

State of The University Address

January 7, 1998

I appreciate very much the opportunity to come before you today to assure you, first of all, of the continuing strength of this place and to assure you, furthermore, that the state of the University is sound. I come also, however, to challenge you with some new themes that I believe should guide our development for the immediate future. As strong as this place is today, I believe it can be even stronger by the application of some basic themes that are sound in any size academic institution.

But first, please excuse a few personal remarks. I don't know how much change has come into your life in the past twelve months, but a bit of reflection by each of you would demonstrate once again, as Heraclitus said, "The only constant is change."

While the life of a small college president today, particularly on the private side, is not nearly as idyllic as some have made it out to be, I will confess that my biggest challenges of a year ago were how to complete the success of a \$70 million fund-raising campaign, how to ensure another incoming class at a place judged by most to have the highest academic standards in the state of Kentucky, and how to move that institution into the upper tier of the nation's top 40 best national liberal arts colleges. Surprisingly enough, the campaign was completed, another top-flight class was recruited, and this year, for the first time, that small college was listed in the top 40 of the very finest national liberal arts colleges.

While most of that has little or no interest to those of you in the room today, it does demonstrate that things were reasonably "under control," or as much as they can be on any college campus, and that the direction of my life for the ninth consecutive year in Kentucky seemed assured.

About three months later, however, came "that call" from the retiring head of the American Council on Education, on whose board I sat, suggesting that he thought I would be a "perfect fit" at the University of Georgia. After the typical academic demurrals and almost two months of delay, I did send a resume to the search committee one day before the deadline, an action that led Mary, the boys, and me to walk through the Arch

on June 26, 1997, as I began work as the 21st president of this great institution.

It would be hard to chronicle the acts of kindness and welcome we have received over the past six months. Mary was stopped in Charleston, S.C., by the president of the local Bulldog Club and told she was "the best female bulldog ever" I think it was meant as a compliment. A student stopped me at the recent Rolling Stones concert to say, "I can't believe you're here." I wanted to tell him Keith Richards and I had seen each other before he was born. A faculty person wrote, "Your concern for others makes me want to do better." I could tell you other stories.

But the one I remember the most happened in a local Chinese restaurant. I overheard a parent say to one of his four children, "That's the new president at UGA." The 10-year-old responded, "I'm going to UGA." A friend with him said, "Yeah, it's really tough to get in there. You better study really hard." The other child responded, "Don't worry I'm smart, I can do it."

The fact that we are setting that kind of standard is especially important to me, and it would be a small understatement to say that I am grateful for the warmth and civility of your reception and for the common belief we now share that the best days of this institution are yet before it. That belief is not grounded in my own presidency or talents but in the solid and consistent set of accomplishments you and others have provided.

The transition in leadership from Dr. Knapp has, I believe, been orderly and seamless. There are two primary reasons for this. One is that Dr. Knapp left the University in superb condition. From his success in raising academic standards, to his support for improved teaching and research, to over \$300 million worth of capital construction with special emphasis on the development of East Campus in these and many other ways, Dr. Knapp helped lift the University many rungs up the ladder of educational excellence. I share with those of you gathered here today deep appreciation for his 10 years of service to the University of Georgia.

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The second reason for the smooth transition in leadership was Bill Prokasy's service as interim president last summer and his consistent and dedicated leadership in the development of this institution's overall academic program. I am indebted to Bill for his assistance and friendship, and I know that you join me in thanking him for his many valuable contributions. While we will have other opportunities before his formal retirement to express our gratitude, I hope you will join me in doing so at this time.

Every president, new or old, brings not only certain stylistic qualities to an institution but also certain deeply rooted beliefs or themes around which he or she feels an institution can be developed. Such is the case with this president. What I would like to do today, if I may, is to outline some of the themes that guide me in the application of administrative leadership and that will give the greater university community increased insight into this "still new" president.

First and foremost, everything that we do should be aimed at improving the ultimate experience for each student, be he an undergraduate, graduate, or professional. The student not the administration, not the faculty, and not the support staff, as important as all of those elements are is central to the core of any university, and service to that student is, at the most basic level, our reason for being.

