

State of the University Address
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The State of the University Address, in its second year, thanks to our Chair, Judith Ogilvie, has now become a tradition at The American University of Paris. It is a rare pleasure for a president to be address in one room all the constituencies amongst which she works to review the previous year's work and lay out the goals for the next academic season. The state of our university matters to each of us because, as partners in the enterprise of advancing The American University of Paris, each constituency of this University—the Board of Trustees, the leadership team, the faculty, the staff, the alumni and the students—has a leadership role to play. My talk will have two parts, the first a frank estimate of the annual state of our particular university as against our goals, projections, and historical performances; in part two, I like to think, a little differently each year, about what I like to call our “AUP exceptionalism,” the way in which our particular university is different from any other in the vast firmament of American higher education.

I

Let me start with hard facts. The last few years, following upon our decision not to merge with NYU and the global financial crisis that exploded in the fall of 2008, have not been easy ones for this institution. And the larger backdrop of American higher education suggests that these haven't been easy years for any institution, the most robust private and public institutions amongst them. We've had a lot of company amongst sister institutions across the planet—everyone is learning to do a lot more with a lot less. But a university as small as AUP, as dependent upon tuition, was in a particularly vulnerable position. We had cash issues, a year or so of small deficits, and an enrollment crisis in 2009 that has taken a few years to overcome. In all honesty, these years have been a struggle for the soul of our institution, determined as we all were that AUP deserved to go forth autonomously and occupy a leadership position between US-based and overseas American education. And during those crisis years everything—from governance to the academic program, from the physical plant to technology infrastructure, from admissions to the bursar—needed rebuilding. Where my tone was more cautious, even pensive last year, however, it is stronger and more celebratory this year. At the end of four years of financial crisis and recession, at the end of several years of cost-cutting and reorganizing, and at the end of a year of some painful restructuring, the state of the University is substantially better than it was last year—financially, academically, and even physically, in terms of our Campus in the 7th.

Let me be clear about our goals here. We decided to use these years of difficulty to strengthen the core of our institution, not by making survival our goal, but by giving deep consideration to the future of our university—its mission, shape, size, cost structure and academic character and quality. We're not in this just to survive the turmoil that has seized higher education of late. We're in it to address in a profound and permanent way all the structural issues that have made AUP a fifty-year start up, or, better said, a fifty-year start over and over. We're in it together, every single constituency represented here, to ensure the institution's next fifty

years. And over the past four years, with a strong, committed board led by indefatigable Judith Ogilvie, with the work of a stellar, professional team in place (whom I cannot praise and thank enough), and with the good will of staff, faculty, and students willing to work right along side us in every department of the University, we have faced down the storm clouds and righted this ship. Although I can't promise there won't be other challenges on the horizon, The American University of Paris enters her fifty-first year with auspicious winds at her back.

Let me begin with a few interesting facts from our DashBoard, and I'll start with the headlines:

- We have just had, hands down, the best recruiting year in our history, including the famous "NYU year" in 2007 when we had lots of students of which 24% were visitors staying a single semester. AUP's admissions team, working with a new front-end paperless recruiting system and new admissions policies aimed at recruiting those students who would become their best and most adventurous selves at AUP, brought in 56 more new students than last year.
- We saw our applications for fall 2012 rise in every single category an average of 341% overall (4242 applications as compared to 961 the year before), even in categories not affected by the Common Application.
- UG applications alone were up 426%, and only a third of those came from the Common App, which means we were recruiting better everywhere in the world and largely (75% of all apps) through our own new online portal.
- As was the case last year, and as is the case in the US generally, graduate admissions flattened out—graduate enrollments tend to be countercyclical in recessions—and freshman and visitor enrollments rose steeply. In spite of that slight drop, the current ratio of UG to G remains stable at 80 to 20, which is precisely our target range.
- If any member of the Admissions team is sitting in the audience tonight, Brad Walp, its director and Randy Vener, its Deputy Director—we salute you. You have, working with every constituency of the University, clarified our identity to prospective students and drawn to us the right kind of student for us. All anecdotal evidence from faculty on the front lines points to the fact that you've recruited a magnificent class.

