In this, my seventh year as your president, I look forward to this year more than any other. I am so proud of this university--all that it has been in the past and all that it strives to be in the future. This university is gaining recognition as a respected, vibrant and essential element for the future of our region, as well as national attention as one of the best colleges for the real world. Everyone here has had a part in this growth and recognition, and should take great pride in the work that has been accomplished.

I thought you would like to see one of the media pieces our advancement office sometimes uses to promote this wonderful university to prospective students, alumni, donors and business partners.

Media pieces like these help us illustrate to others the experience Eastern can offer to students to help them on their way to becoming productive citizens. Many of our students tell us they appreciate that they are spoken to in a kind way, that people smile at them and make them feel welcome, that they are not a number, but a human being. They matter to us!

Our students are our collective work and effort that we recognize each year at graduation. We are so proud of all our accomplishments . . . and we are all so pleased and happy to have had a hand in helping those who come here to realize their aspirations of a better life . . . an educated life. We wish them well, we offer them future assistance where possible, and we welcome the next group of bright and energetic faces to our campus.

But I also think the media pieces help us to realize that we have chosen to work in a place in which we are all proud. I would like to recognize the many and varied components of our university that all work together so that we, as employees, can enjoy our work here. This creates a positive and beneficial experience for our students while they are here.

To all of you who work in our many departments and offices year round, those who work to feed us, those who work to keep our buildings and grounds clean, safe, and in good repair, those who police and protect us, those who keep our calendars, those who process applications and assist with financial aid . . . you are the engine of our workplace. We cannot exist without your daily effort and expertise. You make a difference, and your work is appreciated. Many times you are the primary people with whom our students interact. Would you all please stand? Thank you for the outstanding job you do! Welcome back to a new academic year!
To our faculty, congratulations on the many successful and innovative ways you teach our students. With over 100 fields of study, 50 majors, and a student to faculty ratio of 24 to 1, our students learn so much by knowing you and working side by side with you as you teach, encourage, advise and guide their study, research and personal growth. In addition to your teaching, you conduct research, write professionally, include service learning in your teaching, as well as finding grants and contracts to enhance your work. You also participate on boards and committees, and are community liaisons sharing your expertise with those around you. You make a difference to each student you teach and your colleagues. Your work is appreciated. Would all of the faculty please stand? Thank you for all you do. Welcome back!

To the 121 new faculty, staff, administrators and coaches hired since last year, welcome to EWU!! A high standard has been set for you. Would you please stand? Welcome!

We want to thank our many volunteer boards that work tirelessly to guide and advise us such as our Board of Trustees, our Foundation Board, our Alumni Board and our many advisory boards. Your work and care are sincerely appreciated. Would you please stand so that we can thank you. Welcome back!

To our deans, associate deans, department chairs, associate and assistant vice presidents, vice presidents and cabinet members, we all join together in recognizing that your conscientious attention to the enormous task of leading, communicating, managing, accounting, coordinating, funding, reporting to a host of agencies and attending to the fiscal responsibilities of a state resource is not an easy task. You make a difference every day to our staff, students and faculty. Your work is appreciated and applauded. Would you please stand? Thank you to each and every one of you! Welcome Back!

As you know, we do not exist in a virtual sense. EWU is located in Cheney, Washington, and the City of Cheney has been a willing and cooperative partner. We appreciate all that the City and our businesses do for the university. This breakfast is just one example of the goodwill we enjoy with the community in which we reside. Would all of you from the City and business community please stand so we can thank you for your continued patronage? Thank you for welcoming us back!

Our recent successes have not occurred by accident. It is the result of hard work on your part and of conscious planning and decision making on the part of many people at this university. Five years ago at this breakfast, I laid before you the outlines of a ten-year plan consisting of three phases. In Phase I, we addressed the internal problems that were afflicting the institution. In Phase II, we are growing and investing in the university. And, in Phase III, we will assess the results of our growth and investment and prepare ourselves to start the process again.

You should take great pride in knowing that many of the actions we took in the first phase are now paying off in the growth and investment phase. For example, we developed a brand new campus master plan premised upon our being a predominantly residential campus rather than a commuter campus. In that master plan, we identified
sites for future buildings to begin an applied research park. Today, located between the athletic practice fields and married student housing, two buildings are now completed or under construction. These two buildings, the first digital archives built by any state in this country and a new state crime lab, are developing critical relationships with our academic programs and will assist in fundamentally changing the nature of our university.

