

**THE BIG HERE AND LONG NOW:  
People, Possibilities and Purpose**  
August 29, 2007

Good morning! Welcome to University Fall Conference and the opening of the 2007-2008 academic year.

Summer has ended! I hope and trust that it has been a good season for each of you, and that it has included time for rest and renewal, as well as precious time with those you care for and love.

The modern miracles of daily e-mail and overnight FedEx delivery made it possible for MaryAnn and me to be away from campus for a more extended time this summer, the first such time in three years. The days at our Minnesota lake home, some biking and travel, as well as reading and reflection – all built around daily time on the computer – were a great gift. So we are excited and ready to begin this very promising school year.

In these opening days, we look forward to greeting all of you returning with us. And we especially look forward to welcoming the new faculty and staff joining us for their first Fall Conference today. I have very much enjoyed meeting many of you during the interview and orientation process, and all of us now look forward to claiming you as colleagues and friends. Would all of you please stand and be recognized. Please join me in welcoming our new faculty, administrators and staff.

I would also like to introduce four new members of our administrative and faculty leadership team:

Steve Titus joined us in June as vice president for development and university relations. Steve holds a Ph.D. in higher education and strategic leadership from the University of Virginia and earned his J.D. at Marquette University. He comes to PLU following five years of service as president of Midland Lutheran College in Nebraska. He brings a

wealth of knowledge in the areas of leadership and development and a deep commitment to the mission of Lutheran Higher Education. Steve.

Our new dean of the School of Education and Movement Studies is John Lee. John holds a Ph.D from the University of Illinois-Chicago and brings to PLU a wealth of experience as a consultant and educator, most recently at the University of Maryland – Baltimore. John is also an entrepreneur and has great experience in building partnerships, qualities which are evident in the major state grant he has already secured to improve teacher quality in Tacoma schools. John.

Bill Frame returns to PLU as interim dean of the School of Business. Many of you remember Bill because in 1993, he brought his extensive academic and business credentials to the position of vice president for finance and operations here at PLU. He left us in 1997, and in 2006 retired after completing a stellar nine-year tenure as president of Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Bill.

Today our prayers are with our friend, colleague and Dean of Humanities Doug Oakman and his family. Doug is battling cancer and is on medical leave for the fall semester. Filling in for Doug as acting dean of humanities is Associate Professor of English Jim Albrecht. Jim.

Finally, I want to extend special welcome to the emeriti and retired members of the faculty and staff, as well as special friends of the university, who have joined us today. We who serve PLU in this new year stand on the shoulders of your achievements, we give thanks for your support, and it is both important and encouraging to have you with us this morning. Please stand.

When I arrived in Olson Auditorium this morning I was struck by the incredibly high level of energy, optimism and good cheer that all of you bring to this day. And while that is always true at the opening fall conference, this year seems to have something special about it. That something special is a sense of momentum and energy, it is the result of

our significant achievements in recent years, and it positions us on the threshold of another round of accomplishments as we look ahead.

**Yes, my friends and colleagues, there are very good reasons for our confidence and hopefulness. They make it my honor and privilege to report to you that the state of the university is sound and vibrant, and the future is bright as we enter the 2007-2008 academic year, the 118<sup>th</sup> year in the life of Pacific Lutheran University.**

It is very good to be with all of you.

The title of my address today is “The Big Here and Long Now.” It was inspired by an essay written by the English electronic musician, music theorist and record producer Brian Eno. In the essay he jolts us into thinking in new ways about our sense of place and our sense of time.

For Eno, “The Big Here” is the notion that we cannot afford to be smugly narrow, conventional and indifferent to or isolated from broad cultural and aesthetic values. Instead we must extend our vision to see ourselves in the context of the ever wider, interrelated human community. We cannot, he says, “lock a door behind us and pretend the rest of the world is just ‘outside.’”

At PLU we would call this being globally focused.

Eno then suggests that such a stretch in the understanding of our spatial circumstances might well be paralleled in a new attitude toward time. He challenges us to recognize that “now” is never just a moment in time. His “Long Now” is the recognition that the moment we are in always grows out of the past and is inevitably a seed for the future.