Here's a portrait of the incoming class of new students:

- The incoming class of all new students is 53% American (largely because of the graduate programs), the UG population of that class is only 41% American, which is also the exact percentage of American students in the total student body. These have been our framing guidelines since 2008 and the huge jump in applications has not changed that yield.
- French nationality is second and fairly constant at 12%
- In descending order of national representation in this class after the Americans and the French, come the British, the Italians, the Germans, the Venezuelans, the Mexicans and the Saudis. Georgia and South Africa are in the top ten group of represented nationalities for the first time.

- The incoming class boasts ten more nationalities than last year (Rwandan, Kazakhstani, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Panamanian, Portuguese, Thai, Cambodian, Guatemalan, Ecuadorian, Argentinian, Honduran, and Irish).
- The UG incoming class brought 42 languages and dialects into the University, and the graduate class brought 22. We have added three new languages to our ten-year tally: Kinyarwanda, national language of Rwanda, Lithuanian, Latvian.
- We've added an average of 6 languages a year for the last ten.
- Just for the record, since 2002, the entering class of this University has brought a grand total of 111 languages and dialects into the university and 117 if you add the faculty. And we need to do a new faculty survey and update that number.
- I want to say with not a little pride that total enrollment on campus jumped from 954 heads last year to 992 this year, and you can bet that we will break the sound barrier of 1000 next year! At the rate we are going, I am certain that we will make our target of increasing enrollment to 1250—still an intimate learning community by any standards--by several hundred students in the coming five years.
- Of that 992, 11% are visitors, also within our target range, and 69% overall are women. Women are 66% of the entering UG population, and an astonishing 92% of this year's entering graduate class. Paris, as the poets say, is a woman.
- Our retention rate dropped slightly from 72% to 69%, and is the focus of board and leadership team and faculty and even student scrutiny this year. I'll have a little more to say about that later.
- Our graduation rate—which is the percentage of students who enter the University as degree-seeking UG who have indeed graduated 6 years later—rose from 52% to 59%. The national average in the US is 58% at 4Y colleges.
- AUP gave out a total of 3, 210, 933 euros of institutional financial aid this year, 150K more than last year, and certified \$5,355,642 in US federal loans.

Here's a bit more of last year's harvest:

- A year ago, the humanities at AUP were in crisis. This, for the record, is not just the situation at AUP, but is a phenomenon noted everywhere and frequently written about in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Students everywhere, frightened by the prospect of scarce jobs and unpredictable markets, flocked to the pre-professional side of the house to take on hefty majors that virtually excluded the traditional liberal arts fields. It turns out, though, that a year later, through steady academic management, a rational bell schedule, enrollment-based scheduling, and collegial work with the faculty, our Dean, Neil Gordon, reports our problem virtually resolved. The Humanities are alive and well and thriving in Paris.
- As you all know, because I've already communicated directly to you about it, the Board and the leadership of the University made the decision to sell the Bosquet Building last year and to rent it until we find a suitable replacement.
- The sale of Bosquet left us with a year-end cash position of 10,4M euros, an unassailably strong position with the Department of Education and, for the first time in our history, possession of the cash we will need when we find the right building for us.

