

President's State of the University Address
August 23, 2007

(Welcome)

Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this event, which formally marks the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year. I had hoped I would be giving this address in the Alma Thomas Theater, but as you know, it rained a bit in Georgetown this summer.

Before we begin, I would like to ask everyone to join in a moment of silence in memory of Dr. William Carrington Finch, who passed away June 13. Dr. Finch served as the 11th president of Southwestern from 1949 to 1961, guiding the University through a difficult period of declining enrollment and revenue that followed the immediate post-war boom. He remained a loyal supporter of Southwestern until his death.

Also, Joan Strandtman began working at Southwestern in July 2000 as a biology lab technician. Joan died this summer after a long battle with cancer. Her memorial service is tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. in our chapel.

(Class of 2001)

I always begin my address by including information about our new first-year class, so let me share with you a short profile of the Class of 2011.

This past weekend we welcomed 375 new students. This class was selected out of the second largest applicant pool in Southwestern's history and is the second largest class in Southwestern's history.

Notably, we were able to increase the size of this year's class while still maintaining its quality and diversity. Fifty percent of our first-year students were in the top 10 percent of their high school class, and the average SAT score for incoming students was 1220. I am particularly pleased that we also increased our number of out-of-state students.

I would like to commend our enrollment services staff for meeting some very ambitious goals this year.

Among our incoming students is **Jessica Espinosa**, who will be the first legally blind student to attend Southwestern since Glynn Langston graduated in 1971. Some of you may have read the article on Jessica in the local paper over the summer. She is truly an inspiration, and we are delighted that she selected Southwestern to continue her education.

We also have two students from our Upward Bound Program who will be entering Southwestern this year. **Anabel Aviles** and **Juan Juarez** are both graduates of Jarrell High School. Southwestern recently received a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to continue its Upward Bound Program for another four years.

One hundred seventy-one students from the first-year class will be participating in 13 Living-Learning Communities this fall – an increase of 22 students from last year. This program has now become so popular that we have expanded it to include part of Brown-Cody Residence Hall. Results of the 2006 living-learning communities survey included many, many positive comments; such as, “it exceeded my expectations. I never thought I could have so much fun in a class or get to know so many great people. I have already recommended the program to many prospective students.” Again, I would like to thank all the faculty members who are volunteering their time to participate in this program.

(New Faculty)

We are pleased to welcome five new tenure-track faculty members this fall, although one of them is already a familiar face at Southwestern. **Abby Dings**, formerly a visiting professor, is now a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Spanish.

New to campus are:

- **Paula Desmond**, Assistant Professor of Psychology;
- **Fumiko Futamura**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics;
- **Francis Mathieu**, Assistant Professor of French; and
- **Alison Marr**, Assistant Professor of Mathematics.

We are pleased that **John McCann** has joined us as Assistant Dean for Faculty Development and Sponsored Programs.

Tim O’Neill, Professor of Political Science and holder of the Tower-Hester Chair, has agreed to serve as the campus champion for student fellowships. In this role, Dr. O’Neill will work with faculty advisors, the Center for Academic Success, and the campus community to identify and support students who have the potential to be successful in the pursuit of student fellowships. It is clear that we have many bright and talented students, and I have believed for quite some time that we have missed opportunities to promote their success with fellowships. I am delighted that Dr. O’Neill has agreed to assume this responsibility, and I look forward to seeing the results of his efforts.

I’m also pleased to announce that **Shannon Winnubst** has been appointed to the Carolyn and Fred McManis Chair in Philosophy.

Since Beverly Jones is on leave, **Eric McKinney** will serve as Interim Chaplain this academic year. Eric is a 1972 graduate of SU and former senior minister of First United Methodist Church in Georgetown. He also serves on the University’s Board of Trustees.

We have several new staff members who have joined us, but two in particular I want to mention because they will be working closely with the faculty and students:

- **Judith Sonnenberg**, our new Director of Counseling and Health Services, and
- **Dinorah Martinez-Anderson**, our new Director of Health Services.

Last week, the Provost and I sent a letter to the faculty outlining a process that will allow the campus community to move forward in our recent conversations regarding student and faculty course loads. While our previous campus conversations on these issues have often been contentious, we affirmed in our letter that we believe that when dealing with issues of such importance, we must move beyond our individual differences and perspectives and adhere to the standard of doing what is in the best interest of our students and, therefore, the long-term best interest of the institution.

We further affirmed our belief that moving student course loads to the equivalent of four courses per semester so that they may devote more of their time to engaging their subject matter in a more intense and in-depth manner meets this standard. And, that this standard also is met by reducing faculty teaching load so that they may not only engage further in their scholarly and creative pursuits, but may also devote more time to quality teaching and interactions with students.

