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Created on February 25, 2011 at 12:00am - Last updated March 4, 2011 at 2:19pm

"Uncertainty is the only certainty there is, and knowing how to live with insecurity is the only security." (John Allen Paulos)

Hello everyone,

As many of you know, I am dealing with a fairly lengthy commute each day to our campus. Apart from the wear and tear on my vehicle, this is usually not such a terrible burden. Not terrible, that is, unless the weather changes drastically and dramatically, as it did this past Monday evening. What was supposed to happen – light flurries starting around five o'clock in the afternoon – and what actually occurred – heavy snow beginning at noon – ended up creating an unexpected and very hazardous situation on the sidewalks, roads, and bridges at the end of the day. As with all such challenges, however, we were forced to deal with the situation in the very best ways that were at our disposal. We slowed down, we took our time, and we drove that much more defensively. Well, most of us anyway. Inevitably, there was the occasional vehicle that was being driven much faster than conditions allowed. And as I made my way down I-71, the sides of that road were littered with the results of that kind of driving.

The next day, the sun came out, the roadways were cleared, and life went on. On my calendar was a luncheon in downtown Mansfield featuring Lt. Governor Mary Taylor, who spoke about economic development in a climate of budget uncertainties. Following her speech, she held a question and answer session, and many thoughtful people spoke about the economic situations they found themselves in with their businesses. There was one attendee, however, who broadsided the speaker with a bit of a tirade about a personal issue that was completely disconnected from the contents of her speech. Ms. Taylor handled this individual in the best way she possibly could. She slowed down, she took her time in responding, and she tried to validate the individual's concerns as much as she could while emphasizing the importance of paying attention to the bigger picture.

As our own university budget picture begins to emerge in the coming weeks and months, there is going to be a lot of uncertainty about how everything will fall into place. For sure, there will be individuals who will be focused mostly on their own personal needs and desires, rather than the campus as a whole. Please know that I will be providing information in a timely and transparent manner. At the same time, however, I anticipate having to help others understand the importance of slowing down, taking our time, and otherwise making sure that we are keeping the whole campus community in mind as we make decisions about how to move forward. In essence, I want to make sure that we keep all of our wheels on the road at all times.

On a related if somewhat more expected note, we have lots of snow coming down this morning In Mansfield. As a result, I closed our campus earlier today after consulting with our own facilities personnel and our North Central colleagues. Please be careful out there today, and of course please take the time to enjoy the weekend with family and friends!

Steve Gavazzi