Welcome Back Breakfast - 2012

Thank you and welcome to another exciting year! It is great to see you all this morning and know that we are going to have an INSPIRING year at Eastern. After a summer respite, it is good to get back to working with students and encouraging them to be successful and creative.

Before I go too much further, I would like to ask all our new faculty members here this morning to please stand and be recognized.

I would like to encourage you to introduce yourself and welcome our new faculty. Reach out to them. Offer them help. Make them feel welcome—this is their new home.

In addition, I would like to welcome a number of other staff that are joining the Eastern family and that will be leading some of our critical Strategic Action initiatives this coming year.

- Dr. Martine Duchatelet, Dean of the College of Business and Public Administration and Executive Dean of EWU – Spokane
- Dr. Amy Johnson, Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Life
- Ms. Molly Ayers, Director of Community Engagement
- Dr. Ben Meredith, Executive Director of E-Learning and Off-campus programs
- Mr. David Millet, Director of the Veterans Center

I would also like to introduce the EWU Board of Trustees who took time out of their busy day to join us this morning. Will you please stand and be recognized:

- Ms. Jo Ann Kauffman
- Dr. Mark Mays
- Joshua Neil, our new student trustee

Our board members work tirelessly on behalf of the institution. Thank you again, Trustees, for all your work and for joining us today.
I would also like to recognize the office of Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers. She is represented here today by her district director, Mr. Dick Leland.

A great deal of time was spent last year developing our new Strategic Plan – "Inspiring the Future" - and this summer all major units on campus spent time developing specific actions that will set us on the path toward success.

On your table you will find two documents I encourage you to read: one is a copy of the Strategic Plan, and the other is a brief review of the Action Plan for the coming year. The Action Plan identifies programs or activities that will help ensure we are moving in the right direction to fulfill our five year strategic plan.

“Inspiring the Future” is not just some glossy publication to put on your shelf so it can gather dust! It is a set of four clear goals that, if achieved, will move Eastern forward; with improvements in student achievement, increased faculty scholarship and development support, and greater student, faculty and staff engagement. These results will bring greater visibility to Eastern! This visibility will make us a "first choice" University and a destination for learning in the State of Washington.

**Student Success**

The first goal is student success. To achieve student success we will need to address critical issues in retention, graduation and faculty development that will provide the building blocks for a quality education in all degree programs at Eastern. While we continue to make headway every year, THIS year will be critical to the continued improvement of the University. Despite limited state resources in recent years, we have all done an admirable job of pulling together, and you have shown me that we CAN make a difference.

Our retention rates have improved in the last two years, and it appears that we will make a significant jump again this year. These changes are the result of new approaches to old problems. Your ability to rethink how we support our students and how to best utilize our resources are proving to be keys to success as we search for creative solutions.
For instance, as we prepared for the coming year, Academic and Student Affairs leadership and their staff reconsidered how we could improve academic support services to students. They agreed to consolidate the many different student support offices on campus and bring them together under ONE administrative unit reporting to the Provost’s Office.

This consolidation will increase student access to advising services; and provide a system by which faculty and staff can gain support and training if they need to improve their own advising skills. Also, having professional advisors available for extended hours that are more consistent with the times students are on campus - - will result in improved support for ALL students.

This development, coupled with the opening of our Learning Commons at JFK Library, will create greater synergy for learning and student support. The Learning Commons will centralize a number of essential student support services, while providing students from different disciplines the opportunity to enhance their skills and work together in a way never seen before at Eastern.

The Writers’ Center, "PLUS" (Program Leading to Undergraduate Success), and the Multi-Media Lab have all been relocated to JFK as part of the Learning Commons. In the future, other units of the University that offer tutoring and advising will also provide services out of the Learning Commons.

I encourage all of you to participate in the formal ribbon cutting and tours for the Learning Commons this Friday at 11:30 a.m. at the JFK Library.

Another effort to improve student success is the redesign and implementation of new approaches to the delivery of a developmental math curriculum. As a result, over the summer we created two math laboratories in Monroe Hall that will support the new teaching approaches to be utilized by the Mathematics Department. In addition, the department - with assistance from the Provost - has hired four additional faculty to help support this curriculum redesign.

We have also reallocated university funds in Student Affairs to create the Veteran’s Resource Center, which opened this summer. This office will give veterans enrolled at Eastern a central, one-stop location so they can receive
information about advising, financial assistance, tutorial services and matriculation to university life.

Another way we have helped students is through scholarships. And last year we received RECORD scholarship support from the EWU Foundation, totaling nearly $748,000 dollars.

**Innovation**

Our Strategic Plan goes beyond student support, because I know the more critical way to help students succeed is to provide high quality curriculum - and faculty WHO can deliver it. So that is where our efforts are focused when we talk about our second goal: being an Institution of Innovation.