Eno encourages us to be thinking about the very long-term future of society, to think about the coming generations, and to think beyond artificial temporal barriers such as

the Millennium. Recognizing that we are part of and responsible for sustaining the beautiful continuum of life, he says, “If we want to contribute to some sort of tenable future, we have to reach a frame of mind where it comes to seem unacceptable – gauche, uncivilized – to act in disregard of our decedents.”

At PLU we would understand this perspective as an inherent quality of life informed by a sense of vocation and calling.

“The Big Here and Long Now,” it turns out, is another way of attempting to capture and give expression to the mission and the driving vision of Pacific Lutheran University. As such, it provides a useful metaphor for thinking about the state of the university and its future.

Today I have organized my report to you around a sub-title: People, Possibilities and Purpose.

- So I will begin with the successes of some of the very talented “people” we count as colleagues. During the past year, they helped lift the university to new levels of achievement.
- I will then reflect on the “possibilities” we have before us this year to build on those accomplishments.
- And finally, I will share with you my deeply held belief that all of our successes have arisen and will arise from our fundamental clarity about our mission, vision and “purpose.” So my full title:

“The Big Here and Long Now: People, Possibilities and Purpose”

## **PEOPLE**

First the people. For the last 15 years in this address it has been my practice to review achievements that have marked and flavored the year just past. This year is no exception, but my approach is a bit different as I have chosen to recognize and hold up specific individuals and groups who have done truly outstanding work. Those who have led us all by their example.

There is, of course, a risk in doing so as many deserving people will no doubt go unmentioned. So before I get to specifics, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your dedication, professionalism and good spirit over the past year. You are the energy and the architects of all that is PLU.

The result of your collective good work is clear. As we enter this new year, the mood and morale on campus is high, enrollment is strong, teaching and learning flourish, our focus on academic excellence is unwavering, our schoolhouse is being renewed, our budget is balanced, and our missional call to serve the world on God's behalf is being lived out by Lutes in our community and around the globe.

All of this can be ultimately traced back to of you in this room. So as we begin again, please know that your talent and dedication do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Thank you for all that you do for Pacific Lutheran University and our students.

### **Where Do We Eat?**

My story of the year now past begins with Erin McGinnis and the staff of Dining and Culinary Services. When the decision was made to rebuild the University Center, it became clear that this project could not be completed over the summer alone. We faced the challenge of feeding our campus from March to September – including some 1700 meal-plan students – without a kitchen and without a dining room.

So, we gave the problem to Erin and her staff who promptly went to work and reopened the outdated Columbia Center dining room, redid the Bistro menu, opened the Old Main Grill on Garfield street (with wonderful cheeseburgers), and created special events such as Sunday night residence hall meals and dining coupons to be used at community restaurants. Miraculously, the student body was fed with nary a complaint.

Now Erin and her team are opening an entirely new facility with a new server, featuring fresh food cooked right in front of students, with many, many new recipes, new staff and a new meal plan. At the same time, they are incorporating a new focus on health, wellness and sustainability. It is a simply incredible story.

### **From Goats to Garfield**

The story of the past year continues with the work of David Kohler and the staff of facilities management. Not only does this dedicated group tend our campus grounds and care for our buildings (and they have never looked better), they also plan and guide many of the capital improvement projects that fill the summer schedule.

And then there are the very special projects. This summer Dave and Sara Paz, grounds manager, added 270 temporary employees to his staff for nine days. While they were never heard to complain, some of them were lazy and tended to lie down on the job. Others butted heads from time to time. But in the end the herd of goats that they rented cleared more than five acres of brush from around the University Center and the hillside that separates upper and lower campus. I am told that these eco-friendly, cost-effective weed-whackers may be invited back again next year.

And then there is the story of John Kaniss and the office of construction management. Over the past 15 months, the university has completed over \$30 million in construction projects on and around campus. These investments include the renovated University Center; the new bookstore; Garfield Book Company at PLU; the major renovation of Pflueger and Tingelstad residence halls; as well as dozens of smaller projects. This spring and summer, John has worked 24/7 managing the Garfield Commons, UC and

Tingelstad projects. (John is one person who did not find time for rest and renewal this summer!)

And none of these projects would have been possible without the exceptional work of those dedicated individuals who did the planning and the unwavering cooperation of those who were displaced along the way. Our hats are off to all of you and especially our planning committee leaders Mark Mulder on Garfield Commons, Laura Majovski on the University Center, and Tom Huelsbeck and Stephanie Serventi on Tingelstad Hall.

