From its beginnings as a normal school in 1887, established to educate the necessary teachers for a burgeoning immigrant population, Moorhead State has grown with the region, responding to and meeting the needs of this region and its people. Today, Moorhead State University believes its education must emphasize the liberal arts, prepare students for careers and remain a student-centered university.

Moorhead State University offers a wide range of career preparation with a high degree of success. Indeed, MSU has introduced outstanding programs in business, computers, industrial technology and speech pathology. But the liberal arts remain the major focus and distinctive quotient in the curriculum. The centrality of the liberal arts is well shown by the following comments:

"If we are to deliver the young from the deformities of ignorance, it will not be done by making them computer literate; they will be free and they will be whole when they confront the human experience and the profound reflection on it of poets and prophets.

... To open the eyes of students and deliver them from provincialism — that is our purpose."

Roland Dille, President, Moorhead State University, in a speech before the International Association of University Presidents, Bangkok, Thailand, 1984

Even as MSU holds to this durable liberal arts curriculum that is the foundation of education in our Western civilization, we never lose sight that universities exist for the sake of the students. In a mission which includes teaching, research and service, the teaching mission has the highest priority. Emphasis is given to the individual development of the students who are able to apply evidence, reason, judgment and compassion in their lives. As educated citizens, they contribute to the life of the community in which they live, and are committed to the pursuit of knowledge.

On the threshold of Moorhead State University's second century, challenges lie ahead on several fronts: developing a critically important science literacy in this country that will be second to none, preparing citizens for the demands of living in a global culture, encouraging our students and professors to develop the highest scholarly excellence of which they are capable.

The Centennial Campaign blends the best elements of our American educational system by building on a strong past to meet the challenges of the present and future.
The Centennial mark provides an opportunity to pause and consider our past, to see what we have grown from, what we have grown into, and what may lie ahead. It is a time to assess whether growth has been quality growth, to see what may be discarded, what must be retained, what must be added. As our forebears considered the needs of their generation and met the difficult challenges of each age, so must we meet the challenges that lie ahead of us with equal vigor.

In the world in which we live, it is possible to be parochial in countless ways our prairie forebears never dreamed. The world in 1887, the date of the first Moorhead State Normal School, was small and closed. The people of the Upper Midwest were able to turn their backs on the rest of the world to become essentially self-sufficient and self-supporting.

This is certainly no longer the case. We are today part of a global culture where fluctuating oil prices can create havoc, where we know that nuclear missiles are directed at us. It is a complex, potentially volatile world, a puzzle of interlocking pieces dependent on elements we need to know more about.

We feel the press of our competitors in business, industry, and agriculture, not from our neighboring states, but from the four corners of the world. Yet we understand the tremendous opportunities that lie in the global marketplace when we meet these challenges.

Moorhead State University has a vision of a strong future, where both science and the arts—both the fine arts and the liberal arts—play leading roles, where the citizens of the Upper Midwest will take their place in a prosperous, peaceful global culture. This university and this administration are committed to it, and to implementing the programs that can achieve it.

Roland Dille, Ph.D.
President, Moorhead State University