Good morning and welcome to the fifth annual Blugold Breakfast.

As you may have guessed from my hard hat and the construction tape on your tables, today’s theme reminds us that excellence at UW-Eau Claire is always “under construction”—and never more so than during the year ahead of us, as we plan to break ground on our long-awaited Student Center and Children’s Center.

We will literally be “under construction” and so I invite you to take with you one of the stress balls or rubber ducks at your table for those times this year when you struggle to find a parking spot or you have to slog through the snow around construction fencing. Let these stress relievers remind you that this is the kind of change we’ve been waiting years to experience. I’m proud to be wearing this hard hat this morning, because we’re building even better facilities for an already great University.

I would like to begin with some introductions and with thanks. First, this morning would not be possible without the generous support of Sodexo, which has underwritten the full cost of this wonderful hot breakfast. Sodexo was a co-sponsor last year and this year stepped up as the sole supporter. The Sodexo team are truly our partners and I want to thank Christian Wise and everyone on his staff.

They not only got up early to help cook and serve this breakfast, but they work hard behind the scenes day in and day out. Let’s give all our Sodexo colleagues a big round of applause. Christian, would you say a few words?

[Christian’s remarks.]

This morning I want to warmly welcome all our new faculty and staff to their first Blugold Breakfast. I hope this is the first of many in the years to come. If you joined the University anytime during the past year, please stand so we can officially welcome you to our campus.

In particular, I’d like to introduce two new deans who arrived this summer—will you stand. Dr. Brian Carlisle is the new Dean of Students—he arrived in July from the San Francisco Art Institute. Brian brings us great experience to continue to build our extraordinary student learning environment.

I also want to welcome Dr. Diane Hoadley, our new Dean of the College of Business. Diane joined us just three weeks ago from Eastern Illinois University. We’re extremely pleased to have her on our leadership team and to continue growing the quality and distinction of our Business programs.

I also want to acknowledge the significant contributions of my Cabinet over the past year. This group of faculty, staff, students, classified staff and administrators has provided invaluable counsel to me. We have some important guests who got up early to be with us this morning and I’d like you to help me welcome them. First, someone who has been my co-host at countless university events and receptions and at every one of the past five Blugold Breakfa}
• Dylan Jambrek – Student Body President
• Phil Rynish – Student Body Vice President
• Sarah Tweedale, Chief of Staff
• Matt Sias [Sigh-us] – Information Technology Director
• Casey Driscoll – Secretary
• Jessi Van Natta – Organizations Director

I am looking forward to working with all of you this year and to welcoming to campus the almost 11,000 students registered for this coming academic year.

We’re honored to have several legislators and good friends with us today.

As I read your name, please stand—and let’s hold our applause until everyone has been introduced:

• Bruce Barker, president of Chippewa Valley Technical College
• Brian Doudna Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation
• Tom McCarty, Eau Claire County Administrator
• Gregg Moore, chair of the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors
• Representative Jeff Smith of the 93rd Assembly District
• Representative Kristen Dexter, of the 68th Assembly District
• Mark Aumann, representing U.S. Congressman Ron Kind
• Marjorie Bunce, representing U.S. Senator Herb Kohl

We in western Wisconsin have waited many years to enjoy local representation on the UW System Board of Regents. Last year, one of our very own, student Aaron Wingad, began a two-year term as a student Regent. Then this spring, Eau Claire was fortunate to have Edmund Manydeeds, a local attorney with Richie, Guettinger & Manydeeds, named to the Board of Regents as well. We’re honored that both Regents are with us this morning—please stand so we can thank you for your service.

Aaron, will you please join me at the podium to bring official greetings from the Board.

[Aaron delivers greeting and recognizes Paul Thomas, UW System Regents' Teaching Excellence Award recipient.]

Thank you, Aaron and Regent Manydeeds, and congratulations Paul. When Dr. Thomas received the award in Madison last week he credited UW-Eau Claire faculty as among the most dedicated he knows — and I must heartily second that observation.

It’s now my pleasure to invite UW-Eau Claire Foundation Board Secretary Betsy Kell to the stage to bring greetings and we hope a little something else from the UW-Eau Claire Foundation.

[Betsy presents check and then introduces student Melissa Gullickson to say a few words about the impact the Foundation has made.]

