



North Dakota State University

October 12, 2006

President Joseph A. Chapman

State of the University Address

Good morning and welcome to this, my eighth State of the University Address. In 1999, when I first stood before you as president, North Dakota State University was a university with a well established reputation for quality teaching, for conducting research and extension that contributed to the economic vitality of the citizens of the state, and as a place where students received the solid education needed to be successful in life. When I was interviewed for the presidency, it became clearly apparent that this university wanted to be more -- to do more. I was delighted to be selected to lead this transformation.

In 1999, North Dakota State University was at a crossroads and we asked, "What will the 21st Century hold for this great land-grant university?" We had great aspirations and we were fortunate to be at a point in our state's history where the Higher Education Roundtable created an environment where flexibility and acceptable risks could be taken. We enjoyed wide consensus that a great land-grant university could make our state better. This expectation -- within this environment -- would prove to be a powerful opportunity.

The people of North Dakota State University said they wanted to do more. I challenged every unit to move to the next level. Some could have stayed status quo, but none did -- no one -- and we set off on a great adventure. What is amazing in all this is that we succeeded beyond our dreams.

In all of this, we have had great partners. The State Board of Higher Education has supported all of our requests. Together, we rose to the challenge and have transformed the university.

I want to thank the members of the State Board of Higher Education for their strong support in our institutional transformation. As we faced challenge after challenge, we were never alone. The members of the board were with us throughout, encouraging us, and voting their support of our proposals. They, too, could have been champions of the status quo, but instead provided the support we needed to accomplish our goals. They shared our vision.

Today, we have much to show for our efforts. We have many new academic programs. We have new facilities on campus, across the state and in downtown Fargo. We have record enrollment for the seventh consecutive year. We have made great strides in research, diversity and athletics. Today, North

Dakota State University demonstrates what happens when you turn aspiration into momentum. We live our mission statement.

Our success, driven by flexibility with accountability, is a national model. No other university has accomplished as much as we have during this period. Others want to hear of our progress and how we did it in a climate of budget recessions. Last November, I was a member of a delegation invited to present this model at a meeting of the Chicago District of the Federal Reserve Bank. In March, the University of Colorado invited us to talk about our success as they make plans for their proposed research and technology park.

It is clear our success is founded on our ability to define and shape our future role on the local, regional, national and international level. We understand this cannot be done remotely, but only at each institution where contact with partners is initiated, put into action, sustained, and, finally, evaluated. This empowerment is available to all to define unique futures that are responsive to institutional and greater community needs. With research extension centers and offices in virtually every county, we are touching the lives of citizens throughout North Dakota.

In setting our agenda, we have worked through a series of well-known and familiar institutional themes. They are: It's About People, Students Are Paramount, Programs, Leveraging Support, and Stature. These themes were created collectively after individual meetings with every campus unit, and with alumni and community groups across the state and nation. With these themes, we had solid criteria to chart initiatives and, as we evaluated our progress, we had criteria to benchmark our success.

Our foremost responsibility is the educational preparation of people so they can lead successful and productive lives. How do we measure our success in this imperative? We can look at the high rate of employment of our graduates. We can look at how in an increasingly competitive environment, a growing number of students are choosing North Dakota State University. And we can look at the extraordinary level of involvement of our students in the daily life of our university.

The active support of our students in NDSU's growth and vision also is drawing praise and comment. Let me share a story from our site visit last February by a 10-member team of consultant-evaluators from the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission. During their visit, they attended dozens of meetings with faculty, staff, students and others who care about this university. At a meeting with me, they told how they were getting a little suspicious that student after student in these scheduled meetings spoke thoughtfully and consistently about our mission and future direction. So, thinking they might be hearing orchestrated messages, they cancelled a planned dinner and made unannounced visits to campus dining centers. They spoke to more than 100 students that night and heard the same things over and over again. The next morning, they told me that never in their collective experience had they seen a university where the students have such a high level of understanding and involvement in the institutional vision and activity.