A second example is the tenure buyout program we initiated and implemented in two separate fiscal years. As a result of this initiative, the Provost will allocate three to five new faculty positions this fall from the $250,000 in savings gained by taking the difference between the salaries of the senior retiring faculty and the salaries of the newly hired junior faculty. A third example is your response to the goal I set in my Vision 2010 to reach $20 million in grants and contracts by the year 2010. The Eastern community received $12.2 million in grant and contract support during this past year. This is the third consecutive year of increased grant and contract support, and it is well above the average of $8.0 million per year Eastern received prior to fiscal year 2001-2002. This year’s record firmly places EWU in the top grant supported group of comprehensive universities nationwide.

A fourth example is the just completed installation of fiber from Spokane to our campus here in Cheney, linking the University to the new Virtual Possibilities Network, a private fiber network consisting of the colleges and universities in this region for research, innovation in education and economic development. Our network is linked west to Seattle, and from the hub in Seattle, to the rest of the world. This network will connect faculty and students among the participating institutions to each other in classrooms and research with voice, video and data; and it will support our efforts to link our faculty to businesses throughout the region. What makes these examples more amazing is that they were accomplished during a period in which we were also required to reduce our state general fund budgets by $5.5 million in the past three years.

And, of course, the efforts of all members of this university community have made it possible for our enrollment to grow from just 6,900 students seven years ago to over 9,800 students this fall; and this does not include the more than 500 students that are enrolled in Eastern’s programs on eight community college campuses around the state. Congratulations to all of you on our successes!

As we move forward into the growth and investment phase, how will we know where to invest our resources and where will the resources come from? In 1994 Ernest Boyer, one of the most influential spokespersons on higher education, described what he called the New American University. His vision for what a university should be is actually a very good description of Eastern:

“An institution that celebrates teaching and selectively supports research, while also taking special pride in its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice.”
I do not need to remind you about the EWU mission—you are already living it in what you do every day: working to make Eastern the best student-centered, regionally engaged, comprehensive university. We know that if we are to remain a model for the high-quality, best-value university of opportunity for our state and region, we must be proactive, not reactive. We must plan so that we can meet the future on our terms. That future will be based on what we value: our institutional priorities of service to students, supporting high-quality faculty, and engaging with our communities.

Last year we initiated a new element of our strategic planning process designed to help us consolidate our goals. We focused on the one thing that must drive all our planning decisions—the academic experience. If we get that right, we will get the budgeting and growth and capacity decisions right.

Judith Ramaley, former president of Portland State University said “change is a scholarly act.” By that, she meant that if done right, it exemplifies the professional values we hold dear: it is inclusive, involves respectful dialog, encourages experimentation and creates new networks for communication. Our planning process did all those things.

I want to take a moment to thank all those faculty and staff who participated, but especially Provost Brian Levin-Stankevich and Doctor Tony Flinn, past president of the Faculty Organization. I would also like to recognize the leaders of the Work Groups. If you are here, will you please stand:

Brian and Tony; and
Doctor Barbara Alvin
Doctor Patty Chantrill
Doctor Dana Elder
Ruth Galm
Doctor Raphael Guillory
Doctor Ray Hamel
Doctor Nick Jackson
Doctor Jane Pimentel
Doctor Wendy Repovich
Doctor Henry-York Steiner
Doctor Tom Trulove
Doctor Bill Youngs

Thank you for your participation.

You can read the full academic strategic plan on our website and see a short synopsis of the highlights in the handout you receive today. I encourage you to review this handout closely. There are two things you should notice.

First, while our plan has three priorities—our students, our faculty and our community—they are actually three interdependent facets of one overall commitment to
a quality, integrated Eastern experience. Strategies that benefit our faculty benefit our students . . . strategies that benefit our students help our communities . . . you get the picture.

Second, the brochure lists only a few of the many strategies in our plan. These are the priority items identified by the Cabinet and are first steps. Others will be added as the Faculty Senate meets and as these are implemented.

As we begin a new academic year, I want to focus on what this strategic plan means for those of us here today.

As you read through this handout, you can see that we are not changing our student-focused mission—that should never change. We are challenging each other to redefine it in ways that will change what we do and how we do it. We want to connect general education to the majors—that is going to mean working across disciplines, departments and schools to deliver courses in ways that give students deep and integrated perspectives. We want to expand our idea of student access to include access to co-curricular learning, access to faculty-student research projects, and access to experiential learning through service or engaged real-world practice. We want to provide learning that connects students to diverse people and places—across the curriculum.

What is exciting about these goals is that they also create opportunities for us that benefit our own professional lives as, faculty and staff and administrators.

We can do that only if all of us commit to working in “three dimensions.” We have a long history of focusing on students first. But we also need to add two more perspectives. We need to ask not only …

• Am I doing what is best for our students?

