

- "February 4, 2011"

Posted by gavazzi.1

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"Some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice." (Robert Frost)

Hello everyone,

To say that this was an interesting week for me would be something of an understatement. On Monday, I gave what might well be considered my inaugural address to the faculty. A portion of my time was spent discussing what I entitled a "glimpse of a vision" regarding my aspirations for the OSU Mansfield campus. I covered five main points, including:

- 1) Paying attention to our shared identity as an academic community, with an emphasis on increasing the interdisciplinary work that we engage in as scholars.

- 2) Identifying each individual faculty member's talents and skills, so that different levels of expertise in teaching, research and service/practice could be developed in synergistic fashion.

- 3) Enhancing our campus climate, including especially a focus on the development of mentoring relationships.

- 4) Extending our resources, with particular consideration given to the further development of partnerships with our North Central State College colleagues.

- 5) Augmenting our ability to function as a team, with a concentration on how faculty and staff can combine efforts in ways that more efficiently serve our students.

A smaller amount of time was used to discuss concerns about semester conversion, including most pointedly issues surrounding faculty workload. Because all of the regional campuses inevitably will need to present a unified vision to the Provost on this matter, there will be a number of additional meetings that I will be holding with faculty members. So stay tuned!

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I also had to face my first weather-related difficulties this week due to the significant ice accumulations we faced. We closed the OSU Mansfield campus beginning on Tuesday evening, and then extended our shut down throughout the day on Wednesday. Happily, Brian White and his crew went into overdrive and had our campus in great shape for the remainder of the week. And they kept on working to help our North Central campus partners get their Kehoe Center up and running as well. That's the "ice" I was thinking about in the Robert Frost poem that starts this communication, by the way.

As for the "fire" portion of that verse, my family and I had to deal with a small but significant fire event in our home on Tuesday evening. As best as the firemen and electricians can tell us right now, a circuit breaker overloaded when our emergency generator kicked in that night (oh yes, another part of that "ice" reference has to do with the fact that my neighborhood lost power for a day and a half). Rather than shutting down the system as it was designed to do, the breaker ignited in flames. Very fortunately, both my fourteen year old and I smelled the burning almost as soon as the generator kicked in. The fire department responded within three minutes of our 911 call, and the situation was well in hand within a half hour. And even more amazing was the fact that the company that installed the generator came out and had us fully operational two hours after that!

Because everybody and everything ended up in good shape, I rather obviously have lots of blessings to count this week. Among other things, I have a fully engaged faculty that is ready to get to work on taking the OSU Mansfield campus to an even greater level of success, I have an amazing facilities crew that works tirelessly on behalf of the campus, and I have enough personal good fortune to get through a set of hazardous circumstances in relatively fine fashion. So I invite you now to take a moment to be thankful for all of the things that – perhaps – you take for granted. And on a parallel note, please take the time to enjoy the weekend with family and friends!

Steve Gavazzi