I am not convinced that it is impossible, even at a place of this size, to personalize the experience for every student, because I firmly believe that if each faculty and staff person is making the overall welfare of the student pre-eminent in his or her daily activities, the entire enterprise will, over time, feel and actually be more student-centered. Applying such student-centeredness at UGA at the present time means several things.

It means that our first new capital priority together will be a modern learning center in which to better serve students, with attention both to high-tech access in an emerging world of information and to smaller, high-touch classrooms allowing the kind of personalized interaction between faculty and students that will always remain at the heart of the educational enterprise. In addition,

spaces for library access and student-affairs activities will make this center an active campus hub. I am hopeful that the governor and the legislature will agree that this proposed learning center is a top priority and will provide immediate resource funding for its formal planning, with construction funds to follow at this time next year.

Being student-centered also means that we need to explore the improvement and expansion of residential life on this campus. The current Reed Hall project should be but a foretaste of similar projects to come, and I believe we need to engage in a campus-wide discussion, as well as systemwide analysis at the Regents' level, of what our long-term goals and needs might be in campus housing. We are facing increasing concerns largely caused by the continued growth in our student body, at a time when our last residential construction was completed in 1969.

We have increasingly become a campus of undergraduate and graduate Athens commuters, placing stress on the community's road system, parking alternatives, and sewer capacity. We are probably nearing the outer limits of growth under the Regents' guidelines for a student body of 32,500, and we have yet to take an in-depth look at what another increment of growth might mean for the total University climate and infrastructure. Because of our non-residential nature, we have become a place that does not know one another as well as we need to, and "after hours" residential and campus life have suffered in the process.

Most importantly, I believe undergraduate academic life will be improved when we know one another better, and in that light I am today announcing the creation of a fund of \$100,000, which can be drawn upon within certain guidelines by any faculty member teaching undergraduates, to support the gathering of classes or appropriate student groups into your home or other site for additional academic and social interaction.

We need to develop a broader series of opportunities for personalized interaction between the faculty and students. Much work in this regard is already under way with the freshman seminars, new writing initiatives,

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and numerous other experiments throughout the University. I would like to see these activities enhanced with additional after-hours interaction and with increased emphasis on the impact that stronger relations between faculty and students can have, particularly in the development of recommendations and analyses for career-planning and placement services. Chancellor Portch was right to praise the "magnetism" of our faculty in an address this past fall, and we must continue to seek out opportunities for that magnetism to take hold. This needs to be a place where the faculty do know the students and the students do develop an enhanced appreciation for the work of both the teaching and research faculty.

A second theme: our administrative structure and efficiency needs to be as clean and understandable to the overall community as it can possibly be, while at the same time acknowledging both the substantial growth at UGA over the past 20 years as well as the enhanced and increasingly complex challenges that we now face. I want an administrative structure that is team-based, non-paternalistic, understandable, and efficient.

Over the past several months, I have studied organizational charts from the Ivies to the Big Ten to the Pac Ten to the finest institutions in the Southeast, and no two of them are identical. What they all demonstrate to me, however, is that there are still three overarching functions that a university needs to manage well to be successful today. In that light, I am submitting today a proposal to the Board of Regents with an accompanying letter to the University Council requesting approval of an organizational restructuring which reflects, I believe, a holistic approach to serving students. This proposed restructuring will more clearly vest administrative responsibility in three senior vice presidents, allowing your president to provide the kind of statewide and national leadership that this University demands. I am offering you today a brief outline of this restructuring, with an accompanying suggested organizational chart that will highlight the major functions to be performed by each of these three senior vice presidents.

As a first initiative, I intend to implement a nationwide search to identify the very best candidate for the position of senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. This individual will be the chief academic officer of the University, reporting to the president, and will carry chief responsibility for the core activities of academic and student affairs, instruction, public service and outreach, and research. Under this plan, the current vice presidents of research, public service and outreach, and student affairs will report to the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost.