But also….

• Am I doing what is best for my personal growth and development; and
• Am I doing what is best for EWU?

Our strategic plan offers us the tools to help us begin to answer those questions. That is why we are not filing the plan away. As Michael Fullan said, “Good ideas with no ideas on how to implement them are wasted ideas.”

In your handout, you will see we are not wasting our ideas. We have already taken some action steps. I am pleased to announce some of them today. The Provost and Faculty Organization President will begin the General Education Review, to be led by the Senate. The Board is looking for results, and I will add my voice to ask the Senate to move forward with all deliberate urgency. Related to this critical effort at curriculum innovation, we have been selected to participate in the Pew Foundation-funded R2R project—or Roadmap to Redesign. It is a new learning model being pioneered by our Psychology Department to determine more effective ways to enhance student learning of introductory courses, while at the same time expanding faculty opportunities for
service and research. I also want to lend my voice to the creation of a new **Center for Service Learning**. While operational details remain to be worked out, particularly in deliberations between the Deans and Faculty Senate, this kind of concept is essential to the integrated academic experience that will truly distinguish our university.

I would like to announce the start of an annual campus-wide learning theme in conjunction with a national trend. Each year we will encourage all colleges to provide enriched learning around a particular theme. We will ask for nominations for a faculty or staff person to design a year-long theme beginning in 2006. This year, we will use the **American Democracy Project**, a national initiative supported by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. You will read more about this in the weeks to come. To support this, as well as initiatives in diversity and service learning, we are expanding the **Faculty Fellows** program. There is a sheet in your handout that describes the program. This leadership development program brings faculty together to learn from each other and will link co-curricular activities with classroom experiences.

During this past year, our Faculty Fellow for Diversity, Dr. Raphael Guillory, was part of a work group that was responding to my call at last year’s breakfast for an assessment of our academic program offerings related to diversity. That work group has recently submitted its report to the Provost, and its work will be forwarded for further discussion and action to the Faculty Senate. Will members of that work group please stand so that we may recognize you for your efforts?

Doctor Carlos Maldonado
Doctor Deirdre Almeida
Doctor Valerie Appleton
Doctor Jerry Galm
Doctor Dick Winchell
Nancy Fleming

Thank you all for your valuable contributions.

I encourage all of you to become involved in helping to implement these important first steps toward continuing a more integrated and interdependent EWU experience.

In addition to these important first steps, we are also launching what we are calling **SP3**—the third phase in our strategic planning process. It is also a collaborative effort, coordinated by the Vice Presidents and the Faculty Organization President. Now that we have the academic plan in place, we can begin to look at how we can support our vision: our enrollment, physical and programmatic activities, and our funding strategies.

This month we will distribute to you a white paper outlining EWU’s current growth, capacity and resource environment. You will have an opportunity to discuss the paper at a series of information sessions to be scheduled in early October.
I want to thank the hard-working individuals who have spent the past few weeks pulling together the facts and figures that will form the backbone of the white paper. Will you please stand so we can recognize your efforts?

Jeff Gombosky  
Neville Hosking  
Shawn King  
Tesha Kropidlowski  
Rick Romero  
Annette Skaer  
Michelle Whittingham

Thank you for all your hard work!

After we have had the opportunity to review the white paper, we will be convening work teams to look more closely at the issues that emerge from our information sessions. Our goal will be to finalize strategies for our growth, capacity and resources for the Board of Trustees in June.

Our strategic planning has two other very important benefits. First, the plan helps us begin to talk to alumni, corporations, and philanthropic groups about how they can help us expand our horizons. Over the course of the next two years, I will be taking this message outside the campus to share our vision with others.

Second, our planning has also continued to bring us together as a campus. We have developed goals that are important to all of us. I know there are ways in which each one of us can contribute to making these goals a reality.

As this academic year begins, I encourage each of you to think in three dimensions: Am I doing what is best for our students? Am I doing what is best for my personal growth and development; and am I doing what is best for EWU? Together we can create our future.

Many issues are facing us this year: state funding, salaries, accountability, new programs, and labor negotiations. Are we all going to agree? Agree to disagree? Look to find common ground? I pledge to continue to lead this university with mutual respect for all, to encourage civil debate and discussion, to use the platforms provided to me to advance our mission and vision, and to work together to continue the good that we are accomplishing here.

The fact is, we have all chosen to be here, and it is a terrific corner of the world. I am truly privileged to share with you this very special time at Eastern Washington University. It is indeed a ‘Great time to be an Eagle.’ Welcome back!