- Bosquet could not be renovated into a student union/library complex and needed repairs would have swallowed up a couple million of our renovation budget, an investment with no gain.
- While waiting to move, we nonetheless this summer renovated the AMEX kitchen, the Student Media Center, and the Academic Resource Center summer, focusing our capital budget always on improvements to student space.
- I want to say one elegiac word for Bosquet—I have loved and lovingly restored this Grand Salon and I'll miss its grace—but I would sell any of our buildings to give the students of AUP, after 50 years, a home of their own on our campus in the 7th. A university with students from over 100 nationalities, living in all 20 arrondissements, needs a student life center, its own little UN. Believe me when I say that I will not rest until we have put that in place for you and for the next generations of AUP students.
- On the accreditation front, we had a Middle States visit this year following our Monitoring Report and passed with flying colors—not a single recommendation or requirement. We should have no further accreditation hurdles before us for some years to come.
- We filed this summer for French accreditation of all of our UG and most of our graduate programs, only the two-semester programs could not be aligned with European standards. Dean Marc Montheard translated and carried four cartons of materials to the Chancellerie des Universités. That recognition, when it comes, by our host country's Ministry of Higher Education, will feel very, very good. And it will mean for our students that your diplomas will be double stamped with American and French accreditation.
- Finally, in Finance, we ended the year with 10,4 M in cash, thanks in large measure to the Bosquet sale. But even without the proceeds of the sale we closed with double the cash balance we ended on last year. We also came in well under the deficit we projected last year, successfully carried out our reorganization plan to address it, and developed a conservative three-year enrollment and budget plan that gets us comfortably into the black by next year. Our conservative and increasingly accurate models show that if we increase our student body by reasonable levels, slowly and surely, and continue to strive for excellence in all domains, we will achieve a sweet and sustainable spot in the very near future—at which we can accumulate the surpluses necessary to tend to the campus, invest annually in academic quality, raise institutional financial aid, and develop new programs.
- An endowment on top of that, plus a strong program of annual fundraising, will be the docking station for our renewed business plan.
- All in all, it was a tough, but a very good year.

So what's ahead?

- On the academic front, working with the faculty he leads, Dean Gordon has set forth the highest standards for academic excellence—in the classroom, and at the level of professional engagement and research, which is, we believe, essential to and synergistic with the finest teaching. The Mellon Foundation has just renewed our Faculty Development grant for 300K this fall, so that this work can continue. He will be

using this grant to define with faculty what The Global Liberal Arts looks like in characteristically AUP terms, and we'll be disseminating that information in the form of an international conference when he concludes.

- Raising academic quality, we need to remember, is a job for all of us—the dean, and faculty, as well as students. For it is also the responsibility of students to come to class prepared and to contribute fulsomely to the quality and rigor of class discussion. If you want higher academic standing at AUP, you need to step up and help to create it in every single class you attend.
- The Dean will also preside this year over a number of replacement searches—not since 2007 have we renewed faculty numbers so plentifully. I cannot say enough that the heart and soul of a university is its faculty, for its leadership of the curriculum, its support for learning, its mentoring of students, and its definition and upholding of academic excellence and reputation. These hires of young teacher-scholars will join an already strong faculty on campus to define the professoriate at AUP for the next 20 years. I cannot underestimate the impact that these hires will have on our institution.
- And we are launching a new baby, a new MA in Climate Policy and Practice, which will include a summer semester doing fieldwork at The University for Peace in Costa Rica. I've never hidden the fact that I feel no university in the world is better positioned to address the issue of the environment in new interdisciplinary and cross-cultural ways. A strong new hire last year of a climate scientist is supporting that new MA program, and his presence will bring with it as well a complete renewal of our undergraduate science program. That's been a long time coming at AUP and it matters intellectually to me. In our present era, global citizens require scientific literacy urgently.
- And, finally, the Dean and his graduate directors will be branding our graduate offering of some 10 programs into The AUP Graduate School of Global Studies. (I think that's the title they have settled upon—and I apologize if I've gotten too enthusiastically out in front of a faculty vote, which of course I will respect.) Some shared curriculum and modularizing of student trajectories within will become possible promoting profound interdisciplinarity and student-centered curricular choices. Branding our graduate school in this way also puts us definitively head and neck above all the other American universities in Europe—which have largely study-abroad and undergraduate-based curricula and are less focused on faculty research than we are. None has a graduate school. And we have done that without creating a separate graduate faculty or undermining our undergraduate program. In fact, graduate studies at AUP have had a major impact on the whole institution, galvanizing faculty research and a host of new academic partnerships. All AUP faculty teaching in those programs also teach a majority of undergraduate courses.
- On the campus front, we have no other thought in our minds and hearts than our next building acquisition. We are currently doing feasibility studies on four buildings, some for rent and some for purchase. Although it's very hot off the presses, I won't hide from you that I've found my preference, but we're months away from knowing the terms on which it might be available. We are doing everything we can to be able to announce by next year, the future home of AUP's Student Life Center and Learning Commons with all associated student services integrated alongside them in the same space. The decision about which building to acquire for AUP's future is ultimately the