### **Critical Road Map**

After three years of intensive work, our first comprehensive campus master plan was completed last year. Sheri Tonn and a steering committee – including representatives from academics, operations, student life, residential life, development, alumni, athletics as well as students – prepared and presented the plan to the Board of Regents who accepted it last October. The next step is to secure county approval of the plan as a kind of road map for campus improvements and facilities additions. Once it is accepted by the county, it will both simplify and expedite the approval and permitting of individual projects. I thank all of you who worked directly on this effort, as well as those who provided key input and perspective.

### **Again, In the Black**

While all of us interact with the business office from time to time, most of their work is invisible to us. What you probably don't know is that under the leadership of Sheri Tonn and Associate Vice President Bob Riley the business office staff is facing an enormous challenge in adjusting to and successfully complying with an increasing maze of government regulations and auditing standards. I salute them for their dedication and excellence.

More evident is that the business office delivered another clean audit for the past fiscal year and brought us great news of significant financial progress for the university. Once

again our operating budget for 2006-2007 was solidly in the black and the university's total net assets increased from \$128 million to \$141 million, an increase of more than 10 percent. Our endowment investments performed well and yielded a 12.4 percent increase in our portfolio last year, so our endowment now stands at \$69.2 million.

### **Stepping Up**

Our development and university relations division, under leadership of interim Vice President Greg Brewis, had a very productive year. Over \$8 million in gifts were received through our development program. In addition, university communications working with Information and Technology Services made significant strides in enhancing our Web-based communication platform. While KPLU, itself in the midst of leadership change, continued to rank near the very top of all NPR stations around the country. Congregation and alumni relations both continued to build enduring relationships with our most important constituents.

I also want to hold up the work of every individual in the division. They have lived through three long years of leadership transition – and through it all you have stepped up, accepted new roles and responsibilities and the results have been outstanding. Now we welcome Steve Titus as our new vice president and we look forward to a new comprehensive development campaign.

### **Congratulate and Then Celebrate**

The admission and financial aid offices, as well as student services, have been led effectively and well for the past three years by Laura Majovski and Karl Stumo. This year Laura is focusing on her role as Vice President for Student Life and Karl Stumo has moved up to vice president for admission and enrollment services.

Today we should all take time to congratulate Laura, Karl and their staff for a very successful year recruiting new students. And when you do, I know that they will rightly deflect some of that praise to you, the faculty and staff who contribute in uncounted

ways to building and maintaining the important personal relationships that draw students to the PLU community.

So let's celebrate together as we prepare to welcome the largest class of first-year students in the history of the university, as of today the total stand at 725. In addition, our goals of enrolling more males and more Lutheran students have been met, and the academic profile of the entering class has improved slightly even though the class is over 10 percent larger.

In addition, I am very pleased to report that this is the most ethnically diverse class of new students in the University's history. This fall, students of color will comprise 19.3% of new freshmen and 20.7% of new transfers. For this accomplishment we recognize Melannie Cunningham, our associate director and coordinator of multicultural recruitment, her colleagues on the admission staff and all of you who reach out to diverse populations of prospective students.

In recent years the marketplace for transfer student recruitment has been more challenging. However, Joelle Pretty, director of transfer recruitment, and her colleagues across the campus have not been deterred and we expect to enroll approximately 240 new transfer students, down just slightly from last year.

And finally, financial aid awards, a critical recruiting component, were out earlier than ever and student services follow up with students and their families was prompt and effective. So we recognize Kay Soltis and Sue Drake and their staff members for their consummate professionalism and student focus.

### **A Shared Mission**

Transformational leadership is rare in a university setting where established traditions and a healthy skepticism often conspire to inhibit innovation. It is therefore with particular pride that I note the significant changes that have been made in recent years in student life programming at PLU.

Many leaders across the campus have built on the work of predecessors to strengthen and expand the PLU model of cocurricular life and to assure that the mission of student programming is at one with PLU's educational mission. Our thanks go to Paul Menzel, Steve Woolworth, Roberta Brown, Laura Majovski, and Eva Johnson for their leadership on programs such as Wild Hope, First-Year Experience, the Honors Program and Leadership Development.