Thank you, Melissa, for reminding us why we love to come to work every day.

I want to recognize all those of you who support our University through your financial donations as well as your time and dedication. You have helped make the past two years the second- and third-best fundraising years in our history. I encourage you to take the time to read the stories in the Foundation brochure in the packet at your table. I want to especially commend the Foundation staff members who have achieved so much during a very challenging economic climate.
It is a Blugold tradition, indeed a highlight of our opening meeting each year, to recognize those individuals who exemplify our University’s commitment to excellence.

Would the following people please come forward for the presentation of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Excellence Awards:

- April Bleske-Rechek
- Connie Russell
- Wanda Schulner
- Paula Kleintjes Neff
- Scott Lester
- Terry Wells

Provost Patricia Kleine and Vice Chancellor Beth Hellwig, would you also please come forward.

Excellence is not just our motto at UW-Eau Claire, but something that each one of us works hard to achieve. It’s fitting that each year we recognize those faculty and staff who set high benchmarks for all of us to follow. Each Excellence Award recipient will receive the University Medallion and a check from the UW-Eau Claire Foundation in the amount of $1,500. The Marquart family endowment funds the Excellence in Classified and Academic Staff Awards and the Excellence in Teaching Awards.

[Awards are presented.]

Congratulations to all of you. It is now my pleasure to introduce University Senate Chair Susan Harrison.

[Susan's remarks]

Thank you, Susan.

Our University is privileged to have a tradition of dedicated leadership in shared governance. I don’t know if Susan is close to setting a System record for years as Senate chair, but we are fortunate to benefit from her continued service. Thank you, Susan.

This is our fifth Blugold Breakfast together. Over these years I have talked about planning, diversity, new facilities, resources and fundraising, and the special and unique characteristics that define this university community.

We have not only talked about these things at the breakfast, we have spent the past five years acting on them as well.

With your help we developed a vision and a dynamic strategic plan—our Centennial Plan—that has become a guide to action. We created a new budgeting process, one that is far more participative and transparent than in the past. And we are changing the way we work together, holding ourselves accountable for continued excellence and innovation.

If you want to see evidence of that change just look at what we have accomplished in the past year alone.

Last year, at this breakfast, I stood before you with some slides and a packed agenda. Still ahead of us back then was our 10-year re-accreditation visit by the Higher Learning Commission and the October visit by the Board of Regents, both of which we completed with high commendations and accolades.

Still to come last August was the implementation of Campus Solutions. I am pleased to recognize that this month we went live—on schedule. Continued work will be required this year to smooth the rough edges and
improve our familiarity with this system, but great progress has been made thanks to the work of many
dedicated staff members. Would all those who have worked on Campus Solutions—whether LTS staff,
functional staff or through contributions large or small—please stand so we can recognize your achievement,
and more than that, your dedication. [Applause]

Still to come last September was the collective bargaining vote by faculty—we now continue that process of
moving toward negotiations in the best interests of faculty, their students and our university.

Only a year ago we were unfolding the rough plans for the new Student Center. Now, one historic tree, fifty
feet and lots of detailed planning work later, the State is about to move forward, bidding out that contract,
with construction to start this academic year. Just as important as the new building, has been our efforts to
make it sustainable—designed to silver LEED standards. But we’ve gone further.

This year we have an energized Clean Commute cadre and a forthcoming student study notes that our
Facilities Management folks have demonstrated commitment and creativity in making us a UW System leader
in saving energy.

With our Sustainability Fellow, Kate Hale-Wilson, our faculty and students have worked with my
administration to work toward a campus plan to reduce our carbon footprint. Our students will shortly unveil
our new biennial Greenhouse Gas Emission study. We want to continue to be leaders in environmental
responsibility.

At last year’s Blugold Breakfast I spoke about Diversity and our EDI goals—a theme I have repeated at every
one of these breakfasts.

This priority has taken on even more urgency under the direction of the Board of Regents who have been
unmistakably clear that they want quantifiable improvement in the diversity of our student body and in those
we graduate.

Today, I’m pleased that we have begun to make progress and have some quantifiable results to show for our
efforts this year. Thanks to Admissions and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the number of multicultural
students in our incoming class is up 38% over last year, at a five-year high. This is a promising beginning, a
trend that is beginning to be echoed by other initiatives across campus.

