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Remarks for Introduction as Provost
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Mr. President, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve this great institution in yet another capacity, this time as the provost.

Greg – you told me that I am not blessed with a dull life.

This was his response after I shared with him how much I am enjoying my job as dean of the college of Engineering. After three years, I was just beginning to settle into some form of routine.

Oh well, there is now a higher call to serve Lehigh and I will not walk away from it.

Please allow me to spend the next few moments sharing with you some thoughts on my new assignment. I will start with some of my goals and priorities.

I will also share my initial plans for changes in the structure of the provost office.

But before I do, please join me to thank Ron Yoshida for his four years of dedication to LU as provost and wish him well in his new assignment.

Three weeks ago, the president, in his state of the university speech articulated the challenges and opportunities facing Lehigh in six key areas:

- People (faculty and staff)
- Distinctive programs and the definition of the role of a liberal arts education at Lehigh
- Our national reputation – which does not reflect our true strengths
- Student life and Greek life
- The physical environment of our campus, and
- The Campaign for Lehigh, which officially moves into high gear beginning tomorrow.

It is clear that the Academic Affairs area is at the center of most, if not all, of these challenges. I believe we must begin immediately to translate these challenges into Goals and Priorities. I've not officially started as provost, and I already have a long list of things to do!

To that end, let me share with you three specific goals and a short list of priorities that will be used for wider discussions with the deans and the faculty.

The first goal is developing the best environment conducive to successful careers at Lehigh for faculty and staff, from hiring to retirement and beyond. This includes

addressing important topics such as shared governance, faculty mentoring, tenure and promotion, cultivating leadership at all levels and looking at post-retirement engagements.

The second goal is articulating the intellectual signature of Lehigh through scholarly work of the faculty and distinctive programs. Large components of this goal include:

- Defining the role of a liberal arts education at Lehigh;
- Articulating the distinctive features of all programs including cross-disciplinary programs;
- Integrating 2020 research initiatives into academic programs; and
- Building synergy among the four university-wide initiatives (Bioscience and Biotechnology, Nano and Structural Systems, Environmental, and Information and Optical Technologies) and expanding them to all four colleges.

The final goal is important. It deals with creatively enhancing the total learning experience for Lehigh students – both undergraduate and graduate.

Achieving this goal will involve the integration of practical liberal arts education concepts into all professional undergraduate majors as well as the integration of general education and co-curricular experiences throughout all four-year programs.

In addition, enhancing the first year learning experience, and adhering to best practice in implementation of learning-centered education as a philosophy and practice, are key components of achieving this goal.

It is clear to me that defining the role of a liberal education at Lehigh should be placed at the top of our priority list. I know that Anne and her colleagues in the College of Arts and Sciences have already started this process and they expect to have something to share with the Lehigh community by the end of this academic year.

Let me stress that as we move forward with the process of strengthening our liberal arts programs, we will also continue to strengthen our historically distinguished programs in engineering, science, and business.

In fact, I am a strong believer that by further defining the role of the liberal arts at Lehigh, we will add greater value and help further differentiate our professional degree programs in both business and engineering.

Of course, our College of Education has already successfully established their distinction in graduate education and research on a national level. Now, the challenge – and the opportunity—is figuring out how to take advantage of the

college's expertise for the benefit of our students learning in the other three colleges.

Summary

It's clear that during the past six years we have witnessed great achievements at Lehigh. Now, we need to face the new challenges before us, the challenges our president has articulated, so we can achieve the next level of excellence – namely; preeminence.

I believe this can only be done by strengthening partnerships between our colleges, through greater collaboration between faculty across all boundaries and moving to creative integration, assessment and continued improvement in all our academic programs.

Now, that sounds like we have quite a bit of work ahead of us, doesn't it ? Greg – did I actually say that I would accept the job?

So there is no doubt, let me say now that I do accept this new assignment with enthusiasm. I fully appreciate the immense responsibilities of the office of the provost and the trust that you have placed in me. You can count on my passion and dedication to get the job done.

To get the job done right and in order to do it in the appropriate time frame, I believe that the provost's office must be structured to meet the new challenges.

To that end, I will immediately begin a wider consultation with my colleagues regarding this issue. I personally believe we will need to appoint one or two deputy or associate provosts who will be drawn from the faculty. One will be dedicated to faculty issues, and the second dedicated to programs (e.g. International Studies, Cross-disciplinary programs, and Middle States Accreditation). I also believe that at least one of the two faculty members should be drawn from the College of Arts and Sciences.

I will also start meeting with the staff in the provost office so that together, working as a team, we can move the new agenda forward.

Of course, my acceptance of the provost role leaves an opening for the dean for the College of Engineering and Applied Science that needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, Greg would not allow me to hold the two jobs so he wouldn't have to give me double pay!

I will meet immediately with the department chairs and the faculty in the college to put a process in place to conduct a search for a new dean. The new dean will need to have the ability to work effectively and harmoniously with Anne Meltzer, Sally White, Dick Durand, and myself.

Every Sunday, I call my 80 plus year old mother who lives in Cairo. She still gives me advice, good advice, as all mothers do. She always tells me “work is a form of prayer so make sure you do it well.” I do listen to my mother and you can count on my doing this job well and with genuine passion.

I would like to end my comments with one more remark. It is true, as our president has said that I haven’t been blessed with a dull life. However, I have been very blessed with an incredibly supportive wife – who helps me navigate all the challenges that come with my life at Lehigh and beyond. So my wife Nora is also here with me today to accept this job and be a part of our success in the future.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I’m please and proud to accept the role as Lehigh’s next provost and I look forward to working with all of you to make Lehigh the very best.