The results have been stunning. Again last year, we reported significant improvements in the results of the national survey on student satisfaction. After years of hard work across campus we have reached marks above the national average in 10 of 12 dimensions of student experience. This success can be attributed to the student life division and to all of you on the faculty and on the staff who work with such dedication on behalf of our students.

It is another remarkable accomplishment.

### **Sustainable Living**

Our campus-wide commitment to sustainable living grew substantially last year thanks to the leadership of Rose McKenney, Jill Whitman, and our Sustainability Committee, the student environmental group GREAN, and staff across the campus. Here are a few of our accomplishments:

- Dining and Culinary Services participated in a pilot composting program for kitchen food waste to reduce landfill waste.
- GREAN sponsored the "All Hall Energy Challenge," pitting residence halls against one another to reduce their electricity consumption during March.

- Dave Kohler and Facilities Management’s “Can the Can” campaign became a nationally recognized effort to boost the university’s recycling rate. More than half of our faculty and staff no longer have trash cans and instead have recycling on their minds.
- And finally, last year PLU signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment that pledges universities to develop a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, become carbon neutral, and continue to integrate sustainability into the curriculum.

### **Pathways to Distinction**

Our long-range plan *PLU 2010: The Next Level of Distinction* sets out a series of recommendations that open new possibilities and serves as a guide for the future. Among the most important are those related to building a more distinctive academic program, as well as celebrating more intentionally our academic achievements.

And so last year was another year for progress:

- “World Conversations: Voices from Around the Globe” in February was a two-day symposium organized by Neal Sobania and the staff of the Wang Center. It featured academic presentations and roundtable discussions by students and faculty recently returned from J-Term study away and included special guests from Trinidad and Tobago. It was also an occasion to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Wang Center and award the 2007 Peace Builder Award to Peter and Grace Wang.
- The symposium also featured an address by former Vice President Walter Mondale. He spoke warmly about PLU’s focus on lives of service and said, “I salute your realization that we have to learn to be part of this world in which we live.” Fritz Mondale clearly understands Brian Eno’s “Big Here.”

- The annual Natural Sciences Academic Festival last spring again showcased the research and capstone accomplishments of our students. The fair is the pride of Angie Alexander and her colleagues who enjoy celebrating student accomplishments in fields from microbiology, to geology, to environmental sciences.
- Paul Menzel, Andrea Shea and the Wild Hope team again organized the three-day conference, “Meant to Live,” pushing students to consider questions of value and meaning in order to claim their life’s purpose. The conference included an address by bestselling author Anne Lamott, a discussion with the Extreme Kindness Crew and a Josh Ritter concert.
- A Visiting Writer series was organized Jason Skipper and Rick Barot. This well attended series exposed students to lives of vocation through the eyes of accomplished writers.

These are only four examples of what was a year full of academic lectures and festivals, capstone presentations, special recognition events, student engagement in activities such as the January Explore Retreat, and countless faculty presentation and seminars – all evidence of our distinctive academic program and our determined focus on celebrating these accomplishments.

### **Remarkable Leadership**

During the past year we all benefited from truly remarkable faculty leadership. Faculty Chair Erin McKenna, Vice Chair David Robbins, and key committee chairs such as Duane Swank of rank and tenure, Anna-Leon Guerrero on faculty affairs, and Karen McConnell in educational policies, as well as the other members of the faculty executive committee provided outstanding leadership and service. In my 15 years, I cannot remember a year when faculty governance worked more effectively or efficiently.

Provost Patricia Killen provided outstanding leadership in her first year as provost, and the cooperation between her office and faculty leaders yielded faculty assembly meetings that were exceptionally well organized, efficient and productive. So we have a new honors program, an important organizational realignment in our professional schools and the continued positive and productive conversation of general education reform.

### **Grassroots Progress**

Academic change at PLU has always been a grassroots effort. Some things do not change quickly or easily, and that is not a bad thing! So last year was the third in our comprehensive general education reform process. To date the discussion has been deliberate, thoughtful and careful at every point. And that is very important because, in my judgment, there is not a single conversation that is more important for the future of the university. For their steady work and progress, I salute the leadership of Erin McKenna, and task force members Jon Grahe, Rona Kaufman, Patricia Killen, Richard Louie, Patsy Maloney, Karen McConnell, David Robbins, Pat Roundy, and Karl Stumo who together are going the extra mile to engage this critical undertaking. We look forward to your continuing leadership in the year ahead.