Such an arrangement will, I believe, firmly establish the academic mission of the institution as primary while at the same time providing a holistic approach to the many functions that impact and are impacted by the academic process. The future reputation of this institution is largely dependent on our ability to enhance and broaden our already substantial research base. For 11 years, we have been led effectively in this mission by Dr. Joe Key. Dr. Key has indicated to me a desire to return to his laboratory in the next year or two and a willingness to work wholeheartedly on behalf of the University within the context of whatever structure I might propose until that time. Such is indicative of Dr. Key's good spirit and long-term, effective service to the University. As he continues in this important role, and as a part of this restructuring, his current function and that of his successor would be as vice president for research and associate provost, with direct reporting responsibility to the senior vice president for academic affairs.

For many years now, this institution has provided national leadership in the area of public service and outreach, first in the person of J. W. Fanning and now in the equally significant service of Dr. Gene Younts. Gene has indicated to me a couple of major projects that he would yet like to see to completion. I have come to rely on his good judgment and to depend on his myriad of wonderful friends and contacts around the state which benefit the University of Georgia greatly. In order to enhance what is an already successful program in public service and outreach, I believe that even closer coordination between the public service and

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academic functions will be beneficial to all concerned, and most of all to our thousands of friends and supporters around the state of Georgia. At its most important level, public service is an outgrowth of the mind-set of those of us in the academic arena who desire to share our knowledge with constituencies beyond the classroom and throughout the state in a significant way. Therefore, Dr. Younts will become vice president for public service and outreach and associate provost, also with direct reporting responsibilities to the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost.

While I do not intend, nor will I attempt, to tie the administrative hands of the incoming provost, whoever he or she might be, it is my personal belief that at a place of this size we need to create at the associate provost level a person whose formal and primary focus is undergraduate instruction. I will make such a recommendation to the new provost with the hope that we might vest in an appropriate person the responsibility for ensuring the delivery of our most important function, teaching, and thereby creating daily focus on ways in which that activity might be enhanced.

Furthermore, I will also request that the current vice president for student affairs and the functions reporting to him also look to the new senior vice president for academic affairs for leadership. In my first four months here, as the normal chain of student challenges has developed whether it be cases of excessive drinking, late night altercations with campus police officers, or questions about administrative services to students one question is rarely asked in such cases which quite frankly should be at the heart of our enterprise: "How does this impact the overall academic process?" I want to ensure that, at a place where the student is central, questions of student affairs and student services are examined in the context of how such services impact the academic and social development of today's young people. I believe the entire campus will benefit from a closer working relationship between the academic and student-life leadership.

In addition to our central academic core, there are two other major enterprises at

today's modern university that I believe merit leadership at the senior vice president level. I am proposing along with the senior vice president for academic affairs both a senior vice president for finance and administration and a senior vice president for external affairs. While I do not like to think of universities in corporate terms, the fact remains that we are today a massive business. We have physical-plant resources that would cost in excess of \$2 billion to replicate. We are almost a billion-dollar-a-year operating enterprise. We employ almost 10,000 people.

We are fortunate to have a person of significant experience and accomplishment in this area, and I will recommend in my letter to the Regents that Dr. Allan Barber become the new senior vice president for finance and administration. In that capacity, directors of finance, human resources and facilities will report directly to him. He will have continued responsibility to organize areas including but not limited to accounting, the budget, campus planning, public safety, and the University's treasury. Additionally, the senior vice president for finance and administration represents the University's financial interests on a number of boards, including the University of Georgia Athletic Association, the University of Georgia Research Foundation, and several others. The only change in current reporting responsibility I am recommending in his area is that the internal audit function be moved to the president's office. Such a shift is appropriate, as most internal audit matters involve funds, and this adjustment will remove the potential for built-in conflict that is present under the current organizational structure.

