Given the state of affairs, I would proceed with a College of Social Work and look to the future when the others are ready for an altered status.

I concur with the recommendation about the College of Education.

I agree with the recommendation concerning the Seidman College of Business with one caveat. I would let the economists decide where they want their department to be located.

I concur on the recommendation for all university programs.

The School of Communications and Engineering in the new scheme remain in the College of Literature, Sciences, and Arts. Whether the College as proposed by the commission or the status quo prevails, they should be associated with the other disciplines as they now are, until they are ready for college status. My preference, as you know, is to keep Criminal Justice and Public Administration in a similar relationship.

There has been considerable argument about the commission's recommendation to organize a College of Literature, Sciences, and Arts. There are two positions against it that appear prevalent.

First: the autonomy given to professional schools will dissociate those schools from traditional arts and sciences departments and diminish our efforts to insist upon a strong general education core for each student.

Second: The divisions are working well. Why change what works? In addition, fears concerning strength of departments in a new

configuration compared to the old keep floating into my office.

On position number one, you know my stand. We need strong professional colleges and they will be enhanced by the change for the reasons I have mentioned.

To guarantee that decisions about the curriculum of all colleges, schools, and departments are made in the interests of sound university core curriculum requirements, we must continue to insist that an all university curriculum committee makes those decisions. Whatever our organizational structure, that is the cardinal principle if we want a university that sends educated, not trained, people into society. It is a "read my lips commitment." Anyone who advocates we change it is in trouble. "Right?" I think there will be opportunities for joint appointments, and perhaps the faculty may want to be more insistent that its members from professional programs and the arts and sciences departments participate in the process of integrating our curriculum in substantive and even unique ways. I pledge my support to such endeavors.

I feel like a leader when I speak about Professional Colleges, Core Curriculum, and Power for the all university curriculum committee. Win or lose, I know where I stand and so do you. On the issue of the organization for Literature, Arts, and Sciences, I may appear more as George Bush has the past two years on many issues. Was he led or was he leading? It was hard to tell. I can accept the will of the Faculty Senate, whatever it is, without feeling that a serious mistake is made.

The commission has carefully laid out a College of Literature, Sciences, and Arts. You may accept their recommendation. If you do, I hope you will amend to include Schools of Criminal Justice and Public

Administration. If you prefer to keep the divisions, may I suggest that you consider throwing over them all the title of College of Literature, Sciences, and Arts, and we will continue to function as we are. Our neighbor, Hope College, functions well as a College of Literature, Sciences and Arts with Deans for each Division who report to the Provost. I support the process the Senate's Executive Committee has suggested the Senate follow in reaching a decision. The academic organization is too complex for the Senate to take an all or nothing approach. There may be proposals in this report whose time has come, while for others more thought is necessary, and still others that you may choose to place on the shelf. For some, the days of discussion have been intense, and they have lasted a long time. Now we must decide, and move on to other issues.

One of those issues comes to you from the General Education Subcommittee. They present to you a three course and a two course proposal for consideration. Study, analysis, discussion and agreement have been the companions of those engaged in strengthening our core curriculum. They are now ready for you to decide the route to follow. I believe they have avoided the pitfalls of being politically correct and instead have a proposal that is educationally sound for students in our multicultural democracy. Though I have devoted little time to an issue that you will debate in depth and have debated before, what you decide is as important to the future character of our University as academic organization. This too, along with the proposal for academic reorganization, requires your attention now so that both may be resolved soon.

I turn now to four matters that I believe should consume our time

and interest for the next year and a half to two years. First is the Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership. A team, led by Professor Eleanor French, Director of the School of Public Administration, submitted a grant proposal to the Kellogg Foundation asking for support to educate managers for the nonprofit sector to further strengthen volunteerism among our student body, a program already remarkable for its growth and service, and find ways to permeate our total curriculum with the spirit and substance of volunteerism, as well as identify existing courses that can contribute to the education for nonprofit leadership. The Kellogg Foundation leaders believe that democracy depends on the development of our generous natures, and the establishment of well managed initiatives through which that generosity can affect the behavior of society. With over 900,000 Kellogg dollars, the Center exists and Dr. Thomas Jeavons is its new director. Dr. Jeavons most recently has been with the American Association of Colleges working with its members to set up programs for volunteerism and nonprofit leadership. He will need your interest and your cooperation as we all seek to add a new dimension to our curriculum and influence positively the values of our students.