### **Decennial Destiny**

This academic year PLU will conclude our decennial accreditation review process. But much of the hard work has already been done under the leadership of Dave Robbins, Laura Polcyn and Patricia Killen, plus executive committee members Chris Ferguson, Laura Majovski, Kris Plaehn, Sheri Tonn, and Marie Wutzke, as well as office and program leaders across the campus. The report is taking shape and exhibits are being gathered for the accreditation team visit on April 16-18. You will continue to hear more about accreditation as this year unfolds.

## **The Net and More**

Information and Technology Services had another excellent year. Chris Ferguson and his team made significant progress in improving the capacity and reliability of our campus network, supporting the full integration of Morken Center resources, upgrading classrooms, and transitioning to the Sakai learning platform.

## **Honors, Awards and Accomplishments**

But the story of the remarkably talented people we count as colleagues at PLU is not yet complete. For there are powerful examples of individual accomplishment and honors and awards from last year that burnish our reputation and also stand as true points of pride for PLU. Let me give you a few examples.

- K.T. Tang was elected a Fellow of the American Physical Society in recognition of the advances in knowledge he has produced through original research and publication and his innovative contributions in the application of physics to science and technology.
- Wayne Carp has been awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer grant. It's the highest honor offered by the Fulbright program. He will spend spring semester teaching at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. And two senior Fulbright awards went to emeriti faculty: Dave McNabb has left for Latvia to teach business marketing and Gundar King will leave next month to teach in the Riga Aviation School.
- Several faculty members have been invited speakers across the globe. Elizabeth Brusco gave the International Lucy Farrow Lecture at Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden in April. Brenda Ihssen is currently at the University of Leuven in Belgium to deliver a lecture at the International Conference on the Church Fathers and Catholic Social Thought. Bob Erickson

will deliver the Joseph and Rebecca Meyeroff annual lecture at the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., in November.

- Patricia Killen last year received the American Academy of Religion's 2006 Excellence in Teaching award. The award recognizes the importance of teaching by honoring outstanding teachers in religion.
- Excellence at PLU is evident on the playing field as well as in the classroom. This year we salute head coach Geoff Loomis, who with eight seniors from his first recruiting class, led Lute baseball to its first conference title in more than a half-century.
- The Department of Chemistry last year received major National Science Foundation grants totaling \$743,000 and \$181,000 to purchase state-of-art scientific equipment. PLU will have one of the few undergraduate chemistry programs in the country teaching with and giving student researchers access to both a very powerful solid state nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer and an atomic force microscope. Craig Fryhle, Dean Waldow, Myriam Cotten and Neal Yakelis are to be congratulated for this important step forward in chemistry education at PLU.
- The Institute for the International Education of Students awarded Neal Sobania the Lifetime Achievement Award at the institute's conference in October. The highly competitive annual award honors a single individual for distinguished and significant achievement in global education.
- In November, Jill Whitman received the 2006 Bay Hero Award for excellence in environmental education from the Tacoma-based Citizens for a Healthy Bay. Jill was recognized for her service in addressing cleanup, advocacy and restoration work in Commencement Bay, and for her leadership as chair of the Puyallup River Watershed Council.

- The Marriage and Family Therapy Department became PLU's most "awarded" unit when Cheryl Storm was named educator of the year for 2006, and Charles York in 2007. In addition, David Ward received the 2007 Dissertation Award from the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.
- KPLU's Keith Seinfeld is heading off to the Massachusetts Institute for Technology having won the Knight Science Journalism Fellowship for reporters who cover science, technology, medicine or the environment.
- Vickie Vital, supply technician and property book officer for PLU's Army ROTC program, was named this summer as the Cadet's Command's top supply technician in the nation.

So there you have it. A snapshot, a sampling of the outstanding people of this place. You have given us a year of great progress and accomplishment and you have brought honor to our community.

And as we close these reflections on the year past, it is important to remind ourselves that the focus of all we do together is our students: serving them is our shared vocation. They embody our commitment to a BIG HERE and a LONG NOW as they study and prepare to live out their lives of service to others and to the world. You know as well I as I do that there is absolutely no limit to their engagement in the world. Just recently,

- Four graduating seniors and one alumnus received Fulbright scholarships for study overseas this fall, bringing the total number of PLU students to receive the prestigious award to 76. Jessica Hanson and Mike Wauters received study grants. Jamie Stewart, Vanessa Bruce and Lucas Dolge received English teaching assistantship grants. They will travel to Austria, Ecuador, Indonesia, France and South Korea.