Finally, at the senior vice president level, and over the next several months, I will initiate a national search for a senior vice president for external affairs. This individual will have overall responsibility for a number of non-academic functions that relate to the development and enhancement of the University's support base, including government relations, University alumni and development activities, and special events. Each is a major component of the institution's external support bases. I believe, properly orchestrated and led, all of these

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areas provide significant opportunities for the enhancement of the University's mission.

And ours is a mission that must be monitored with due diligence in the coming years as we seek to maintain Georgia's exemplary leadership in a changing educational climate. In that regard, I am today announcing that I have asked Dr. Don Eastman to become the University's vice president for strategic planning and public affairs. In that role, he will be asked to provide leadership and direction for the University's strategic plan for the first decade of the 21st century and to examine ways in which we can enhance the rising national reputation of UGA. He will work with the respective schools and colleges in developing their own plans for success in the 21st century, as well as be a key player in the planning of the Gwinnett campus. He will also supervise institutional research and planning, university communications, serve on the campus master-plan committee, and be a part of the preparatory team for our institutional self-study. Such is essential in advance of our decennial review by SACS, scheduled for the 1999-2000 school year.

For almost ten years now, Larry Weatherford has provided exemplary service to the University of Georgia in development, public affairs and, most especially, legislative relations. In addition to continuing his exemplary work in legislative affairs, I am asking Larry to assume the senior vice president for external affairs position on an acting basis. Larry, too, has indicated to me a desire to scale back his overall responsibilities over the next two years. At the same time, I want the University and the president to continue to benefit from his knowledge and leadership experience. During the next two-year period, we will together be identifying new leadership in legislative affairs and examining some ways in which we might be more successful in development. At an appropriate time, and soon after the proposed changes in the central academic core of the University are begun, I will initiate a nationwide search for a new senior vice president for external affairs to succeed, but not replace, Larry Weatherford.

I believe all of the above will leave the University with a much cleaner and more efficient administrative structure. While the vice president for legal affairs, serving as general counsel on University-wide issues, will continue to report to the president, as will my personal staff, the president will rely on these three senior vice presidents for aggressive leadership in their respective areas. Such a structure will, I believe, allow the president to assume additional state-wide development and external-affairs responsibilities while leading the entire enterprise to greater academic achievements through national recruiting of the best minds deserving of both national and international recognition.

Indeed, my personal commitment to the University's place as a flagship institution will be increasingly reflected in my own movements around the state. With perhaps 40 to 50 percent of my time, I will be talking with alumni and friends, as well as providing on-campus leadership of, I hope, substantial importance. No one should interpret this new administrative structure as a signal that the president will not continue to have an active hand across the board in the academic, general administrative, and external affairs areas. But I do intend to become an increasingly visible spokesperson for UGA. I will continue my service on the executive committee of the American Council on Education and will over the next two years also serve as chair of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, having succeeded University of Virginia President John Casteen just last month. I want to play a significant role in convincing our friends, as well as our critics, of the supreme importance of the continued refinement and improvement of this institution, not because tradition calls for prominence in the state, but because the service that we provide in Athens and across the state demands our excellence in all areas.

A third guiding theme in all that we do as a land-grant and sea-grant institution reflects the need for us to recognize, articulate, and provide services across the board to the entirety of the state of Georgia. Over the past six months, I have literally traveled from Chickamauga to Camilla, and from LaGrange

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to Savannah. I have driven a tractor near Tifton, watched poultry being processed in South Georgia, and learned more about tomato viruses than I ever thought I would know. I have also participated in UGA continuing education programs, and I've seen firsthand the benefits of our nationally recognized public service and outreach program. All of this leads me to say that there is a real hunger across the state of Georgia for the services this institution provides in agricultural and non-agricultural areas. We need to be a regular and important presence in every geographic region of the state. We need to seek more joint programs with our research colleagues at the Medical College and Georgia State, and yes, even at Tech. We need to strengthen our economic development leadership in some of Georgia's underdeveloped counties and initiate programs that reassert that the state is our campus.