Second is the Internationalization of the university curriculum. We all read about the global society, the changes, particularly in the economy, that our new President appears to be making the centerpiece for his new administration. Business schools throughout the country are scurrying to update their programs. For years this University has engaged in exchange programs. Many of you have been abroad in the name of Grand Valley or your profession. Hundreds from here have made international contacts, and hundreds from foreign lands have come to

us. Our offerings in foreign languages are in greater demand, and not only because our overall enrollment has increased. Our international activity is impressive, yet the time has come for us to produce a coherent university plan for our curriculum and our international programs; one that reflects the new world order in which our students must compete and succeed. Such a plan can reach into every department on this campus. Even the scientists whose subject matter has no specific international component benefit from contact with fellow scientists in other countries. I think we will need a series of position papers on various aspects of an internationalized curriculum and its supporting international programs. I will ask the Provost and Executive Committee of the Senate to advise me and you as to the process we should follow in making our University one that excels in sending well prepared graduates into a global society.

Some exciting developments have already taken place. A Latin American Studies Program and negotiations with the Japanese are two of them. For us to present to our constituency and the state the best international plan will take two years. If we do it and do it well, we will be ahead of other institutions, and that's where we want to be. It is inevitable.

The third focus on the future is directed to the placement of our students in jobs and graduate schools after they successfully earn a degree here. Tom Seykora and his staff work miracles with the resources available to them. Major professors are often the most important persons in securing placement for their students. When I read the annual report from the Placement Office I am always pleasantly surprised at how many students have found something to do related to

their field of study at college. Yet, I always want to do more for our graduates. I feel that way for two reasons. First, the job market is more fearsome than any time since the great depression, and I believe our responsibility extends beyond certifying a student for a diploma. Second, the university that has a reputation for being outstanding in placing its graduates in jobs and graduate schools will attract outstanding students. I will ask the Dean of Students, in consultation with his staff, and the Provost to advise me on how to approach the matter of expanding a successful program. I mention this to you because I am aware of the crucial importance the Faculty are to the success of our Admissions Department and I thank all of you who assist Jo Ann Foerster and her staff. I think there may be a similar role the Faculty can play in providing more help to our graduates.

The fourth matter that I believe should command our ongoing attention is justice for all. There are three areas of particular interest to me where justice has been a concern on our campus and elsewhere. I have been impressed by the academic success in recent years of our minority students. The African-American group is the largest of the minorities on campus and their retention rate is the same as the retention rate of the University as a whole. The same is true of other minority groups. This is progress. I think it has social as well as academic connotations. Though we have made progress in matters of race and I look towards the day when we will no longer concern ourselves with racial issues because they will be truly overcome, we are not yet there. On this campus we are getting closer, and I think it is time for us to assess where we are on that journey to racial justice at our University. I will ask the Dean of Minority

Affairs to consult with all of the Deans and advise us how we can best ascertain where we are and what we must do next.

Over the years we have encountered on our campus a few serious cases of sexual harassment. I am unnerved at how long it took to resolve a couple of those cases because we could not persuade the victims to testify. Finally the complaints were so persistent and the circumstantial evidence web-like for the perpetrator that resignations were arranged. To show how intense these issues become, a University person, obviously angered, called the Press in an attempt to embarrass the University and the accused because a quiet resignation was not enough. We had a few cases also of unjust accusations of sexual harassment when the evidence collapsed or the accuser admitted finally that the charge was made falsely. These are volatile situations fraught with the danger that is always near at hand as we live out our sexuality. We can only encourage those mistreated to come forward, and we must continually review the process we have delineated to insure that justice is done. To me it is unethical for Faculty or staff to have any sexual relationship or hint of such a relationship with a student, no matter how comparable their ages. It is not right. Any interest, if pursued, should await the end of the student's enrollment.

Almost as volatile is a situation when a woman perceives that she has been dealt with unfairly. I await the climate study now in process. That should give all of us a clear idea of where any unfairness lies and what insensitivity exists in matters of gender. I anticipate that policy will be affected and actions taken after the findings are analyzed, and I will work with those in charge of the study to improve our climate of justice when it is ascertained what those improvements

should be. I can pledge to you that all appointments in which I am involved will be made on the basis of merit, gender equal in nearly every case. At this stage I cannot imagine appointing a male as Director of Women's Studies, or a woman the head football coach. And when there are salary increases, gender cannot be a factor.

As a University we have taken a course different from the research university and the small college. In Literature, Sciences and Arts we do not have a publish or perish policy, yet we want to allow and encourage faculty who want to publish some time to reach that objective. If a Professor does not publish or does so on rare occasion, she or he should be evaluated on teaching alone, and not penalized for lack of publications. Teaching load should be adjusted accordingly. The research inclined faculty member at Grand Valley should be evaluated for both publications and teaching, with the understanding that teaching is the primary university responsibility. The emphasis on publication is greater in fields where graduate degrees are offered and where accreditation requires it. In those areas there is the expectation that Faculty will publish and in salary and tenure decisions that expectation is taken into account. A university can come apart over those matters, and our policy is by intent not uniform throughout the academic units. I will ask the Provost to examine our policies, consulting with Deans and members of the Faculty to consider grievances and the long-range implications of our present policy and in any change of policy he may commend to the academic units.