- Over spring break, more than 60 students embarked on service-oriented trips to work with social service organizations around the country. Offices organizing “Service Project Runaway” included: Campus Ministry, SIL, University Congregation, the Center for Public Service, the Volunteer Center, ASPLU, Outdoor Rec, the Diversity Center, GREAN, Catholic Campus Ministry, Residential Life and the Wang Center.
- Student organizers of the second annual Relay for Life raised more than \$50,000 for the American Cancer Society with more than 600 students, faculty and staff participating.
- The Society of Professional Journalists recognized a number of PLU media students and student-run media organizations with regional Mark of Excellence Awards last year in broadcast reporting, photography and editorial and feature writing both in print and online.
- Two students in our master of fine arts creative writing program had their work honored by national associations. The American Library Association named Kathleen Flenniken’s first book, “Famous,” as one of three notable books of the year in poetry. Kelli Agodon’s poem, “How Killer Blue Irises Spread,” placed first in the Atlantic Monthly’s national poetry-writing contest for student writers.
- Nursing students Rebecca Miner, Allyce Doody and Jamye Gore won an award from cable television provider Comcast for the year’s best public service announcement. Their spot highlights the key role that hand washing plays in preventing the spread of disease.

Yes, it is a great calling that we share and I hope it excites each of you as we prepare to welcome over 1,000 new students in these next few days. And we can welcome them in confidence knowing that we are ready to offer a life-changing educational adventure.

And we know something else – we know that PLU is a place on the move, a place that is changing and becoming stronger, a place ever clearer and more intentional about its mission, and, hence, more effective in delivering our program. And your dedication and achievements over the past year bespeak your commitment to that vision. Your actions give meaning to our claim that PLU is both an aspiring and inspiring place and, therefore, a place of possibility, new possibilities, great possibilities, for the university and our students.

## **POSSIBILITIES**

Each summer leaders across the campus gather to discuss, debate and prioritize the possibilities for the year ahead. Our annual planning process results in a plan of work built around our highest priority “initiatives.” A summary of that report can be found on your table this morning and you will note that it informs the comments on POSSIBILITIES that follow.

First, I believe our highest priority must always be to offer the strongest and most powerful academic program possible. And because our current academic program is strong, we have a remarkable opportunity to build a curriculum that is clearly distinctive.

This is truly a “good to great” scenario.

What are the next steps?

For starters, we must continue to build our 2010 pathways to distinction. If we aspire to be a BIG HERE and LONG NOW university that engages and transforms lives, our pathways are perfect. Global education, student-faculty research and vocation centered learning, operating individually and in synergy, compel every student to engage the search for truth, encounter the breadth of human experience, and explore the most seminal questions of meaning, faith and self-understanding. They are a living recipe for a liberal arts university and, as Provost Killen will say in her address tomorrow, these

pathways have the capacity to not only shape what we do, but also effect our self-understanding as an academic community, and the manner in which we do our work.

I salute your decision as a faculty last year to position our international core program as an honors program for many of our most able and ambitious students. Now we need to move forward and make decisions regarding our general education curriculum. I have confidence that we are well prepared to take the next steps; to make the important decisions that will yield a gen ed curriculum that is tied to our mission, clear in its objectives, relatively simple in structure, and, most important, enjoys the broad and enthusiastic support of both faculty and staff.

As we enter this year of reaccreditation, it is an important time to review our entire academic program, and, in particular, our efforts to systematically assess and measure learning outcomes. Preparing our accreditation already has reminded us of the very important assessment work being done at the department and school level. But we are not where we need to be when it comes to university level and general education assessment, and this year provides a great opportunity to address this issue. And I urge us to do so not just because of accreditation pressures, but, more importantly because it can help us build more distinctive programs and communicate our educational message more effectively with prospective students and our other publics.

In summary, our future as a university rides on our academic program. It is strong; yet, building our pathways, reforming general education and refining our assessment efforts can make us even stronger!