Board's and the implementation of that decision will be the Leadership Team's. Once that decision gets made, however, a building committee will be formed with ample student, staff, and faculty representation. Everyone who will live in that building will get a say on how we develop and furnish the space, but the administration, held to budgets, will get the final say. That's how shared governance works.

- We'll need your input on another major project this year. MStoner, the company we've engaged to produce our new public website with integrated intranet (MyAUP) and social networking, has come back to us with the first design concepts. As of next week, every member of the community will be invited to participate in a feedback exercise and/or a focus group to help them and us refine the design scheme and navigation architecture.
- On the student front, we have a strong, second SGA team that is building on the governance achievements of last year to completely remake student government at AUP. Taking the baton from last year's team in a thoughtful, planned way, they are way out ahead already. We've offered them some leadership training, and they've instituted a remarkable transition plan, and we're now just standing back watching them reinvent the role of student leadership at AUP.
- On the Board, President, and Leadership team front, we will be using our fiftieth anniversary, which we'll be celebrating for the entire year, as a jumping off point for the establishment of an endowment fund for AUP and the launch of a 50th Anniversary comprehensive campaign for our second half-century. All of you will be hearing a whole lot more about that in the future, so just a whisper of what's to come is enough for today. I may be getting out a little ahead of my board, which will be discussing this during the meetings this weekend.

II

In his compelling book about the social sector, a sequel to his famous analysis of successful businesses, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins lays out five principal steps to greatness for a non-profit institution. I want to rehearse those very briefly, and then I want to assert that at AUP, we're closing in on number five:

- Defining great in your own terms
- Leadership
- Getting the Right People on the Bus
- The Hedgehog concept
- Turning the Flywheel

First, **defining great in your own terms**. Actually nonprofits, which define success as something different from the usual business metric of increased profits, have done a more nuanced job of defining greatness. We've shifted our vision from inputs to outputs. Money is only an input—it's not a measure of greatness. At AUP we believe that what will ultimately separate good universities from great ones is not the rankings, all those things we call "inputs," the facilities, the number of books in the library, the size of the endowment, the food halls and the student malls, the athletics medals, the number of publications produced by the

faculty, although this last is important, but the capacity of a university to develop the humanity of its graduates, especially in a world where, as borders fall, identity politics escalate. At AUP we believe that the measure of our progress toward mission can be seen in the achievements of our alumni, now 13, 800 strong and located in 126 countries around the globe. We gauge our purpose as an institution by celebrating their creativity, social entrepreneurship, business and political acumen, academic achievements, personal achievements (because the purpose of education is first and foremost to live meaningful lives), and their leadership. In the words of our mission statement, we send them forth to take their places as responsible actors in communities, civil societies, and countries around the globe. Judging our greatness by that statement, AUP is the wealthiest institution on the planet. And I'm committed, with our faculty and our Outreach and Advancement function to consistently assess our output results, the achievements of our alumni and the quality of the lives they lead, and the impact they have on others and the world as evidence of our institution's greatness. The ineffable *je ne sais quoi* of an AUP education is the transformative impact it has, not just on our graduates, but on everyone whose lives they subsequently touch.

University leadership, I can assure you, is not about wielding hierarchical power. Just so you know, no academic institution would put up with the old business model of the autocratic CEO. The faculty would immediately revolt and take a loss of confidence vote. In fact, the president's job in an academic institution is to inspire leadership at every level of the institution. There is, in fact, no power like the power of shared goals, and coalition, and inclusion, and I believe, in fact, that most times, leadership is largely a question of finding the right words to lay on our work so that we all feel called to do it together. To use another metaphor, I always say that the role of a University president is that of an orchestra conductor bringing all of the instruments into harmony, so that this meeting today of all of us is one of those moments when all the musicians are in the same room leaning into symphony. This is one of the things you have to love about our University—the very particular way that each of us, most of all our students, has stepped up to what we are trying to accomplish together. I'll come back to that point in a few moments.

