As we enter the New Year, I would like to thank this campus community for its hard work in preserving high quality educational programs and saving jobs during this recession. During our December Town Meeting, we discussed how very far we have come in preparing for the post-recession new normal and our plans to complete our preparation this Spring. Please know that I am very proud to be a member of this caring campus community.

The following activity details our progress on the goals set forth in the August 17th all University welcome, which can be found on the web at http://web.mnstate.edu/president/speeches/general_university_wide_meetings/8_17_2009_welcome.htm. Please note that the work reported in these updates is the result of a hardworking group of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

1. Increase recruitment, retention, and student success.
   - Our relationship with Noel Levitz Inc. continues. The newly developed weekly admissions reports suggest that our new strategies in admissions and marketing are starting to pay off, although we still have much work to do.
   - Our marketing director has hit the ground running, and our new web strategist is now on board. We have a marketing plan for admissions and send more mailings to more students than in previous years. In addition, we have continued with billboard, theatre, school newspaper, and other advertising venues. New this year, is a kiosk in the busiest area of the West Acres Mall that was placed before Thanksgiving.
   - Effort continues on the new Residential Life master plan. Specifically, work on the sighting and finance of the new residence hall is underway along with renovations of Grantham Hall, which are planned for this summer.
   - AVP Donna Brown continues fundraising for the American Indian Center as well as other efforts to support recruitment and retention of underrepresented students. During the past quarter, she has completed and received the Access and Opportunity grant from the Chancellor’s Office and has received $14,000 from a trust fund for scholarships.

2. Assure both quality and efficiency in all areas of the university.
   - The accreditation visit from Association for Accreditation of Colleges and Schools of Business has been completed and the preliminary reports are promising. We will receive our final decision later in January.
   - The Construction Management Program submitted its Self-Study for review by the American Council of Construction Education Accreditation Committee in preparation for a site visit this March.
   - We are working toward a site visit from the Higher Learning Commission regarding online offerings.
   - The Faculty Association and administration continue work on a plan to assess the Dragon Core general education curriculum.
   - Successful intervention strategies implemented by the ARO to support and retain first year
students resulted in a 2% decrease in the number of freshmen suspended at the end of their first academic year last spring compared with the two prior spring terms.

- The School of Teaching and Learning is part of a new consortium with NDSU and VCSU funded by the Bush Foundation to work on improvement of teacher education curricula.

- Summer Session last year yielded increased revenue as well as probably decreased energy use. The Summer Session Task Force is working on significantly increasing the revenue for the coming summer.

- Progress continues toward improving the quality and efficiency of university facilities. The $15 million Lommen Hall Renovation project is on schedule and on budget with Phase One due to be completed by February 2010.

- The campus has $2 million in HEAPR projects underway to enhance the quality of the campus facility infrastructure and improve energy efficiency.

3. Increase external recognition, alumni engagement, and fundraising.

- Thanks to the hard work of the Foundation, we are up 375 donors over last year, a 6% increase. During just the past 6 months, we have added $946,000 in donations to our endowment. We are still working to increase scholarship dollars, and final figures are not yet in. One challenge has been the decreased interest last year from the endowment due to the recession.

- Fundraisers have continued to hold events and visit with alumni from around the country. In addition, I have visited with alumni in Texas and in the Washington DC area.

- Overall, we have increased the number of alumni events by 15% over last year and have increased communication with alumni (email and/or ground mail) by 75%. Further, we have added another 9,000 addresses to our alumni email list bringing our total to 18,000.

- Under the leadership of Gina Monson, the Millennial Alum effort has gathered steam. We have a new Millennial Alum advisory group and have held several events for this group, including one in which 30 of us learned the biochemistry and history of beer making from CASE Professor, Ellen Brisch.

- I have been given the privilege of serving on the Ad-Hoc Committee on System Planning. The committee is working on a 2020 plan for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and includes 4 trustees, 4 presidents, and 4 vice chancellors.

- We have added more neighborhood representatives to our regional advisory committee and added an additional meeting. In addition, Doug Hamilton and Dan Kirk have met with the leaders of the four closest neighborhood groups.

- We learned that I will be featured by the Forum newspaper in their 10 to watch in 2010 series.

4. Continue development of a stable fiscal model to take the University into the 2012 biennium and beyond.

- We are making progress on our plans to increase revenue through increased credit generation and increased summer school revenue.

- After the Board Early Separation incentive was completed, we had a total of 23 faculty and staff participants. Through this effort, continued restricted hiring, and energy refits, we have
reduced our base expenditures.

- The campus was recognized by the City of Moorhead for the extent of its energy refits.

- Over 30 supervisors completed three day “Art of Supervision” training in late October.

- Interim Director Herb Trenz is starting a review of all division organizational structures as well as all VP portfolios and will make recommendations to me for changes as needed. He welcomes input from all employees and can be reached by email at trenz@mnstate.edu.

- Because we will need to operate with fewer people while serving more students, we are working to examine and where necessary streamline or modernize our processes. To that end, Winona State is providing facilitator training for LEAN (see www.winona.edu/lean) in the second week of January. Karen Mehnert-Meland is coordinating this effort and working across divisions. Please let her know (meland@mnstate.edu) if you would like to volunteer for the training or if you have processes to suggest for consideration. In addition, Karen is working across campus to help us with university scheduling and general maintenance of campus facilities.

- Communication is an important part of change. To that end, we are increasing the frequency of our regular town meetings to once a month. In addition, I am now holding office hours at least once a month and more often where possible. In addition, our biweekly electronic newsletter for faculty and staff, Edna’s E-News, debuted in December.

5. Complete a New Strategic Plan for the University

- The strategic planning committee has made significant progress. Drafts of the various components of the plan have been completed and shared with the campus community as well as the regional advisory committee with revisions made. The current version is just about complete and will be finalized by the end of February. The components of the plan can be found at http://web.mnstate.edu/president/StrategicPlanning/StrategicPlanning.htm.

- The facilities master planning process is underway. The contractors have begun gathering information and meeting with key stakeholders. When complete the university will have a facility and grounds strategy that supports its mission and enhances its stewardship of the environment. To enable good communication and broad involvement in the planning process, a "Master Facility Plan" web site has been developed and can be found at http://web.mnstate.edu/plans/facility.