We also stated that these changes cannot occur without thoughtful consideration and the development of a clear strategy for moving forward – and we acknowledge that there are faculty members who may see these changes as detrimental to their programs.

Therefore, we felt it was important to bring together a group of leaders from among the faculty and campus administrators for a facilitated and concentrated session designed to

address many of the differences and concerns that have arisen and to set in motion a plan that will allow the University to move forward with these changes.

To this end, we will be forming a committee comprised of:

- the Brown Chairs,
- the University Scholars,
- the faculty representatives on the Academic Affairs Council,
- administrative and committee chair representatives, and
- four faculty members elected from the divisions and Sarofim school.

The committee will meet during the fall semester in a retreat setting with an outside facilitator, to be named at a later date.

It is our expectation that the members of this committee will be able to adequately represent the various curricular and programmatic points of view on these two important issues. It is also our expectation, however, that each of the participants will be willing to take a “university-wide” viewpoint and will work diligently to understand and accommodate the viewpoints of others.

The recommendations of the committee will be reported through the appropriate councils and, ultimately, will be presented to the faculty as a whole. Our goal is to complete this process by the end of the 2007-2008 academic year, if not sooner.

I look forward to working with the faculty as we take this next step in achieving our 2010 strategic plan goal of “fostering a liberal arts institution of the highest rank and quality.”

This fall, I also plan to work with the faculty to redouble our efforts to increase the number of African-American faculty members at Southwestern. Another, initiative of the Strategic Plan for 2010 is to create partnerships with historically black colleges and universities. This year, thanks to the continued generosity of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we will be continuing our efforts to develop student and faculty exchanges with:

- Dillard University,
- Houston-Tillotson University,
- Morehouse College, and
- Rhodes College.

These projects are designed to ultimately enhance the educational experience of all faculty and students at the participating institutions.

(Paideia)

I'm sure you all know what an excellent job **David Gaines** did in his first year as director of the Paideia Program. Thanks to David's efforts, we had a record number of applicants to the program last spring. This year we will have a total of 230 students participating in the program. I also would like to welcome our new Paideia Professors:

- **Daniel Castro**
- **Sergio Costola**
- **Maria Cuevas**
- **Mary Grace Neville**
- **Elisabeth Piedmont Marton**
- **Carl Robertson**
- **Kim Smith**

(Campaign Update)

I'd like to give a brief update on *Thinking Ahead: The Southwestern Campaign*, which we publicly launched in the spring of 2006. Our campaign total is now over \$71 million – an increase of more than \$15 million from this time a year ago. Major gifts in the past year included a \$6 million gift from the Cullen Trust for Higher Education, which will be used to renovate the Cullen Building.

Funds from the Cullen Trust also will be used to build a new Admission Center adjacent to the Cullen Building. We expect to break ground at the end of this year.

Generous support of alumni, parents, and friends affords the university the opportunity to engage minds and transform lives through enriching experiences inside and outside the classroom.

As members of the campus community, your annual participation does make a difference as it symbolizes to others your commitment and plays an important role in Southwestern's ability to continue providing its students with an exemplary liberal arts education that promotes a passion for lifelong learning and fosters a community whose values and actions encourage contributions toward the well being of humanity.

Later this week, Christine Bowman and Don Parks, campus campaign co-chairs, will be asking for our support. In November, as part of national Philanthropy Day, all campus donors will be invited to a special event.

We, as a campus community, will succeed in accomplishing our strategic goals through this comprehensive campaign and the result will be a greatly enhanced learning experience for our students.

(Alumni)

Joe Seeber, class of 1963, continues to do extraordinary work as president of the Association of Southwestern University Alumni. Joe started his President's Tour on July 24, 2006. Since then, he has made 32 trips to cities where alumni are concentrated and met with 449 alumni. He still has four more visits to go (Austin, Waco, Georgetown, and Dallas) before he concludes his tour this fall.

As a result of Joe's efforts, we now have active alumni chapters in eight cities. He will be reporting on his work at the October faculty meeting. It is not insignificant that he paid for all of these visits out of his own resources.

(Fine Arts Renovation)

As I mentioned earlier, the renovation and expansion of the Alma Thomas Theater was delayed due to all the rain earlier this summer. It will probably be mid-semester before we are able to move into the Alma Thomas Theater. I would like to thank **Dean Paul Gaffney** and all of the faculty and staff of the Sarofim School of Fine Arts for the patience they have shown in dealing with this situation.

This year, we will present our fourth President's Philanthropy Award to Faye Sarofim in recognition of his many contributions to our School of Fine Arts.

