

**Chairs' Corner – November 2005**  
**President Emmert's Vision – Annual Address to the UW Community**

TO: UW Foundation, Campaign Cabinet, Deans, Development & Alumni Staff  
FROM: William H. Gates, Chair, and Orin C. Smith, Vice Chair, UW Foundation

Dear Friends,

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, President Mark Emmert delivered his annual address to UW faculty, staff, and students. He spoke in the largest auditorium in Kane Hall, and it was packed. An academic audience, even a friendly one like this, is not exactly a pushover, but Mark seemed completely at ease. For a formal speech, in fact, this one was engagingly informal, complete with the quick wit we have all learned to expect from Mark's talks to other groups. (You can see an on-line video of the speech [here](#)).

But under the ease and informality, the speech had bones—substance and structure, insight and foresight. It was, as Mark said, a chance to measure the distance he has traveled from the “first impressions” he described in last year's speech. (And in an era of speechwriters, it should be noted that Mark wrote this speech himself.)

What we heard that afternoon was a speech in three movements, to borrow a term from the concert hall.

Mark first reviewed the results so far of the Leadership, Community, and Values initiative he had launched last April. From surveys and meetings on all three campuses, including some 2,000 pages of free-form written comments, he drew lessons both heartening and sobering. The initiative, Mark said, revealed pride, commitment, and affection for the UW that are remarkably broad and deep among its faculty and staff. The initiative also revealed considerable discontent about some issues, but it convinced him, he said, that there is strong consensus on the core values underlying the whole enterprise.

He named three that he found central: excellence (including the special public mission of *access* to excellence); engagement with society (including “translational research” that turns knowledge into public benefits); and the desire to have a transformative impact on people's lives. Those three, he said, should be “the animating forces of the University of Washington—those things that drive us forward, that we use to make decisions around.”

How do you make that happen? This was the question behind the second part of the speech. The answer, said Mark, “the most fundamental reality of the University,” is that “any form of success is entirely about the success of our people.” The key is to create the best possible conditions for those people. So there are problems to be addressed: the inadequate resources for salaries and facilities, and the issues around trust, communication, respect, community, and leadership development that emerged from the leadership initiative.

Finally, Mark talked about what success might look like, over the next five years or so. He focused on four areas: creating a more exciting undergraduate experience, developing the new interdisciplinary department of global health, launching an initiative centered on sustainability of the Puget Sound Basin, and becoming an international leader in information technology across disciplines. Such things, he said, “provide us a sense of what we can do by harnessing the strength of all of our people and those core values that make us distinctive.”

Each of us has had reason, over the years, to think about leadership and its various styles and attributes. What we especially liked about this speech was Mark’s ability to hold up a mirror to the University—to show both the true face of what is and the shining promise of what might be. It was, we think, the speech of a leader.

Bill and Orin

Looking Back

- As of October 31, 2005, our **total Campaign giving since July 1, 2000, reached \$1,513,029,535** toward our Campaign goal of \$2 billion.
- The October Report of Contributions Notes is attached and contains fundraising details.

Looking Ahead

- **Friday, January 27, 2006**, Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee; 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting.
- **Friday, April 28, 2006**, Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee; 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting. Washington Weekend April 27-29, 2006.
- **Friday, September 8, 2006**, Foundation Board Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee, 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting.
- **Friday, September 8, 2006**, Fifth Annual Recognition Gala, Suzzallo Library.
- **Friday, January 26, 2007**, Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee; 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting.
- **Friday, April 27, 2007**, Foundation Board & Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee; 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting. Washington Weekend April 26-28, 2007.
- **Friday, September 7, 2007**, Foundation Board Campaign Cabinet Meeting, 8:30 a.m. coffee, 9:00-11:00 a.m. meeting.
- **Friday, September 7, 2007**, Sixth Annual Recognition Gala, Suzzallo Library.