The best example of this is our Virtual Campus. We MUST provide different learning approaches and opportunities for our students to access our curriculum. You, as faculty, are thinking about and demand more support for your ideas on diversifying your teaching approaches.

As an example:

Dr. Bill Youngs, Professor of History, taught a class about the history of the National Park Service as he traveled across the United States visiting the national parks in his RV and motorcycle. What an experience for students to actually see each of those parks though a telecast from each of these sites!!!!

Dr. Jeff Stafford, Professor of Communications Studies, has adopted a “HyFlex” instructional delivery style in his summer courses. This style means students can attend course sessions in the classroom, online, or a mix of in-class and online. This multifaceted approach truly allows students to choose an instructional style that fits their individual needs.

For those of you who have not attended an Information Technology Faculty Boot camp, you must because you can learn about how you can do what Bill and Jeff do - and I promise, just because it's called a boot camp, there are no early morning pushups!
We are also strongly supporting the development of an Alternative Energy Center on campus just off the Red Barn parking lot. The project is a collaborative effort between faculty in the Colleges of Arts, Letters and Education and Science, Health and Engineering - which we hope will become a regional epicenter of alternative energy education, with a state-of-the-art demonstration site. With the help of the EWU Foundation, fundraising for the support and development of the Center will be ongoing during this academic year.

I believe the campus needs to continue to support faculty creativity like the center and much of that creativity cannot occur without a University investment. Therefore, this year my office is providing funds totaling $400,000 to support the purchase of critical equipment for teaching or research and creative actives of the faculty. The Provost and your Dean will be providing guidelines for the awarding and use of those funds during this academic year.

In addition, I have also approved the use of $160,000 dollars to support faculty development activities during the coming year, over and above those funds that we already provide. Again, the Provost will direct the use of those funds.

It is important for us to support faculty’s ability to create new knowledge and to be able to disseminate that information to your professional colleagues.

**Community Engagement**

Our third goal of Community Engagement stems directly from a concept proposed by our faculty. They see a great benefit in the active participation of students, staff and faculty with community groups, businesses, non-profit organizations and government as a way to hone educational skills. A closer relationship with external groups will only improve EWU’s ability to anticipate and respond to workforce and community needs.

With this in mind, this summer the Provost hired a Director for Community Engagement, Ms. Molly Ayers, who I introduced earlier. She will oversee the Institute with offices in both Cheney and EWU-Spokane. I expect the Institute to become a place where members of the campus community can find support and assistance for service learning projects, internships, and volunteer activities.
We will also continue efforts like my participation in Priority Spokane, which is focused this year on improving student success at the middle school level and bringing greater visibility to the problems faced by children at this level.

I will also continue to co-chair Spokane STEM Network, which is focused on the development of a collaborative network of businesses, industry, government, non-profits, public schools and higher education to more effectively promote greater engagement in STEM fields by students and the local workforce.

Speaking of STEM, I would like to acknowledge the faculty and staff who worked hard to make the FIRST Robotics state competition a huge success here on campus last spring. And, Eastern looks forward to hosting an even better Robotics competition next April. This is the type of community engagement that will improve Eastern's visibility!

**Visibility**

The fourth Strategic Plan goal is Visibility. Eastern’s reputation drives community and business engagement and support, our alumni relations, and most importantly our enrollment for undergraduate and graduate programs. The expanded visibility and recognition of EWU’s strengths and successes will drive internal and external perceptions of the university as an institution of choice.

That is why this year we will see the public phase of our EWU capital campaign launched. The silent phase of the campaign over the past three years has proved to be successful and we expect that the public phase will bring the campaign to a close in two to three years.

The Gateway Project, which some of you might have heard about, is an extension of our capital campaign. While we are only in the feasibility stage, it very well could generate significant gift activity and enhance campus culture.

This project is a proposed multi-use facility that would improve Roos Field, incorporate concessions, produce leased commercial and retail space, provide additional seating, allow for the development of an academic success center and serve as a key transportation hub for STA.
The hope is that the Gateway Project will act as a unifying structure on campus that would bring the academic and athletic components of the university closer together, while creating an inviting entrance to what is already a beautiful campus.

It is my intent to continue to update you on the progress of our Strategic Planning efforts - but to do it in a more interactive way.

That is why next year we will begin a dissemination conference format for informing the EWU community exactly how we are meeting the action goals that we set each year.

As I have said before, having this clear and simple roadmap is the most efficient way to manage our resources.

I want to thank each of you for the hard work you do here at Eastern. Your individual contributions are what make this campus a unique and special place. And no matter your role, you strive to do it well every day -- and the end result is that it helps each and every student in their journey to find success.

For roughly 1,575 new freshman, that journey starts at 11 a.m. today when they Pass Through the Pillars and walk up the brick pathway in front of Showalter Hall. I invite you to join me in welcoming them to campus.

Every year we have a chance to start something big, and it begins TODAY!

Thank you, and have a great year!