(Student Live Initiatives)

We also are excited about this fall's opening of our new student apartment complex, which will be named the Dorothy Manning Lord Residential Center. One of the buildings in the complex will be reserved for students who want to live in a "Civic Engagement/Green Hall." These students will work together to build a community dedicated to sustainable living.

Ansa Copeland, who many of you know from her work on the Peace Conference last year, will be staying on at Southwestern this year as an AmeriCorps volunteer, in the Office of Civic Engagement, and part of her time will be spent serving as an advisor and mentor to students in this new "Civic Engagement/Green Hall."

Jason Reitz from SIRA – who has been a tremendous inspiration to many of our students on environmental issues – will serve as the resident associate for the hall.

We hope this hall will become a center for all students interested in these issues – not just the ones who live there.

Speaking of centers, I want to remind everyone that our Academic Services offices are now operating under a new name – the Center for Academic Success. The change in name reflects the staff's desire to be a welcoming, approachable place where students can find enrichment, resources, and advocacy on their way to academic success. We look forward to the continued work of the staff in the Center for Academic Success as they support our students in all their academic pursuits.

(Athletics)

While we are on the subject of student life, I'd like to mention our athletic program.

At the end of last semester, our women's golf team took fourth place overall at the NCAA Division III National Championship. This was the first time a Southwestern team has brought home a trophy from an NCAA Championship in any sport.

Southwestern also was one of only seven institutions that were recently awarded a Strategic Alliance Matching Grant from NCAA Division III. We will use this grant to help us start a new women's softball program, and we plan to field our first varsity team in the spring of 2009. **Angela Froboese** joined our staff this month as our new head softball coach.

(Talloires Declaration)

You are probably aware that last spring I signed the Talloires Declaration, a treaty that formally commits us to a more sustainable, or "green" way of living.

This fall I will be appointing a committee comprised of faculty, staff members, and students who will work together to develop a plan for implementing Talloires principles at Southwestern. I want Southwestern to be as green as any college in this area. Already, we are working to make sure that the two new buildings we break ground for in the coming year – the Center for Lifelong Learning and the new Admission Center – are built using guidelines developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

These guidelines will enable us to receive LEED certification on the buildings. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

In the meantime, we also are making sure that our existing buildings are easily accessible to all members of our campus community. In response to requests from faculty and students, we have now completed installing automated doors on the Library, Mood-Bridwell, and the Cullen Building.

(Integrated Marketing Initiative)

This coming year we will be continuing our integrated marketing initiative based on last year's marketing research effort.

As you know, our research with alumni and prospective students defined Southwestern as "Engaging Minds, Transforming Lives." Over the summer, we developed several design treatments that can be used to incorporate our brand into our printed and electronic communications.

One of the major recommendations to come out of our integrated marketing initiative was a redesign of our Web site. Obviously, this is not an easy task, and we have decided to hire an outside vendor to help us with it. Last year, I appointed a committee which met weekly for several months to develop proposals that could be sent to prospective web firms. We hope to have a firm selected next month, and you should see a new look on our Web site by this time next year.

I would like to thank all those who served on the committee to put together this RFP.

(New Initiatives)

We do have one new feature that is ready for this academic year.

This is a new campus calendar, which will be accessible through the home page. This calendar will contain all events on campus that are open to the entire Southwestern community or events the community needs to know are occurring. There have been many requests from faculty and staff for a tool such as this, and I hope everyone will take advantage of it and use it. Information will be forthcoming soon on how you can post events from your area to this calendar.

(Upcoming Events)

We have many exciting events coming up this year, including the Writer's Voice lecture, which will feature Amy Tan. This event will be held October 23.

Jesse Purdy is coordinating Southwestern's 30th Brown Symposium, which will be held April 3 - 4. The symposium will focus on the self-world of animals, and speakers will include:

- Novelist and poet, **Diane Ackerman**;
- Behavioral neuroscientist, **Michael Gazzaniga**;
- Artificial intelligence expert, **David Fogel**; and
- Marine mammal expert, **Christopher Clark**.

(Recognition of Service and Leadership)

As we do at this event each year, I would now like to recognize some of your colleagues for their service and leadership.

(Staff & Faculty Retirements)

First, I would like to recognize four staff members who will be retiring this year. Will each of you stand when I call your name and remain standing?

- **Kathy Buchhorn**, staff secretary, will be retiring next March. Kathy has been with Southwestern since 1982.
- **Vic Mahagan**, campus police officer, will be retiring at the end of December. Vic has been with Southwestern since 1984.
- **Dianne Sprock**, program assistant to the Provost, will be retiring at the end of December. Dianne has been with Southwestern since 1990.
- **John Torrez**, painter in Physical Plant, will also be retiring at the end of December. John has been with Southwestern since 1990.