Jeff Vahlbusch and David Jones, would you please stand. Jeff, Director of the Honors Program and David, the
Honors Faculty Fellow, have worked with the University Honors Council, Admissions and OMA to apply the
findings of our Equity Scorecard to re-envision the Honors Program. They piloted a new admissions
mechanism that has produced the largest cohort of students ever in the program—140.

Impressively of the 18 new students entering the program, 13 are students of color. Great work by all
involved!

I want to thank David Shih, who served as our inaugural EDI Faculty Fellow, and Selika Ducksworth-
Lawton, our current EDI Faculty Fellow, for their contributions, past, present and future.

We have made considerable efforts under the passionate leadership of Vice Chancellor Beth Hellwig to
recognize changes needed in our campus life to include our LGBTQ faculty, staff and students. There has
been considerable progress in many areas, as reflected by an improvement in our LGBTQ-friendly rating on
the nationally recognized Campus Climate Index. Many departments, units and student groups have
participated in Safe Space training to make our campus a more welcoming community.

Our Blugold Beginnings program continues to reach out to students of color and low-income students in our
part of the state. These are good directions, and we need to stay focused.
We have also worked to make this campus welcoming for our veterans and their families, being recognized by UW Extension and by G.I. Jobs Magazine as a veteran-friendly campus, creating a space and dedicated staffing to serve the needs of those who have served their fellow citizens.

If you think back to our breakfast last fall you’ll recall that we’d only just completed PEEQ—our Program to Evaluate and Enhance Quality. I was still reviewing the many recommendations received from the Evaluation Team. Today, a year later, we have implemented or made progress on almost two-thirds of the 69 action initiatives that resulted from that highly informative review process. You can read about our progress on the strategic planning website.

Thanks to PEEQ we have been investing in our priorities—and seeing results. Let me give you just a couple of examples:

- Our international enrollment had not rebounded since the exodus of foreign students after 9/11. We invested in recruiting and charged the Center for International Education with doubling our international enrollment in three years. This fall, our international enrollment is up 26% over last year and connections have been made that will accelerate this growth in the next two years.
- As the PEEQ report recommended, we are investing in our strengths. For example, this year we added a new tenure-line faculty position in Mathematics that is essential to achieving a national designation as a Center for Actuarial Excellence.

You may also recall the Powerpoint slide at last year’s breakfast that demonstrated our lackluster performance in graduating our very capable students in four years. We spent this year studying that challenge and we now have extensive and detailed data and analysis to help us improve our performance.

In my address last September, you’ll recall I argued that achieving our vision to be the premier undergraduate learning environment in the Upper Midwest would require more resources, especially in light of the significant reductions we experienced in State funding.

I admit that last year I may have been rather vocal about our propensity to continue to spend resources on a business-as-usual basis. I was even a little shrill once in a while about the need to stop all but the most essential spending.

But we DID stop spending. We took our reductions, most directly in the individual loss of salary that each of us continues to experience. I want to acknowledge the sacrifice that furloughs and the pay plan rescission have had on all of us this year and commend you all on the integrity with which this campus responded, putting our students first.

Our collective frugality resulted in reversing what had become a trend of declining end-of-year balances, and we have restored a balance between revenue and spending that can help us meet such needs as course availability and potential base or one-time budget reductions in the next biennium.

Last September I proposed the Blugold Commitment. It was a busy fall and winter, and in February the Board of Regents approved the proposal that evolved from one of the most intensive and yet inspiring discussion and negotiation exercises I have ever seen on a college campus.

I want to commend our student leadership for stepping up and partnering with us to invest in this university and in the quality of their education. The student leadership courageously said yes to a $1,200 differential tuition increase.

I want to publicly recognize past Student Senate President Michael Umhoefer and current President Dylan Jambrek for their leadership last year in helping us to win Regent approval.
I can truthfully say that I could not be prouder of our student leaders, who in their presentations to students here and to Regents in Madison exemplified the best of this University. They modeled civil discourse, intellectual courage and responsible leadership.

I look forward to a continuing partnership that involves our students in the shared work of distinguishing this University as the premier undergraduate learning community in the Upper Midwest.