I want our students to know how much we value their involvement in the life of North Dakota State University. Our students are truly partners in our activity and success. And, on a personal note, I want our students to know that Gale and I will never forget March 27, the day when hundreds of students at the Memorial Union reminded me of how fortunate I am to be president of this great university, and how no other university could offer us what we already have here. It will remain a defining moment in my academic career.

When we began the expansion of our academic program offerings, some spoke against our efforts to offer our students more. However, our shared vision has given students greater opportunity and now North Dakota students have the options that can be provided only by a great national land-grant university. These programs have attracted students nationally and most are fully enrolled. Coupled with program expansion has been a commitment to on-going program review and assessment of learning, to ensure the continued relevancy and quality of existing programs. Our programmatic expansion is ongoing in areas such as nanotechnology, bioengineering, student personnel management and more.

Initially, we gave a primary emphasis to adding graduate level programs knowing that, too often, North Dakota did a great job at undergraduate education, only to lose those students to states that offered the specific graduate programs many students wanted. Now, and to a growing extent, we are keeping North Dakota students in state by offering new graduate programs. In addition, we have attracted many other young people to our state. Even better, the graduates of these additional programs are staying and finding jobs in our state. These are jobs in businesses that need these students as much as these students need their first career step.

All organizations spend a great deal of time considering the allocation of financial resources and, in North Dakota right now, there is an on-going debate about the allocation of public funding for higher education. As president, my job is to be an advocate for funding at this university. We have been good stewards of our public funding and have leveraged several additional dollars for every new dollar of state support. But the reality is that in good years and bad, state funding is limited and never going to meet the level needed for every possible program. We have successfully found funding from other sources so that we can be the land-grant university that we want to be and that North Dakota needs. In this task, our efforts have been most productive. The growth of our research portfolio to more than \$100 million and the generosity of our contributors to Momentum: The \$75 Million capital campaign are bringing new resources to our university. I want to thank everyone for their efforts in these areas.

In particular, I want to acknowledge North Dakota's elected officials for their support and efforts on behalf of NDSU.

Members of our congressional delegation have worked tirelessly to bring federal research funds to North Dakota. These funds have been the catalyst that has virtually catapulted NDSU's Research and Technology Park into the national spotlight. Today, the park is a model emulated by universities throughout the country. Much of the credit for the park's vibrant growth and robust expansion goes to the valuable partnership NDSU enjoys with our congressional delegation.

The NDSU Research and Technology Park was selected from among 20 finalists from across the nation to receive the U.S. Department of Commerce's award for excellence in technology-led economic development. The Assistant Secretary of Commerce who presented the award said, "The NDSU Research and Technology Park is a world-class facility and a national leader in economic development."

I want to thank the Governor who has, among other initiatives, championed Centers of Excellence across the North Dakota University System. These Centers will bring economic activity to all corners of North Dakota. I wish to thank the members of the North Dakota legislature for their vision and willingness to invest public funds in higher education.

And finally, we are grateful for the support and commitment NDSU enjoys from our community leaders. Together, we have worked to revitalize downtown Fargo and other cities across the state, and to promote economic growth and create new jobs.

North Dakotans too often are judged by others' perceptions of us, rather than on the merits of what we have accomplished. So, you might ask, what does it matter what others think of us? Is it really important if perceptions of us are based on the movie "Fargo"? Or if the words "isolated" and "remote" are applied to a state that lies at the center of North America? National perceptions of North Dakota are important.

Our campus theme Stature is changing the national perception. We are proud of our agricultural roots and our continued ag leadership. We are proud of our growing high tech future, much of which is tied to our prominence in agricultural research.

North Dakota State University is proud to be one of the nation's leading research universities. We are proud to be ranked 34th in the nation in The Scientist's survey of best places for post doctorates. We are proud that our students have won -- for an unprecedented fourth time -- the National Student Steel Bridge competition. We are proud that the City of Fargo recognized our campus with their first Vision Award. We are proud that NDSU Magazine was awarded a Gold Medal from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. The other Gold Medal in our category was awarded to Yale Alumni Magazine. And we are proud to give the nation a new image, a more accurate image, of our university and state.

