



Arthur C. Jones, Faculty Senate President
September 24, 2014



Dear Senators:

During the past year, as I settled into my role as Faculty Senate President-Elect, I began thinking about a framework for the work of the Senate that I would propose when I became President. As the months passed and as I solicited feedback from faculty colleagues, I decided that I would frame our work around a symbolic guiding theme that would serve as the framework for a set of subordinate, interconnected themes. Now that I'm beginning my term as President, I want to share with you the guiding theme that I am advancing and ask that you join me in organizing our work together using this framework. I've outlined it succinctly at the top of this letter, above. Let me elaborate by sharing the back story.

In my experience as a practicing clinical psychologist and scholar with an intercultural orientation, symbols have always carried enormous power. I have found that symbols, for both individuals and for communities, tend to be self-generating powerhouses in which interconnected themes emerge. These themes evolve naturally (sometimes in nonlinear, unpredictable ways) into richly meaningful goals that – as we reach for them – have the potential to be personally and collectively transformative. Symbols appear in many places in

Rather than entering into a detailed set of definitions of symbols, themes and goals, let me offer just one instructive example of these constructs in action that I hope will suffice for now to lay the groundwork for the framework I am advancing. As many of you know, I have spent much of my time over the last 20 years exploring – through scholarship and musical performance – the cultural and psychological underpinnings of the songs called spirituals, created and first sung by enslaved Africans in America in the 18th and 19th centuries. One of my favorite songs in the spirituals tradition is one that many of you will be familiar with because I've introduced it in several settings at DU:

The guiding theme of this song – the welcome table – carries tremendous symbolic power. One immediately imagines a metaphorical table that is the gathering place that welcomes and

operate as a federation of loosely connected academic and administrative units rather than as one university. Increasingly, many of us want to break out of these confining structural barriers.

This segmented institutional culture is highly compatible with the academic preparation most of us engaged in as graduate students. We entered graduate school in separate departments, each of which was associated with a specific academic discipline, often housed in a stand-alone building. That was certainly the case for me at the University of Iowa in the late 1960s and early 70s. I estimate that I spent at least 75 percent of my waking hours in the Psychology Department, which was housed in a building known as the Spence Laboratories of Psychology, named after the legendary Iowa psychologist Kenneth Spence, a pioneer in the conservative classical conditioning branch of behavioral psychology. (For Spence, even B.F. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning was considered radical!).

The Spence Labs – as we called the building – even housed its own specialized psychology library, so that psychology graduate students and faculty members had little incentive to venture outside the building. That was about as narrowly segregated as one could get, mirroring the numerous segregated grain silos that were spread across the countryside in the geographic area that encircled Iowa City! Even then, something in me rebelled against this unnatural system of self-imposed intellectual and social segregation.

I find myself encouraged that some scholars of higher education, and particularly liberal arts education (including Chancellor Chopp), are continuing to highlight the fact that the natural world outside of the academy is not structured along segregated disciplinary lines, and so our academic culture will be increasingly more isolated and less connected to external cultural and environmental realities if we insist on maintaining these outmoded ways of conducting our professional work.¹

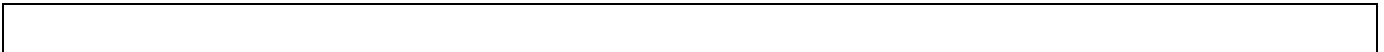
At the same time, I have sensed the presence of a _____ of sorts in the air, a collective yearning to break out of our normal ways of operating at DU. I have not tested it systematically, but there are signs that we are edging close to a "tipping point"² in which a

¹ See especially the new book by Wesleyan University President Michael Roth: [Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters](#), New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, and a recently published volume of essays edited by DU Chancellor Rebecca Chopp, with Susan Frost and Daniel Weiss: [Remaking College: Innovation and the Liberal Arts](#), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.

²Malcolm Gladwell, [The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference](#). New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000.

critical mass of us are ready to engage in a series of personal and collective actions that can be transformative for us as an institution as we move to _____ in a variety of ways.

For these reasons, I am advancing _____ as the guiding theme for our work in the Senate this year. This guiding theme generates several interconnected subordinate themes, each of which has the potential to motivate us to work for transformative institutional change:



As a Senate, one immediate opportunity is embodied in the hard work we have engaged in these last four years in creating a revised Appointments, Promotions and Tenure (APT1 0 0 1 2

Vision Statement for the 2014-2016 Facult

Finally, the results of a study of student experiences at DU (with a particular focus on students of color, international students and gay and lesbian students, whose responses to the most recent campus climate survey reflected heightened experiences of alienation and isolation at DU) will be released early next year. This report will provide an opportunity for the Faculty Senate to join in a campus-wide commitment to create a genuinely inclusive campus climate for all

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