The Blugold Commitment will, after a four-year phase in, result in more than $12 million additional dollars annually that will be used to enhance our academic excellence, increase faculty time devoted to students and student-involved research, provide more high-impact experiences for students and help students with financial need.

The Blugold Commitment is already at work.

This summer, while away from the campus, I logged on to our website and saw three spectacular programs highlighted: the announcement of the TIES semester-long immersion program in Argentina; our art students studying in Thailand; and a new study-abroad program for Winterim in China. Two of these three programs were directly funded by the Blugold Commitment, further internationalizing our students’ education.

Also thanks to the Blugold Commitment we have already begun to invest in new faculty. Starting this fall, the equivalent of 10 positions was added across all four academic colleges to free up faculty advising time that will, along with our professional advising staff, create an integrated advising network dedicated to student success.

In short, thanks to sound fiscal management and the innovative Blugold Commitment student partnership, we are better positioned to tackle our vision to be the premier learning community in the Upper Midwest.

We are also in a position to think transformatively, and I want to make sure you understand that you have permission to do so. Some of us have labored for so long in an environment of scarcity that we need to re-learn how to stretch our imaginations. Even in this so-called “new normal,” we need to move forward instead of reminiscing about some ideal past.

This summer I had the privilege of travelling to China to visit with one of our partner campuses there. I continue to be amazed at the scale of investment the Chinese are making in higher education and the boldness of their ideas. That trip reminded me that our benchmarks for excellence are no longer within our state or our region—they are global. And UW-Eau Claire is well prepared to compete on that stage. We must remember the vision we painted in the opening of our Centennial Plan and continue to make it a reality.

This is the spot in the speech where the Chancellor puts the “but.” BUT we face a tough economy. BUT we need to work harder. BUT we aren’t doing enough. BUT you need to do more.

I don’t have a “BUT” for you this year.

We are not at the end of some grand accomplishment. We are not at the beginning of another new initiative. We are following an agreed-upon plan to achieve in the future the same extraordinary environment that those who went before us achieved in their stewardship of this university. We are well into that journey, and our task is to continue to build on what we’ve begun. So then, what are the priorities for this coming year?

Take the packet at your table and pull out the back sheet—the Gold Arrows chart. Again this year, the Cabinet has helped me to identify the key activities that will need our attention to keep our momentum toward our 2016 vision.
When the University Planning Committee asked the University Senate last spring what activities we need to focus on as our improvement work this year, the Senate told them, loud and clear: “don’t add anything new. We’ve worked hard and we can’t take on anything more.” The Cabinet listened. No new initiatives. The projects we want to work on this year are those we’ve already started, are well underway and those we just need to keep moving forward.

I’d like to spend just a few minutes reviewing these 2010 Gold Arrows with you. I’ll start with the first arrow on the left as this is the core of our academic excellence. This arrow asks us to continue to pilot, assess and improve the Liberal Education Core. Continue to develop the high-impact practices that set us apart and benefit our students. Continue our EDI focus.

This is not new work. We are already revising our General Education program and implementing what may well serve as a national model of transformative learning. In just two years, thanks to many of you, a determined new Provost, and a Department of Education Title III grant, we now have more than 40 faculty members piloting new multi-disciplinary course bundles focused around big questions and often drawing in our student services staff to extend this learning well beyond the classroom.

These “bundle-eers” come from departments across the campus, and I have seen them hard at work this summer on this invigorating new adventure in teaching. This is exciting, daring work and it is happening right now.

This arrow nicely complements a new UW System initiative called Educational Attainment, something you’ll hear more about this fall. It is a System-wide effort to increase the number of college graduates in Wisconsin.

Unlike many other UW campuses who seek to significantly expand their enrollment, we will contribute to Ed Attainment goals by helping students to achieve more timely graduation and by leveraging the resulting available upper-division capacity through increased enrollment of transfer and non-traditional students.

I want to be clear that our approach will not sacrifice quality for quantity. Rather we will increase our use of four-year graduation plans, expand faculty advising, increase mini-session enrollment and design and deliver student services to support greater success.

I’d like to jump now to the third gold arrow on your sheet—the one on the right—which is to continue to implement the facilities, enrollment, sustainability and inclusive excellence plans we’ve worked so hard to create, and to continue to coordinate all of our efforts.