We need to work with the Regents, the chancellor, and the educational resources of the state to provide additional educational opportunities for Georgia citizens and especially those in Gwinnett County. As one of the state's fastest-growing regions and the state's most populous county without a major academic institution, Gwinnett County calls for our finest response, as we work with our colleagues in other appropriate System institutions to develop a full range of academic opportunities in the still-developing I-85 corridor. I am glad to have played a role with the System chancellor and the president of DeKalb College in developing a still-embryonic plan for a Gwinnett campus. I pledge my full support of that project and solicit the University community's help in bringing UGA-Gwinnett to reality. Such service to the entirety of the state is not just the province of the president, but is the responsibility of all who work in teaching, research and outreach at the University of Georgia. As a taxpayer-supported institution, providing service to the entirety of the state needs to be one of our top priorities and one for which we are increasingly recognized.

Fourth, we need to provide an increasingly global dimension to everything that we do. It is not simply politically correct to say that we live in a global economy. We

are rapidly becoming a nation where no one racial or ethnic group is a majority, and recent events should have convinced us that an economic downturn in Asia can create significant concern on Wall Street. Furthermore, as the world shrinks in time and relative size, our capacity to know and understand different cultures, languages, and religions has never been more real. I believe it is the responsibility of every program, every dean, and every academic leader to raise questions today about the interrelatedness of the world at large.

As several senior teaching fellows at UGA wrote me recently, "While the classroom lies at the heart of University teaching, important learning opportunities take place elsewhere, too: from community service and campus organizations to internships, study abroad, and off-campus programs. . . . Since the United States now has more interaction with the rest of the world than ever before . . . the University's curriculum should be increasingly international in perspective."

It is with an eye to the national and international exposure of our academic successes that I intend to expand international programs at the University. Some progress has been made in recent years under the leadership of Dr. Knapp and others, but we simply must do more to introduce our students to the global community. In that regard I wish to do three things. In the coming weeks, I will appoint a special committee to examine and catalog all of the University's current international efforts. I will also ask that committee to recommend to me an appropriate administrative structure that will centralize international program direction at the University.

Second, I will ask that same committee to recommend ways in which some of our existing successful programs, such as those at Cortona and Innsbruck, might be expanded and enhanced. (I might mention that I plan to visit both sites in July. Someone simply has to do it.) And finally, I want the committee to recommend to me potential sites for new overseas undergraduate residential programs, with the full intention of having at least one new

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program in place, anchored by UGA faculty, by the fall of 1999. It would be my hope to have an additional 50 to 100 of our students studying abroad in the first year of this new program and increasing numbers in the years to come.

The institution that I left had in excess of 50 percent of its students enjoying some foreign residential experience abroad during his or her academic development. When I went there the number was almost zero. I am told that the current number at UGA is about 2 percent, and I would like to see us aim for 10 percent of each undergraduate graduating class having a residential foreign experience by the first couple of years of the 21st century. Such programs strengthen not only international relations but also study in languages, social habits, world history, governmental structures, art, religion, culture, and a host of other fields.

As I have directed numerous international educational programs through the years, I've also learned that participating faculty are strengthened and renewed and that all students seem to mature more rapidly and proceed more successfully in their majors after the international experience. I'm a firm believer in undergraduates participating in foreign study in their sophomore year, but that's a discussion for another day. Simply put, no one today is liberally educated who does not have an appreciation for a culture other than his own.

Our world has widened, leading me to a fifth and final theme: in everything that we do that relates to academic and institutional success, I want us to begin to think in national and not just in regional terms. We recruit faculty and students on a national and international basis. We develop research with a national impact in mind. We recognize that our service has broad implications, first of all to the people of Georgia but also to all 50 states and to over 100 countries represented in our student body. I was particularly pleased this year when Money magazine listed the University as one of nine unbeatable deals nationwide where students can attend at little or no cost through the HOPE scholarship program. U.S. News has also called us one of the nation's best buys.

The same rating group has ranked our graduate program in public relations fourth nationally and the undergraduate program in real estate fifth. The graduate program in public administration was sixth among 223 programs in the nation and the graduate program in education ranked 15th among 191 doctoral programs. Arts and Sciences was ranked first in the nation both for advising and for its Web site. The School of Law ranked as one of America's top 10 public law schools.

