

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudina

On several occasions during their recent visit, the accreditation review team told me how fortunate Central is to have such a wise, experienced and knowledgeable group of people serving as trustees. They also complimented the board for their depth of understanding of the university's operations and for their commitment to our mission and values.

I was not surprised to receive those comments. My participation in national organizations affords me opportunities to discuss governance with other university presidents. Not one has reported a Board that compares to that which we enjoy at Central. Ron Erickson, thank you for the role you play in leading our other outstanding Trustees.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

State of the University



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I know that all of our Trustees endorse one of Ron's favorite maxims. "Central can do hard things." We have, year after year, and in the face of very difficult challenges. 2018 was no exception.

The following is but a sampling of our accomplishments in 2018—and I emphasize this is but a sample of the many ways in which we have improved the university.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Last quarter, the Senate approve a radically revised general education program derived from a tabula-rasa consideration of the knowledge and skills all students need to live enlightened, productive, responsible lives.

Their effort began two years ago and sought input from the entire academic community. As differences in perspective surfaced, I was always confident our faculty's unwavering commitment to student achievement would produce a successful outcome.

I extend my congratulation and appreciation to our faculty. A special thanks goes to the three senate chairs who managed this project—Dr. Amy Claridge, Dr. Cody Stoddard and Dr. Sathy Rajendran.

THE BACCALAUREATE EXPERIENCE

For the past two years, Provost Katherine Frank has guided several work groups comprised of faculty, staff, and students as they analyzed, described, and offered strategies for refining the core undergraduate experience that makes Central distinctive. It has led to such initiatives as the launch of a professional development center for faculty focused on continuous improvement of teaching and learning,

planning for a new Transfer and Transition Center to assist students in a seamless transition in and through their undergraduate studies, and will help inform the revision of our current advising model on campus. It will continue to serve as a guidepost for our outreach to students and for our use of new instructional modalities and learning sites.

Provost Frank recently showed me a word map generated through campus conversations suggestive of those distinctive qualities. I agree with this initial report, which identifies our core commitments to access, inclusivity, quality, engagement, and innovation. That is what we do better than anyone else.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

FACILITIES

We are nearing the conclusion of a decade-long plan to construct state-of-the-art science, technology, engineering, and math facilities at Central. With my fingers crossed, I believe that the state legislature will be able to provide the promised second half of the funding needed to construct a new health sciences building this summer.

No other university in the State, and I believe few in the country, has achieved such an ambitious program of construction.

There are many reasons for our successes. Our government relations staff, headed by Vice President Linda Schactler and aided by Steve Dupont, and Antonio Sanchez have been critical.

So has the Facilities and Maintenance staff who design, build, and maintain our facilities. Over the years, we have learned to build less expensively than other institutions—largely because our facilities have a clear purpose and embody the core values that make Central successful.

With the science neighborhood nearing completion, Vice President Andreas Bohman is underway in developing a plan for the coming decade.

STUDENT SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The student service center in Bouillon Hall is another example of our commitment to student achievement and innovation. What we have designed will serve our students for years to come.

Student services is not, however, only about space. Last month I received a call from Michigan State University asking for advice. They were in initial phases of their response to the growing need to address student wellness, and they were reaching out because Central is a recognized leader in this subject.

I did what I could to help and then recommended they talk to our staff, who understands the issues in far more detail than I. I must admit that it was satisfying to receive that call—a request for advice that more typically flows in the opposite

direction. Provost Frank, Dr. Hyatt, thank you for leadership and for allowing me that small pleasure.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

I was also proud to have a vice president of research from a large, doctoral-granting institution marvel at the quality of student-faculty research and creative expression that exists at Central. He also admitted that his institution could not involve so many students, even with the assistance of doctoral candidates.

I hope we never take our commitment to inquiry and creative expression for granted. What we are doing is a national model and is another indication of the distinctiveness of Central.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Our Operations Division is doing a masterful job of improving our information and administrative systems. Central is a model for others within our state and across the nation. I hear that from my colleagues in the region and from consultants who come here to work on our systems.

A demonstration of how those systems contribute to student support is found in CAPS+, our innovative student degree-planning tool. Last week, we received a copyright for that software, which will allow Central to commercialize the product.

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT PLAN

After a year-long, campus-wide effort, we have a strategic enrollment plan that I anticipate will be endorsed by our trustees next month. Well underway is the corresponding modernization of our communication programs and our tracking of new student interest and applications.

In the past, we followed a process used by most public universities. Like them, we predicted enrollment based on high school graduation rates, demographic trends, and historical market shares. All we needed to do was the arithmetic. It was easy and safe, but it also allowed outside factors to determine our expectations.