A second possibility: PLU has emerged in recent years as a regional and national leader in environmental education and sustainability. I described some of our accomplishments just a few moments ago. It is a proud record, to which so many of you have contributed. I am proud that we were the first Northwest institution to sign the Tallories Declaration and one of the first 12 signatories to the American College and

University Presidents Climate Commitment, a commitment now endorsed by more than 340 presidents.

Let me add a personal note: In the past six months, MaryAnn and I have visited alums in Hong Kong, traveled with the Norwegian American Foundation to Svalbard and the Arctic Region, biked our way across the mining-ravaged region called the Minnesota Iron Range, and visited our farm in North Dakota. Wherever one goes, there is one consistent, clear lesson to be learned: for too long our planet has been taken for granted and is now under great stress.

So I strongly believe that as a university we have both a moral obligation and a great opportunity to do all that we can to reduce our environmental footprint and model sustainable practices for our students and our community. There is much we can do, and nothing we do will have greater impact on our hope of being a LONG NOW university.

During the next year we will inventory our greenhouse gas emissions and take two or more “tangible” actions to reduce them. We’ll also begin to work on a climate action plan to achieve no net greenhouse emissions by 2020. The Campus Sustainability Committee will guide this process. Sustainability fellows Tamara Powers-Drutis and Kyle Morean are working with residential life to promote sustainable decisions regarding residence hall renovation and programming. In particular, we will all have the opportunity to sign the LIVE GREEN pledge in upcoming months. In addition, the Martin J. Neeb Center is designed to meet the standards of LEED Gold, which will double the number of LEED Gold buildings in Pierce County and at independent colleges in the Washington (The Morken Center is the first).

A third possibility for the year ahead is the continuing upgrade of campus and facilities. I lift up this possibility because the adequacy and beauty of our schoolhouse and campus, as well as the quality and condition of our equipment matter. It effects how we are able to work and how we feel about our work, and it is a major factor in our ability to

recruit the very best faculty, staff and students. Thus, what might seem like a SMALL HERE is, in fact, LARGE.

As I described above, we have been making good progress in recent years. In the last decade we have added Mary Baker Russell, South Hall, and the Morken Center. We have restored Xavier, Foss and Pflueger, completed smaller capital projects across the campus and, in the process, substantially reduced deferred maintenance and increased energy efficiency. As we begin this new year, Garfield Commons holds great promise as a lynchpin for Garfield Street improvements, the University Center holds new promise as a gathering point and community builder, and the renewal of Tingelstad completes the restoration of our lower campus residence hall cluster.

Our new campus master plan provides a roadmap for the future. So, once the KPLU Center is constructed in 2008, it is my hope that we can at last begin the restoration of Eastvold Hall.

In addition, it is time to make a significant investment in facilities and fields that support recreation and wellness, physical education, as well as intramural and intercollegiate athletics . . . something we have not done for over 30 years. Finally, the annual renovation and improvement of space across the campus, as well as an aggressive plan of equipment acquisition, including information technology, must be a continuing priority.

The cost of both construction and equipment is daunting. So we will need to rely on annual operating budgets, selective and strategic debt financing, and our continuing fund-development campaigns to accomplish this POSSIBILITY through a sustained, prudent and long-term effort. A schoolhouse worthy of housing our excellent programs must be our driving vision.

Our fourth possibility in the coming year emerges from the launch of our new comprehensive development campaign, a new step in expanding and strengthening the

university's financial foundation. Let's be frank, mission requires money, progress requires investment. So where do we stand? Where should we be headed?

A word about our expenses: Education is a people business; so, 70 cents of every operating dollar in the PLU budget goes to us, to faculty and staff compensation. Our highest priority for new resources each year is to improve compensation. The other 30 cents of every dollar goes to support all of our programs, pay administrative costs, provide utilities, as well as support equipment purchases and capital projects, and pay debt service.

Our largest source of annual income is tuition and fees. Together they account for over 90 percent of our operating budget. Each year tuition and fees go up and provide most of the new revenue needed. But PLU is not only a place for rich people. We remain committed to serving students from all economic backgrounds, and thus our reliance on increases in tuition and fees must be restrained.

Gifts and grants are our second source of income, and PLU has annually ranked near the top in gift income among schools of our size and tradition. We need to press on, as the growth and continued success of our development efforts will be of even greater importance in the future. These efforts provide our primary source of capital funds, crucial support for programs and scholarships for students, and gifts to the university's endowment fund provide a growing resource base for the future.