Getting the right people on the bus. In the AUP context, I interpret this two ways. First, the utter importance of a seasoned professional staff. The way we've seen all boats rise here as a result of Neil Gordon's work in Academic Affairs, Valerie Gille's work in Finance and Administration, Marc Montheard's in Student Affairs, Brad Walp in Admission, and Kristina Foley's in Outreach in Advancement has been nothing short of miraculous. Each of those people has worked wonders in his or her domain, and we've worked wonders together. We've made more progress in the single year since all of them landed, because of the synergy of the team, than in the two prior to that. We've done a similar thing in the staff and faculty ranks, creating a senior staff of middle managers whom we are grooming for leadership positions as they come open, encouraging them to become co-builders with us as we remake the management base of AUP. We've created a junior faculty of teacher-scholars who are deeply engaged in the life of the university. Some of those junior faculty have even joined the Comité d'Entreprise, another of our important institutional instances, and the conversations taking place there have changed considerably over the past two years—as administration and staff work together not to save but to raise AUP. Although I aspire to raise faculty and staff salaries in the years just ahead, I believe that ultimately human beings are motivated most by

loving the work they do, feeling that their work is essential to an institution's forward motion and ultimate greatness. That is the gift that AUP—as challenging as it can be sometimes to work here—gives to us all.

But there is a second way in which I am thinking about the idea of bringing the right people into our community. Over the past few years we have changed our admissions policies and activities so that we recruit the right kind of student for us. Instead of using traditional measures of selectivity, we're looking for those who self-select, whose personality, background, and aspirations bring them toward us and Paris with the force of a recognition scene in Greek literature. And we are getting there—84% of freshmen who matriculated at AUP this fall, and 83% of graduate students said AUP was their first choice. We are committed to telling AUP's story in a way that draws to us just those students who will feel at home in the exceptional laboratory of our particular learning community—students who select AUP because this is the only university where they could become their best and most adventurous selves.

Becoming a hedgehog. What Jim Collins means by this is essentially that the better part of greatness is discipline, the courage to say over and over a resounding “no” to anything that takes you too far afield of mission. We've had to take tough decisions over the past five years about programs that weren't working, or didn't align with mission. A hedgehog organization is one that knows what it can be the best in the world at, what it is passionate about, and how it can develop a sustainable resource engine to deliver superior performance in alignment with its mission. This is not the same thing as profit. What we are working to do at AUP is to define with exquisite precision what excellence looks like in the classroom, in the library, in the IT department, in the Bursar, the Registrar, buildings and grounds, to name just a few of our departments, what the properly structured curriculum for our student body that builds on our faculty strengths and geographical context would look like—and then to identify the tuition model and number of students required to sustain that quest for excellence. We are only a few years away from being there. And it's the journey, anyway, the collective journey of a community aspiring toward greatness in its own terms that matters, not just the getting there.

Finally, **the flywheel.** In building a great institution, there is never, as Jim Collins writes, just one miracle moment, no solitary lucky break.” Rather it is only in pushing with great effort and discipline and consistency, day after day, month after month, some months with imperceptible progress, that the heavy, inert flywheel begins to turn. Momentum begins to be created. More and more people step up to help you push. You can feel that each turn is getting easier, compounding your efforts. This is how you build greatness. The faster the flywheel turns, the more commitment the organization attracts, which, in its turn, attracts greater resources, such as enrollment and donations, which in turn helps you to build a stronger institution. Success breeds support and engagement—and round and round the flywheel turns. It is precisely this building up of commitment and success and more commitment that we are witnessing in the arrival of 5 new and wonderful trustees to the board, in the engagement of faculty and staff with the building of AUP's excellence and in their willingness to give the administration the benefit of the doubt in some of the tougher decisions we've had to take. We see it, too, in the complete alignment of students with our

strategic direction for this university. I have never in all my years at other universities, ever seen a student body so engaged with the trajectory toward greatness of its own university. I've never been part of a University that listens to and collaborates with its students as we do either.