That is unacceptable, so I asked Vice President Sharon O'Hare for an "out-of-the-box" idea that would allow us to take more control over our planning—planning that is needed to allow us to define the student population we wanted.

Working with a team drawn from across the university, she did just that—and turned the old model on its head. In the future, we will begin planning by identifying our ideal student profile. We will then recruit and retain the students best suited for the learning environment we offer.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

This new way of thinking is causing us to be more intentional about how we communicate with prospective students. We are fortunate to have an experienced person heading our public affairs and marketing efforts. Of course, I am speaking about Vice President Kremiere Jackson. She is organizing her team to support a university-wide commitment to enrollment, and I am very pleased by the progress they are making.

INCLUSIVITY

When the enrollment planning group presented their plan to me, I immediately noted and applauded their inclusion of goals related to diversity.

Inclusivity is found in the ethos of this university, and we have someone who wakes up each morning thinking about how to best manifest that commitment. That person is Vice President Kandee Cleary. She and her team make sure inclusivity is always a top-of-mind subject.

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Over the past five years, Vice President Scott Wade has been building our university advancement program. Our Foundation and Alumni Association are rapidly becoming a significant partner in the success of Central, and last year we passed several important milestones:

- We received two seven-figure gifts to academic units, a first for Central.
- Our College of Arts and Humanities set a new standard by surpassing the million-dollar mark in its annual gifts.
- And, under the leadership of Dr. Dennis Francois, we were able to update our north campus athletic fields using donor support.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

I cannot complete this summary of 2018 without a mention of our new budget and administrative models. We are mid-way through our second year of activity based budgeting and responsibility center management. It is clear that we are still learning and adapting, and that is exactly what we should be doing at this early stage in the transition. To do otherwise would risk adopting a textbook model of implementation that might not work well for Central.

I am pleased with our progress and I compliment Vice President Joel Klucking for his commitment to promoting a new way of thinking about money. Money is usually a difficult topic on university campuses. Yet, we are having these conversations, and we are making progress.

I am particularly pleased with the progress made by our faculty members. Their growing understanding of the models and the vigor in which they are engaging in the governing process gives me confidence that we are succeeding in making the

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

transition. In some ways, the faculty are leading the administrators—and that is not a bad thing.

On Friday, Katherine, Amy, Bernadette, Lidia, and I stood before the NWCCU Commissioners. That meeting gave them a chance to hear from our visitation team leader and to ask us questions about the report.

While they will not issue their decision for several weeks, I can report that the meeting went very well. In fact, the commissioners complimented the university far more than they questioned us. As we left the room, the visitation team leader shared his summary opinion—that Central was an outstanding institution, and that we are on the cusp of greatness.

It was satisfying to hear that comment from the respected head of the external review team. It confirmed what we know to be true, and it filled us with pride—a feeling all of you should share.

WHAT IS NEXT?

That statement suggests a question. Should we be satisfied being an outstanding university?

For me, the answer is NO.

While we should take pride in that accomplishment, we should not be satisfied. What we do is simply too important. Rather, we should use our excellence as a catalyst for improvement in that which we do we do best—offering a robust and rigorous learning environment to individuals—one at a time. We must make all of our students successful—regardless of their background or preparation.

We must welcome them, learn their names, talents, and aspirations, and then go to work figuring out how to help them make their dreams come true. As I recall, Trustee Erickson said it clearly and distinctly: Central has a special ability to enforce rigor while maintaining a warm, welcoming community.

DISTINCTION

We must see that distinctive heritage as our destiny. Student success is the focus and measure of everything we do. Always has been. It is what sets us apart from other schools.

I've worked at many institutions, but only here have I found a place where everyone shares that ideal.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

I see it in every corner of the university.

- I see Andre Dickerson, whose nurturing and powerfully positive leadership teaches students about the fulfillment of public service. He lets students know that he cares, and he lends the confidence to succeed.
- I saw Loran Allen literally risk life and limb to raise the LBGTQ flag over Barge Hall in a 40-mile-an-hour wind. When I told him not to do it, he replied, “Look at the faces of the students. This is important to them.” He put on his safety harness and walked to the top of Barge. Those students will never forget that day, or his effort.
- Jason Berthon-Koch is working to ensure we are all safe, and that we also feel safe. That is especially true for our students—I should say, his students. It is no wonder that our security department was named best in the west.
- Theresa Miller works behind the scenes in our athletic department, setting up for events, washing uniforms, bring out the equipment. But she also knows each student-athlete as a person, and she is there to pat their backs in victory and to dry their tears in defeat. And, she is always there to lend a hand, a smile, or a piece of personal advice.
- Bobby Cummings. What can I say to fully capture a senior faculty member who is a teacher, mentor, friend, and pseudo parent to Central students? There are no limits to the commitment Professor Cummings gives her students. Not her time. Not her personal finances. Not her own career advancement. Not her secrets for life. I admire her for that selfless dedication. And so do hundreds, perhaps thousands of Central graduates.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

BIG IDEA

The big idea is simple: Treat each student as an individual. See the person and not just the student. Commit to the success of that whole person and take his or her failure personally. Ask yourself what you might have done to intervene.