Later this fall, following our October Board of Regents meeting, we expect to move forward with the leadership phase of a \$150 million comprehensive development campaign. The campaign will seek to increase annual support, secure capital gifts for the facility and equipment needs I described above, and, most significantly, this new campaign will seek to raise \$100 million in both current gifts and future commitments to our endowment. The focus of this endowment effort will be on academic excellence, including endowed chairs and professorships as well as program support.

The fifth possibility reflects my strong belief that we are now well positioned to work together and develop an even stronger culture of leadership across the campus. And, I further believe, we need to pursue this possibility not because we are short of individual leaders, but because a university bold enough to pursue the BIG HERE and the LONG NOW requires a distinctive model of community, a model that is built upon a pervasive and energizing “culture of leadership.”

Building such a culture requires (1) that all of us in this room feel both a commitment to and sense of excitement about the university’s mission, (2) a feeling that we are working together to achieve common goals, that (3) our individual contributions are honored and respected, and that (4) we all carry a sense of responsibility toward and for one another, and especially our students. Ultimately, as a university community, we teach most powerfully by example and by the values we model, and so in an important way all of us, regardless of rank or title, are educators.

So in this year now before us, we will be placing more emphasis on providing opportunities for professional growth through our leadership development programs. This is an important initiative for many reasons but particularly now because we are in a time of major generational turnover. So while a few of us have been here for a long time, many of you are new and we need and crave your full engagement in helping to develop the culture of leadership that all of our hopes and dreams require.

Advancing the academic program, moving on sustainability, building the schoolhouse, launching a new campaign, and supporting a culture of leadership – five important priorities and possibilities for the year ahead. Five possibilities that we all share and that will require our collective best. Five possibilities that find both import and impact in the context of mission. So I close with a discussion of PURPOSE.

## **PURPOSE**

They have become familiar words: The mission of Pacific Lutheran University is “to educate students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care – for other persons, for their communities and for the earth.”

They are good words. They have been widely accepted on campus. They effectively focus our mission on students and increasingly I hear both current students and graduates of the university quote them – accurately, with pride and with obvious feeling.

They are appropriate words. Appropriate because they derive from and capture our Lutheran educational heritage and tradition and give expression to that tradition in ways that connect to both current culture and future possibility.

And, they are challenging words. Challenging words that call us to be expansive in our vision. Challenging words that call us to be bold in our aspirations. Challenging words that call us to believe that we have the capacity, the resolve and the potential to quite literally change the world. And the medium of our influence is students; students who in due season become our graduates; competent, caring and committed to serve.

Graduates who, in Brian Eno’s words, are prepared and committed to live the BIG HERE that encompasses the breadth of human experience, and the LONG NOW that both understands history and honors the future.

But can it happen?

Eno asks the difficult questions: “Can we grasp this sense...[that we are]...part of the beautiful continuum of life?”

Eno answers: “I think we can.” Because, he writes, “human beings are capable of a unique trick; creating realities by first imagining them, by experiencing them in their [our] minds.”

Eno asks: “Can we be [motivated] and inspired by the prospect of contributing to the future?”

Eno answers “yes” with a story. When Martin Luther King said, “I have a dream...”, he was inviting others to dream it with him. Once a dream is shared..., as soon as we [imagine] a more desirable world,” our behavior starts to change.

Eno asks: “Can we [truly and fully] extend empathy to lives beyond our own?”

Again Eno answers “yes,” because when we dream, our imagination “becomes an invisible force which pulls us forward.”

Our dream “starts to come true.” Ultimately, “the art of imagining something makes it real.”

And what are the seeds of imagination?

Perhaps there are primarily two; learning and faith. Faith that imagination matters, a conviction that both change and goodness are possible. And, learning, so that our imagination will be not only creative but also thoughtful and well informed.

PLU above all else is a place of both learning and faith, a place that calls us to know and encourages us to believe. If Eno is right, then Pacific Lutheran University is truly the original BIG HERE AND LONG NOW University. A place where dreams are kindled and lives transformed, a place bold to believe that we can “influence the affairs of the world,” a place that has called you to serve that mission, and, a place that rejoices in your presence here.

My best wishes to all of you in this new academic year.