Let me apply the flywheel metaphor to what we call retention. Last year, you'll remember I insisted on the foremost goal of recruitment, asking every member of our community to bring one student, the right kind of student, into the University. Staff, faculty, students, and the board, but also Admissions, did just that and a year later here we are with the very momentum we were seeking. I won't say you can let up yet, but we're on our way. This year, we slipped a point or two in student retention, which we're analyzing carefully so that we can understand the reasons. Our retention rate has always been historically labile, has moved up and down across the decade. It plummeted one year when we raised tuition too much and it jumped the highest with the class of 2009, our smallest class of the decade. Go figure. I believe that we will always see some attrition of students from AUP, because we are urban, nonresidential, and we enroll a highly globally mobile population. A good many of those students leave AUP having loved it, and become some of its fiercest supporters in later years. But there are things that we can do as a community to make AUP a welcoming home to every single member of our diverse student body. Without even having to sound a call to arms, I was gratified this year to see Judith Ogilvie charge the Student Affairs Committee of the board, led by Sandra Craig, to work with management to strategize and set policy for addressing our particularly AUP issues with retention. A week later a group of our senior staff team across Institutional Research, Student Affairs, the Registrar, the Bursar, Academic Affairs, Admissions, and a few other departments I'm surely forgetting, spontaneously set up their own meeting to pool data and work cross-institutionally to analyze it and provide recommendations. The fruit of that analysis comes up to the leadership team which is, in turn, setting strategic direction to address it. I was also moved to hear SGA President Patrick McDermott say in his speech to Faculty Senate that his administration would be building community this year, reaching out with every means at his team's disposal to fellow students and inviting them to participate, helping the university to strengthen retention, just as Sam Yehya a few years ago took up the banner of academic excellence when we were struggling with issues of academic integrity on campus, and just as Pierre Bach addressed student governance in the context of an institution undergoing at the same time both faculty and board governance review. That's when you know every constituent of a University has its shoulder to the flywheel.

I want to end with two more examples of what the students of this university are doing to help us achieve greatness. Last year, Ford Leland diagnosed that while we had many superb student publications, we were missing an opportunity to make this a learning experience for students, one that would both reward excellence in print and multimedia editing and give students the tools to develop their skills as writers and editors in a way that would prepare them for future careers. Out of a collaboration amongst the AUP Student Media group, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, we developed three for-credit classes taught by industry professionals in the student newspaper and magazine, one for the student radio initiative, and one for a brand new student-driven Web portal. Indeed, students are leaders in these classes, where professors coach, midwife, and birth. Today 7% of AUP's

entire student body is involved in this initiative, some 68 students. But that's not all. Ford developed an architectural plan to repurpose space next to the AMEX, and the University built what he designed this summer—new MAC lab of 15 computers and student media space that makes us all proud. The way that Ford sold me on this investment, by the way, which didn't take much, was to show me how crucial this project would be to student engagement and retention. And he was right. Lacy Wood, an AUP graduate student with a passion for fair-trade coffee has been working with Student Affairs and with her mentor Valerie Gille for some months to develop a plan for repurposing other space at the University into a coffee shop for students. She too has produced her own plans for a multi-use student space we are not using optimally, and if and when we all feel comfortable with the business plan, we are very likely to accompany her in this project as well. All of this *en attendant* AUP's Student Life and Learning Center—which will incorporate all of these functions.

It takes a community to lift a University. And AUP is very, very lucky to have the one it does. So long as we—president, board, faculty, staff, students and alumni—look outward in the same direction, agree on what we can be the best in the world at, hold with relentless discipline to the course, step into leadership at every level of the institution, resist the temptation to distraction, pursue excellence in everything we do, and lean collectively into the flywheel.... the state of our university is assured.