Believe that we can never do enough for our students. Their attainment must be the focus and measure of everything we do. All of us, just like Jason, Theresa, Bobbi, Alan, and Andre. That is the recipe for greatness at central.

ACCESS

Our commitment begins with access. Central has a national reputation for its commitment to access, rigor, and student services. While it is nonsensical to suggest we can reach all potential students, our enrollment planning shows that we can reach more: more at Ellensburg, more at our learning centers, and more online.

RETENTION

Access is only the first step. We must do a better job of helping our students persist to graduation.

The first measure of persistence is how many students make it through their first year and return for a second. Our freshman to sophomore retention rate is about 70 percent—above normal for an access-focused comprehensive university. But, not good enough for Central.

Let's commit today to increasing it by 10 percent over the next five years. This is an ambitious goal, but also an essential one.

Keep in mind the conversion of one percent to 20 individuals. Our goal is help 200 additional freshmen return for their sophomore year.

Persistence is a complicated subject, with many factors that uniquely apply to groups of individuals. We have been researching this issue for the past year, and we have information suggesting what needs to be done. Some changes have already been accomplished.

I'll talk about those that need further attention, and thereby set an action agenda for the coming year.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

AFFORDABILITY

Inability to afford college is a national crisis, and our students are not immune. We are doing well in keeping the cost of an education as low as possible. We cannot rest until no student leaves because she or he cannot pay. Then, we can work to produce debt free graduates as well.

The first step is ensure that we are maximizing our financial aid and waiver programs and to increase the scholarship available to our students. And we need to eliminate road blocks to those assets.

ADVISING

Students, past and present, tell me that we need to improve our system of academic advisement. Rarely do they complain about their advisor; they regularly complain about the system.

So let us have a university-wide commitment to develop a more responsive system of advisement. Let's examine ourselves and learn from best practices. Let's surface long-held assumptions and vested interests. While doing so, we can debate the need

for change and available alternatives. At all times, we keep the core goal in mind—the success of our students.

INCLUSIVITY

Our students, our faculty and our staff will be increasingly diverse in culture, in thought, and in heritage. Let's revel in our differences and welcome the unfamiliar and the new. Let's love the things that make each of us interesting.

We know that diversity and inclusivity are important to student satisfaction and success. They are also critical to our ability to work with one another and to challenge difficult issues, like access, assessment, and retention.

Moving from good to great requires that the individuals who serve students also work in a culture that supports collaboration and trust.

We must respect one another. We should approach challenges and opportunities with open minds and give one another an opportunity to express ideas freely and without fear of retribution.

That rich and collaborative space isn't just nice to have, it is essential for what I am proposing.

You have heard me repeatedly speak to the value of inclusivity. I have publicly defended free speech, argued for providing safety for all, and demanded we treat one another with respect. Those comments were mostly directed toward external challenges to our students and our learning environment.

They apply equally to our working environment. However, individual conversations and workplace surveys assure me that we are not where we must be. That input tells me that some of you are afraid to raise new ideas or to challenge authority.

If we are to continue to improve outcomes for our students, we must change the way we work with one another. We have no choice but to tackle this issue.

I have asked that Kandee Cleary, Krechiere Jackson, and our Human Resource Director, Staci Sleigh-Layman to work with me to address this critical issue.

CONCLUSION

There might have been golden years for higher education. If so, they were before my time. Throughout my career, I have been told that the sky is falling on higher education. But, here we are and the state of this university is better than it ever has been.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino

We are an outstanding university. But, I know we can be better. I believe we have to be better. We owe it to our students and to ourselves.

Will it be difficult? Absolutely.

Can we do it? Absolutely.

How will we do it? We focus on our mission. We set aside previous disappointments, perceived slights, and feelings of insecurity.

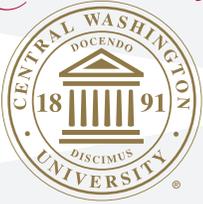
Above all, we must be optimistic. I'll end with the words of Noam Chomsky, who wrote, "Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so."

Let's step up for Central's future.

Thank you for your attention today and for making Central so very successful.

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

*State of the
University*



January 15, 2019

SPEECH

James L. Gaudino