North Dakota State University's stature has increased by our actions. In the past 12 months, we have done much. Let's review some of what made this period of time so notable.

I would like to start with our reaccreditation from the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission. A tremendous amount of work went into this effort that was literally years in the making and involved nearly all of us. In the end, outside evaluators saw the true quality of this institution. Their report cited "profound changes in the basic components of institutional excellence -- people, programs, facilities and funding." They also appropriately recognized that our progress is the product of many, including stakeholders on and off campus. In the words of one member of the NCA team, he regretted that he had never worked at a university during a time of such excitement and change as North Dakota State. Other members talked of how things they saw at NDSU would be taken back to their home universities -- a very high compliment.

Our clarity of purpose has given us the momentum to meet our aspirations. For the seventh year in a row, NDSU has set a record enrollment of 12,258. We have the largest first-year class in the state with nearly 2,100 students. We have the largest undergraduate enrollment in North Dakota with 10,596 students. Graduate enrollment has reached an all-time high for the ninth consecutive year with more than 1,650 students. NDSU's international enrollment, the largest in North Dakota, is at an all-time high of nearly 700. Students have a choice in furthering their education, and a growing number are choosing NDSU.

Our momentum continues in research as, for the second year in a row, we lead a five-state region in research expenditures, as measured by the National Science Foundation. With more than \$102 million recorded in 2004, we are ranked 122nd among the top 600 research universities. In several National Science Foundation subcategories, NDSU ranks among the top 100 research universities, including science and engineering -- 85th in the nation, chemistry -- 80th in the nation, physical sciences -- 70th, and agricultural sciences -- 24th in the nation.

Our research effort is fueling the discovery of new knowledge and creating new companies, new jobs and educational opportunities for our students. For 2005, the latest year data are available, we reported expenditures of more than \$103 million. With the new faculty we have hired, our research enterprise will continue to grow.

NDSU's building boom is continuing with construction projects in excess of \$50 million. This includes the 65,000 square foot addition to the Memorial Union, the 74,000 square foot addition to the Wellness Center, the material handling facility, the first phase of the Center for Technology Enterprise in the Research Park, the renovation of the Bison Sports Arena and we are adding valuable infrastructure to our centers and stations across the state including a new agronomy lab/greenhouse at the North Central Research and Extension Center in Minot, new administrative offices in Dickinson, and a new headquarters addition at our Central Grasslands Center in Streeter. In addition, on Monday of this week, Alien Technology held a grand opening of their research and manufacturing facility at the Tech Park.

You cannot describe the past 12 months without celebrating the accomplishments of Bison Athletics. On August 31, we accepted an invitation to join the Mid-Continent Conference, completing our journey to Division I. On the fields of competition, we introduced ourselves to our new colleagues in NCAA Division I in a series of nationally celebrated victories starting in Missoula, then Madison and then Muncie. Now, we look ahead to competition in Minneapolis.

Earlier, we talked about our record student enrollment and how many people we actually impact, but that tells only part of the story of our educational service to North Dakota. Through extension and outreach activities, we provided opportunities for learning to more than 550,000 residents across the state last year. In addition, we have a new wheat variety, Glenn, which promises to be another major step forward in the battle against scab.

In its 100th year, the North Dakota Forest Service continues to fulfill its statewide mission and also faced the task of fighting fires in a dry, hot summer.

Our Rural Leadership North Dakota program is drawing statewide appreciation, as is the Eat Smart. Play Hard. Together campaign, which is a collaboration among NDSU Extension, Bison Athletics and others to teach young people about healthy eating choices.

Over the past seven years, the state of North Dakota has invested roughly \$61 million in additional general fund resources to support the growth of this university. NDSU, in turn, has leveraged those state resources by securing more than \$483 million from other sources, such as research grants and donations. If added state tax revenues are considered, the net cost to the state of supporting NDSU's growth is \$33.6 million, or about half of the \$61 million expenditure -- without including the more than \$2 billion total economic benefit to the state.

Clearly, the impact of our accomplishments demonstrates how North Dakota State University is moving forward with tremendous momentum.

