

Remarks  
Freshman Convocation  
August 17, 2007  
Comstock Concert Hall  
School of Music  
4 p.m.

Good afternoon and let me add my welcome to each of you.

Over the last year or so, you have faced many important decisions, decisions affecting you personally and professionally for the rest of your life. The first decision was whether or not you would continue your education. You have made the right decision. In this new knowledge-based global economy of today, a college degree is essential.

The second important decision you had to make was which school to attend. You had

many schools to choose from and we are honored you chose the University of Louisville.

Our commitment to you for having chosen the University of Louisville, is that we will do everything that we can to make sure that you have the opportunity to be successful and to graduate. We will provide academic support, advising help, career counseling services, and a great student life program with many opportunities for campus engagement. Most importantly, you will have a dedicated, professional faculty and staff to work with you.

Our goal

Our goal is to see you at another important convocation in a few years – your commencement ceremony.

We're proud that you are part of the University of Louisville.

You are academically the best-prepared freshman class in the history of the University of Louisville, as proven by your grade point average and ACT scores.

You are also the largest freshman class in the history of the University of Louisville, more than 2,500.

Over the last several years, the University of Louisville has been more focused on quality than in quantity. Some schools want to be the biggest. We have committed to excellence—being the best.

Yet over the last several years, as we have attracted better and better students, we've also noticed an increase in our numbers. Students want to attend the best.

As freshman, you are enrolling at the University of Louisville at an exciting time in our history. The University of Louisville has a great tradition, going back over 200 years. We have many prominent graduates in all walks of life.

For example, some in the news recently include:

- the current Senate Minority Leader -- Mitch McConnell
- A current presidential candidate -- Christopher Dodd
- Three admirals in the U.S. Navy
- Business leaders -- Bob Nardelli
- Authors – Sue Grafton
- and on and on

Our focus today is to build upon their great history and tradition and to be among the very best institutions in the country. That is our goal and things on our campus show that

is happening. Let me give you a few examples:

First, our students. Last year 7 of our students received prestigious Fulbright Scholarships – the most of any school in our state. These students hailed from Pikeville, Radcliffe, Mayfield, Owenton, two from Louisville and one from Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Second, our faculty. There is one Food and Drug Administration-approved cancer vaccine on the market—a vaccine that prevents cervical cancer called Gardasil. That vaccine was invented by three people, two of whom are faculty at the University of Louisville. It is on the market today, preventing cancer.

We are now in the process of developing this drug from the tobacco plant. This is part of a partnership that we have with the

Owensboro Medical Center and a plant-based pharmaceutical company located in Owensboro, Kentucky. The current vaccine consists of three shots—\$360. We are proving that we can use the tobacco plant to produce this vaccine at a much reduced price.

Third, our academic programs. We are the only school in Kentucky that has an entrepreneurship program in our ranked in the top 10 nationally. Our College of Education is the top-ranked College of Education in Kentucky, and one of the top 75 schools in the nation. Great universities have great libraries and our Library is among the top 100 in the country.

Students from our School of Music compete annually in world-wide competitions. This past year, our

Cardinal Singers finished second in the world in their competition, and our student symphonic orchestra performed center stage at Carnegie Hall, New York, last year.

Fourth, our facilities: Our Belknap Research Building used by faculty/students in engineering—chemistry, biology, and physics— has one of the top 10 clean labs in the United States.

Fifth, our athletic program: Last year our football team finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the country and were Orange Bowl champions; our baseball team advanced to the College World Series, finishing in the top 6 in the country; our men's track team finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the country; women's golf finished 10<sup>th</sup>; 9 of our 23 athletic teams ranked in the top 25.

So you can see that what we do at the University of Louisville we do with a focus on being the best— we focus on excellence.

One of the advantages we have at the University of Louisville is the community of which we are part. Our Medical, Dental, Nursing and Public Health programs are located downtown. We have recently taken some classes of our Fine Arts program downtown by opening a glass hot shop in our Cressman Center. We will soon further expand our art program downtown in the new 62-story Museum Plaza being developed on the river. This will be open before you graduate. We will soon offer our graduate business programs downtown.

And, of course, you in the class of 2011 will have the opportunity to watch the Cardinals play basketball in a new downtown arena before you graduate.

We have a number of other programs that are focused on our community, including partnerships with the Jefferson County Public Schools and our Signature Partnership program which brings the University of Louisville to a geographic area west of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and north of Algonquin Parkway – economically left behind.

All of this gives you the opportunity to take what you learn in the classroom and apply it to real-world experiences. As Provost Willihnganz noted, each of you will have a graduation requirement called the Quality Enhancement Plan—a requirement that you cap your education with practical, real world experiences through co-ops, internships, or other ways to apply the knowledge you have gained in the classroom to the world in which we live.

So we are excited that you are at the University of Louisville. Excited that you

will have the opportunity to take classes and learn from the very best faculty. Excited that you will have the opportunity to be engaged in real-world experiences in a growing and vibrant community.

We challenge you to be engaged in all aspects of campus and community life. Take advantage of all the opportunities you have to grow both personally and professionally at UofL.

When our convocation concludes we will ask you to join us for the alumni picnic on the oval in front of Grawemeyer Hall.

Before doing so, we ask you, the class of 2011, to join us on stage so we can present to you a CARDS baseball cap. Wear this cap with pride and in 4 years you'll be able to trade this baseball cap in for another hat—your mortar board at graduation.

Thanks for choosing the University of  
Louisville. Have a great year.

**GO CARDS!**