Recently I drove through the mist and the rain to Lansing where the intensity of activity, rumor, and speculation make it appear that we are approaching election day rather than preparing in a deliberative

manner for the convening of a new legislature. The big question, "Is gridlock in our future as in the past, or will the Republicans prevail in the House?" After much discussion of that topic, my colleagues and I, in a meeting with the Director of Management and Budget, learned that no matter who claims the House, the State is expecting a shortfall that will require an Executive Order to clear the deficit in the '93 budget. She would not venture a guess as to the amount, nor how "hard a hit" higher education would take. That she thought might depend on who controls the House.

For us the message is clear. Prepare for a reduction in appropriations in mid year. From our own calculations, I think we can avoid lay offs. Last year we absorbed a 2 1/2% loss of revenue without affecting jobs or academic programs. This year a reduction of that amount will not require surgery either, but it will make us go on a diet. There is a possibility that higher education will have less of a burden to bear than last year. Whatever happens, we all can be grateful to our friends in the legislature who secured for us at the end of the appropriation process an additional \$500,000 over the original recommendation. I thought at the time that may keep the knife in the sheath.

Not all news was encapsulated in gloom. The Director said the Governor wanted a capital outlay bill. The Chairman of Senate appropriations reportedly said he was committed to a capital outlay bill. No university has a better claim on a capital outlay bill than do we. So my hopes are again lifted and light shines brightly at the end of the tunnel. Yet I don't know how long the tunnel is.

The general financial condition of our University is sound. We

have debt on our student housing buildings and some other facilities, but it poses no threat to our operations. We watch carefully the ratios of debt to general funds and debt to total assets. Though we are not over-burdened, I would prefer from now on to follow a "pay as you go" policy unless we add student housing in the future. In the management of our financial resources, it is our policy to protect the university from the uncertainties that afflict the Michigan roller coaster economy which tends to out-boom the booms and out-bust the busts. That we believe is possible in times of minor recession, not in a depression or serious recession. We do not anticipate the economic slough in which we find ourselves will slip into deep recession.

I sensed also in the conversations I had during my excursion to the state capitol that there will be no more money around for next year's general fund budget than there is this year. That is sobering. We will see if this will come to pass. If it doesn't, and we receive an increase, even of modest proportion, our lives together will be much easier. If it does, we will have hard decisions to make about tuition, compensation, and program priorities. For now we will wait to see what transpires. When the state's figures are cast, the representative groups on campus will be asked to participate in the decisions that must be made. Together I believe we can make the decisions that best serve the interests of the university. When I observe several of our sister institutions, I see frightening demonstrations of mistrust and self-serving behavior. The result - academic stall, bad morale, little common sense, badly utilized funds, and lower enrollments. It is difficult to recover from these conditions. It is possible to avoid them. Our efforts, grounded in openness, trust, good will, and sound

management practice will pay off in jobs and academic strength if they succeed. I fervently hope they do.

Money is neither the cause or solution to all problems. The way we live together is more important than the amount of money available to us. Today I have touched on ways that affect our lives together; justice and fairness in several areas. For all our sakes, we have to hold together and we have to have more justice and fairness rather than less to do that successfully. I have suggested some projects that I think run from important to essential; projects when completed will help to make us almost irresistible to students. Those of us charged with the responsibility will prowl around looking for resources to implement those programs, keep existing ones healthy, build the campus infrastructure, and enclose the space we need for our programs.

I haven't painted a bright picture about the state's economy, but not an entirely gloom one. With the students we have begun to attract, with the Faculty we have in place, with an experienced group of administrators in all ranks, we can make it. We can do better than that; we can excel. We can excel because of people and intelligent use of resources.

In closing, I want to comment about my good fortune these past 23 years. I always wanted to be a college President. To want something so important and have it for 23 years here and 32 years in all is indeed good fortune. I am aware, and gratefully so, that you who have cast your lot with Grand Valley have contributed to my personal fulfillment. I could not have it without you talented and dedicated people. And I hope in some way I have contributed to yours.

A few days ago a Professor told me that there was speculation that

I would use this occasion to announce my retirement. I think I will use it instead for just the opposite. I would like to set my sites on the 30 year watch which will be much more elaborate than the 25 year one some of you are wearing. That will take us to January 1999, and then we can see what happens. As I strive to reach the 30 year circle and you think I should settle for less, there are kind ways to let me know. In the meantime, as my 17-year-old daughter Caroline often tells me, "Go for it Dad!"