What does the future hold? I believe, we will continue to see the rewards of our decisions, and we will continue to face new opportunities. With each of these opportunities, we will show our vision, our leadership and our willingness to assume new challenges.

In the coming year, we look forward to the opening of the one-stop shop for student services, which in one central location will provide access to student service transactions. It will be located in the Memorial Union and will serve as a catalyst for providing higher levels of services to our students.

In the coming year, we will continue to address the dangers of underage and binge drinking. The Office of Orientation and Student Success recently launched a new Web site to educate students about the consequences of high-risk drinking. We are engaged in a research partnership with the University of Washington and the National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism to test promising interventions. The issue of high-risk drinking among our students is personal to me, both as a parent and as the president of this university. I appeal to you to take this issue seriously. We are all invested in seeing our students reach their full potential.

In the coming year, we will build on the Strategic Plan for Diversity developed by the Diversity Council. It is an initiative to enhance the diversity of our campus community and create a welcoming environment. This year, the work shifts to a significant degree from the council to the departmental level. In order to make real change, departments must accept responsibility for the efforts they make in response to the Strategic Plan. To that end, we expect that departments will report their efforts in divisional annual reports. Such reporting will give us a chance to identify and share promising practices and demonstrate how our actions follow our intentions. We cannot be a great national land-grant university unless everyone is a part of our future.

In the coming year, we will participate in the NCAA certification process, a program where Division I universities conduct a self-analysis similar to the process we used for North Central Association accreditation.

In the coming year, we will see how the generosity of our alumni and friends to the Momentum campaign is making a difference for the students of this university. From these funds, needed scholarships are being disbursed, faculty enhancements made, library collections have been strengthened and new buildings added.

Our Momentum campaign has been very successful. This success has spawned an opportunity that will not only have a profound impact on the future of NDSU, but on downtown Fargo, as well.

In the coming year, we will take another step in the development of NDSU Downtown. Two years ago, we turned the Northern School Supply Building into an exciting center for architecture, landscape architecture and visual arts students. Those efforts have received national recognition.

Today, we will formally announce the continuing development of NDSU Downtown with the addition of the Pioneer Mutual Building and the Lincoln National Life Building.

When we began the Momentum Campaign, we knew that one of the most critical needs facing the university was the inadequacy of facilities for the College of Business. Our campaign included a vision for a new building on the campus' west side. However, with the opportunity of the Pioneer Mutual Building, we can now further expand our downtown Fargo presence. Later this morning, we will unveil plans to expand the Pioneer Mutual Building into classrooms and offices for the College of Business and the Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics, creating a new synergism for economic development. In addition, we are working to secure funding to facilitate the renovation of the Lincoln National Life Building, providing studio space for the remaining portions of the architecture and landscape architecture department.

Additional phases in the development of these properties will continue as contributions are secured for exterior grounds work at both locations. Our decision to move forward with this expansion came after widespread discussions led us to the conclusion that NDSU Downtown was the better choice because it offered more space with better amenities than construction on the west side of campus, and it allowed our business and agribusiness students to be in the heart of real world business activity.

Just as the first building of NDSU Downtown provided new excitement for a historic downtown location, so, too, will these additions to North Dakota State University's campus. I want to thank the members of the Development Foundation and our donors for seeing this opportunity and acting on behalf of our students now and into the future. We will have further details on our vision at a news conference immediately following this presentation.

In closing, NDSU has been offered many opportunities and challenges. We seized those challenges and transformed a university and a state. Clearly, our university has set a new standard for North Dakota and we are now recognized nationally as a model land-grant university. This was clearly stated in the Higher Learning Commission report where they said we were: "Creating a new level of institutional excellence through heightened camaraderie, inspiration, enthusiasm, morale, pride, unity and commitment among faculty, staff, students, alumni and other friends and constituent groups ..."

We have accepted great challenges and have produced extraordinary results. This alone would be a great legacy, but we are not done! There is more to do. Together, we will meet those new challenges. Thank you for being a part of this great land-grant university's future.