Whether that means making sure we’re talking across divisions or partnering with our community, we need to continue to collaborate. My own personal goal is to continue to explore community partnerships on facilities because when we work together on shared projects—like an arts center or community event facility—Eau Claire and UW-Eau Claire both benefit.

I have argued since I arrived here four years ago that our facilities do not do justice to the quality of teaching and learning that occurs within them. This year, we begin to do something about that. We’ll be “under construction.”

Over the past several years, we’ve gotten used to a lot of change, but this year change will be visible and noisy. It will interfere with your parking spaces and with your routes across and around campus. Work will begin this year on both the Student Center and the new children’s center near the HSS building.

We will also continue with planning the new Academic Building and complete our Master Plan for the campus. All this will present a challenge to our ability to communicate effectively. Let me give you an example:
Many of you know how much I like to spend my summer cycling on back-country roads. This summer, however, I’d often be 20 miles into a ride only to meet an “under construction” sign and find that the only route home has no bike lane and is covered with loose gravel and fresh oil (both very bad for bikes, bike tires and middle-aged cyclists).

Now I know that these projects will likely lead to an even better riding environment for me when they are done, but I don’t appreciate finding out about the detour in the middle of the ride and would have planned an alternate route had I known in advance of the road work.

We all know that our campus construction projects are great for the University. The reality is, however, they will disrupt our routines. We are working hard, however, to make sure that you all know what the disruptions will be in advance so that you can plan alternatives. Keep an eye on the Under Construction icon on the web site and watch for updates that affect your building or your campus activities.

Which brings me to our final gold arrow—the one in the middle of your sheet. It’s not a new priority, but this year, it’s the most important one—to nurture our human resources and to create a more supportive and equitable campus community. This is a gold arrow we can all make possible. I know it will be one of my personal priorities.

We will continue to work toward greater transparency and to improve communication about the decisions we face. We now have revitalized University Senate committees that are concerned with facilities, technology and budget. Information on our budget process will be rolled out earlier this year so that there is ample time for planning, discussion and transformative thinking across disciplines and jurisdictions.

This fall you will all have additional opportunities to contribute your ideas to the Facilities Master Plan. We will involve you in ongoing efforts to determine parking solutions during the construction.

While there will continue to be challenges in the coming year, we remain a unique and distinctive university. I hope that you will join me in working hard to protect that most precious asset we have, the unique culture that has been built by generations before us and that has made UW-Eau Claire the attractive and successful institution it is today.

So take the hard-hat stress ball at your tables and put it on your desk or work space. Use it as needed, but more important, let it be a reminder when you see it there—or on a colleague’s desk—that the inconveniences we all face together will bring a better environment in the future.

Let us commit today to be supportive of one another. To offer a word of encouragement when we see a colleague or student is frustrated. To be patient when we must make allowances.

I ask this, not because it’s a kind or civil thing to do. But because it is at the heart of our mission.

You’ll notice in your packet a business card with our mission, vision and values. I want to draw your attention to our mission.

This mission is brand new. Approved by the Regents this June after serious and committed debate on campus last year. Take a minute to read it.

This mission is uniquely ours and focuses on the attributes of creativity, critical insight, empathy and intellectual courage. This university has a proud tradition of taking creative approaches to learning, to tackling challenges—from bundles to Blugold Commitment.

We graduate students who are prepared and confident in the academy and the workplace thanks to the rigorous critical thinking they are challenged to develop here.
Empathy and intellectual courage are fostered by all our disciplines, our co-curricular experiences and what we demand of one another.

Creativity, critical insight, empathy and intellectual courage—important words, but not as important, in my opinion, as the first five in this mission statement: we foster in one another.

This mission is not just the work of one department, one discipline or one division.

It requires not only our faculty and staff but engaged students as well, all actively involved in learning. Each of us plays a different but essential role in fulfilling our mission to create a learning community of distinction.

In short, our mission is a shared enterprise, a noble calling that links us together in our learning, work and vision and in our collective contributions to this great university.

So while I ask you to continue the extraordinary work we have begun, to tackle this year’s Gold Arrows and to keep your eyes on our Centennial Vision, please also watch out for one another and I’ll promise to do the same.

Thank you and have a great year!