Remarks, delivered at the Inauguration of Juan Olivarez on October 26, 1999

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A statement by Adlai Stevenson about the American Presidency holds for a Community College Presidency as well. He said, “In America, anybody can be President. That’s one of the risks you take.” Juan, you could not avoid the Presidency of Grand Rapids Community College. Your long, distinguished career at the College, your involvement and knowledge of the community, and your capacity to communicate with people make you the best qualified person for the Presidency. You are ready to take the risks of the job because you see the possibilities in the job. I know you are a person who walks the “extra mile” if you believe it will help someone or your institution. If the people of Kent County, the students, the Faculty, the Staff and the Board members will walk with you that “extra mile” for Grand Rapids Community College, the time you share will bring a glorious era to the College. I come from your sister University filled with enthusiasm for your appointment. I know when our two institutions cooperate the students who use both of us benefit.

We at Grand Valley feel one with you and your colleagues at Grand Rapids Community College in the education of those students. Our longstanding 2 + 2 program for students adds up to more than 4 in value to their lives. Today we celebrate your election to the Presidency. Tomorrow and for years to come we will do the hard work together that will improve the lives of the students we share. We pledge our support and cooperation to you, your institution, and your students.