Thank you for your service to Southwestern.

We have one faculty member who will be retiring next spring. **Dan Hilliard** is the William Carrington Finch Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. He has been a member of our faculty since 1974. Dan served as acting chair of the Department of Sociology several times, and formally chaired the department from 1998 to 2002.

Dan also served as the first Senior Faculty Representative of the Brown College of Arts & Sciences, is a Paideia Professor, and is chair of the committee currently examining faculty teaching loads. Dan, would you please stand so we can recognize you?

(Mundy Awards)

Finally, as we do at this event each year, I would like to announce this year's recipients of the **Joe S. Mundy Exemplary Service Award**, which was created in 2002 as a

memorial to the leadership of alumnus and Trustee Joe Mundy. This award honors faculty and staff members who have demonstrated exemplary service to Southwestern.

Would **Jeanne Calvin** please come forward?

Jeanne has worked in Human Resources for nine years and was recently promoted to benefits coordinator and human resources generalist. Jeanne's cheerful and helpful demeanor is so important, since she is often the first voice and face encountered by prospective employees. One of her co-workers says, "She has an unfailing spirit of service to this community and she is an inspiration to us all. I regularly receive high praises from members of the Southwestern community about her consistent care and concern for them." If Jeanne has a task to do, she gets it done, on time, which often means her working late into the night or coming in on weekends. "She exemplifies the positive attitude that this University stands for," another nominator said.

Like Joe Mundy, Jeanne is modest about her professional efforts, she is quick to give others credit, and she is gracious to and respectful of all persons. Jeanne, we value your commitment to Southwestern, and I'm pleased to recognize you with the Joe S. Mundy Award.

Would **Elizabeth Green Musselman** please come forward?

Elizabeth's nominator commented, "She's done an outstanding job mentoring the Feminist Studies students as well as being a mentor to new faculty.

Along with all the work's she's done helping new faculty and our students, Elizabeth also runs the Jesse Daniel Ames lecture series, the family mentor program and the Feminist Studies Affiliates group; and, of course, she teaches her own classes and is an active member of the History Department as well as chair of Feminist Studies. She goes above and beyond her job every day and makes SU a better university."

Would **Bob Radford** please come forward?

Bob has called Southwestern his second home since 1979, when he started working in Administrative Computing as a Computer Operator/Programmer. Today, Bob is coordinator of telecommunications, and as one student commented in a recent ITS customer survey: "Bob Radford is the heart and soul of ITS."

Bob's loyalties to Southwestern are evident from the moment you meet him. He comes to work each day ready to troubleshoot problems and make someone smile with one of his stories. But what matters most to Bob is the person at the other end of the cable. As his nominator said, "Every individual and every issue is a priority to him and there is never a need to ask him for help more than once." Bob also can be found cheering

students to victory at basketball or baseball games, serving up breakfast to students during finals, volunteering at a campus event, or coming in on nights and weekends when there is a problem that needs his expertise. Bob truly represents dedication to service and community.

While our fourth recipient, Norma Gaines, is not here today - she and David are taking their children to college - I would like to read what was written about her service to Southwestern.

Norma has worked at Southwestern for 26 years. Her nominator particularly admired Norma's service on the committee that was charged with taking the proposals elicited for the 2010 Strategic Plan and examining their opportunities, costs and benefits. "Norma helps us to be what we aspire to be – open, generous in our responses to others, confident in our own values and views," noting that Joe Mundy shared many of these same qualities. Norma's trailblazing work and leadership on the Staff Affairs Council also continues to make Southwestern a better place for everyone. Norma was presented her award last week.

The names of these four individuals have been added to the plaque with the names of all those who previously have received the Mundy Award that is located in the Bishops Lounge in the McCombs Center.

(Closing Remarks)

Finally this afternoon, I would like to speak briefly about an issue that you may have read about over the summer. As you may know, *U.S. News & World Report* released its annual college rankings last week.

I am pleased that once again we are the top-ranked liberal arts college in Texas and the *Princeton Review* named Southwestern's Career Services Department #7 among all colleges and universities in the nation.

However, in consultation with our senior staff, I decided not to participate in the reputational portion of the *U.S. News* survey this year. Like many of my colleagues at other liberal arts colleges, I feel that this portion of the survey is extremely problematic, because it asks presidents to rank colleges they may have little real information about. As I have said before, I much prefer the recognition we receive from guidebooks such as Loren Pope's *Colleges that Change Lives*.

I am glad that the growing controversy over *U.S. News & World Report* has prompted a serious national dialogue about college rankings and is forcing colleges to come up with new ways to compare themselves.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming year as we continue to celebrate Southwestern University - an institution Engaging Minds and Transforming Lives.