As is always the case, our academic leadership lies in the strength of the individuals within these programs, and I am grateful for the fine work of our faculty which draws national attention. Last year, Dr. Lois Miller became our eighth faculty member elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and Dr. Edward Law was elected to the National Academy of Engineering, two of the highest recognitions possible for American scientists.

We recruited our fourth eminent scholar under a program created by the Georgia Research Alliance that increasingly will allow us to bring internationally prominent scholars to the state to conduct cutting-edge research. The caliber of our student body remains strong as freshmen continue to enter the University with outstanding credentials. High school grade point averages of 3.5 and SAT scores near 1200 are increasingly our norm.

Our research expenditures of \$225 million last year place us as the fourth-largest research university in the Southeast and 31st in the nation. Among universities without medical or comprehensive engineering schools, we remain number one in the nation in total funding for research and development. You might also be interested to know that we rank fourth in the South and 33rd nationally in the number of doctoral degrees awarded annually.

Last year we took the bold step with our friends at Delta Air Lines in creating a prize that recognizes individuals and organizations who promote international understanding and cooperation. I believe that in future years this prize will become a major impetus for greater peace and partnership among the

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nations of the world. Our Peabody program in journalism already brings great credit and international exposure to UGA.

But, as impressive as these statistics are, ratings and recognitions don't adequately convey the overall breadth and depth of quality that exists at the University of Georgia. We are a far more academically superior institution than is suggested by rankings, and yet we all want to mature to the point where we are regularly listed among the top tier of national public universities.

To move into the upper echelon of truly national universities will require that we maximize resources in all areas. We have received substantial support in this quest in recent years from Governor Miller and the General Assembly. We are working with the governor at present to complete the fourth of four consecutive years of 6 percent salary increases, and the HOPE scholarship already mentioned has revolutionized thinking in America about financing college costs. With executive and legislative help, we have the new North Campus parking deck under way; new heating, ventilation and air conditioning in the main library; renovation of part of the food sciences building; repairs at the Rock Eagle 4-H camp; a new food science research facility in Griffin; and the recently dedicated new NESPAL facility in Tifton. We are working on the hiring of a fifth Georgia Research Alliance eminent scholar and creating enhanced research in the School of Forest Resources and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, among others.

These and other initiatives lead me to say once again that the people of Georgia deserve a flagship research institution every bit as good as that of the people of California or Michigan or Virginia. This is not a place that will settle for second best.

Before I draw to a close, let me acknowledge that all of the above are items that I want to see accomplished by the end of the 1998-99 academic year. The new administrative structure will become effective with the beginning of the new fiscal year, July 1, 1998, and the above is indeed a "full plate" for all of us over the next 18 months. At the same time, I want to acknowledge that a number of other areas with which I want to

deal in ensuing years are beyond the scope of our aggressive menu at the present time. These include further plans on how we can better retain and graduate more students on schedule, how we can increase our percentage of alumni giving, how we can increase representation of all racial and ethnic groups in our employment base as well as our student base, how we can develop more full-time instructors for lower-division courses, and how we can continue to make improvement in the development of our technological infrastructure. And just as we have grown the campus in significant ways, we must now deal with MRR issues relating to maintenance and repair of a largely expanded physical plant.

But most of all, in these and other areas, we need to ensure our quality commitment to the service of students and our statewide commitment to the development of an educated citizenry that will provide the impetus for economic development that benefits us all.

Finally, let me end where I began, and that is that this institution's greatest strengths are in the quality of the people who are in its faculty, staff and support base around the world. The kind of loyalty and commitment exhibited here in so many ways is evident 365 days a year, not just on 11 football Saturdays. I remain truly grateful for the warmth and sincerity of your reception and pledge my fullest efforts to leading this institution into the upper tier of national universities as we face the 21st century together.

I am certain with your help and commitment we will be successful.