The Inauguration of President Ann Weaver Hart

Ann Weaver Hart was inaugurated as the UA's 21st president on Nov. 30, 2012. Below is the address she made during the inauguration, held in Centennial Hall. A video of her address can be viewed online. A slideshow can be viewed here.

"The Risk to Blossom"

Members of the Board of Regents, my colleague presidents, past UA presidents, leaders of Native Nations, distinguished guests from other colleges and universities in the United States and Mexico and the learned societies, elected officials, deans, faculty, staff, appointed professionals, administrators, students, neighbors: Good afternoon and thank you for being here.

To the members of the Board, thank you for the trust you have placed in me. I accept it with humility and with confidence that, working together, we will achieve our common goals. Your stewardship has brought Arizona's universities to new levels of leadership, achievement and prominence. Today, I will ask yet more of you.

To Ms. Regina Siquieros: I am humbled and honored by the Tohono O'odham blessing you provided for this occasion. To all of you who have spoken this afternoon, thank you for your elegant and generous words.

To our world-class deans and faculty, staff and appointed professionals, I recognize and admire the work you do. Your achievements bring honor to the University of Arizona. Equally important, I applaud your skills as teachers and the bonds you forge with the students entrusted to our care. Today, I will ask you to join together to create a new future for the University of Arizona that embraces the spirit of the American injunction to "Go West."
To our wonderful neighbors in the Old Pueblo: I am so proud that Randy and I have been invited to become citizens of this historic city, one of the longest continuously occupied places in the United States – where the land along the Santa Cruz River has been inhabited for at least 4,000 years, in an area that has been continuously occupied for 12,000 years – literally since the end of the last Ice Age. The beauty of the desert that surrounds us, and the cultural, ethnic and social diversity that distinguished our past, will enrich our future. This wonderful destination inspires us even as it provides solace, respite and challenge.

To our alumni: thank you for joining us today. You bring honor and distinction to the University of Arizona with your accomplishments, and your support is invaluable to our future. Through your legacy and the example you set for University of Arizona students, you are setting the stage on which we will all play an important part. Today I ask you, too, to do more.

To our cherished students, young and old, undergraduate, graduate and professional, you are the lifeblood and future of this great institution and the reason for its founding. Your vitality, energy and commitment inspire ours. Our first duty will always be to you. And you will help us create the new University of Arizona.

To all of you, I invoke the words of President John F. Kennedy when I say: the message you are about to hear today sums up not what I intend to offer to you, but what I intend to ask of you. Universities in the United States and around the world today are experiencing an unprecedented challenge to the formula for success that has driven our actions since the Second World War.

In 1913, Arizona Governor George Hunt said that the university was being recognized for shaping the State of Arizona itself: a daunting responsibility. He said, “The University is making a State, or helping to shape its affairs upon that broad basis of intelligence which begets moral and mental courage.”
In that spirit, I find no utility in reminding ourselves and others that our state funding has been dramatically reduced and by how much, hoping that by mourning the past, we will resurrect it. We will never return to the funding models of the 20th century. The revenue sources for great universities will be different. I will ask you to explore, develop and expand these opportunities.

While the budgetary events beginning in 2007-08 were catastrophic, they are now a part of history. Like a deep-sea volcano, these events can be catalytic – venting, brewing, stewing and spewing up nutrients, the building blocks for new land and new life. Out of that turbulence, we can and will become a 21st century university that not only attracts the best and brightest students, faculty, staff and partners, but also attracts visitors from around the world to see how we are doing it. And part of this success will be modeling change by disrupting the past, as an ongoing process to create the 22nd century university. As Albert Camus said, “In the middle of winter, I … learned there was in me an invincible summer.” A great vision for our hot and invincible Arizona summer!

I also find no utility in adherence to rules and regulations that have persisted long past their useful lives. We operate under many such rules, regulations and laws at the university, ABOR system and state levels that were designed for an era that has passed, and which have outlived their usefulness. We will remove these barriers, eliminating dysfunctional rules that no longer serve the purposes for which they were enacted and which may have become an end to themselves. We will need new frameworks to protect goals while advancing the execution of a prosperous future. We have already begun this conversation at the Arizona Board of Regents; let's see it through. Disruptive innovations by definition disrupt!

These will not be comfortable conversations. I want to make it very clear that we do not intend to become the cloistered monasteries of the 21st century – distinguished repositories of the knowledge of the
Western world yet destined to oblivion. We will embrace an enlightened dynamism.

As most of you know, the University of Arizona has been engaged over the past three months through the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, chaired by Professor J.C. Mutchler, with close support from Provost Andrew Comrie, in a comprehensive examination of our academic accomplishments, strengths, hopes and dreams. They have been developing a framework which we will integrate with our campus and financial plans. This committee, the many groups that provided input and all who will provide future input, identified exciting ideas that will truly challenge us all to shape this new university for the 21st century American West.

Over the coming weeks and months, we will have many opportunities to discuss, refine and perfect that process. Huge progress has occurred, and many of you here this afternoon have been active participants. Always, we will focus on execution and implementation, remembering that, however disruptive action may be, inaction is paralysis.

I have structured the remainder of my remarks this afternoon on the ideas that arose out of the planning process with attention to hopes and dreams for the university as a whole and knowing that all of you will be critical partners in the decisions and actions that will make these dreams a reality.

**BUILDING CROSS-CUTTING INNOVATIONS**

We will build cross-cutting experiences through innovations that transcend traditional boundaries between disciplines, through broader and more universally experienced educational excellence, through research excellence that redefines success and informs the world's definitions of not only what we discover, but how we discover it, and through enriched community and world impact.
We will, like the best jazz ensembles, compose a new and inspiring future. I said earlier this afternoon that I would ask more of you. My first action request is to the Regents, faculty and staff: that you reject our conventional definitions of the community of composers in this ensemble – invite new partners into the mix. Break molds. Create a new improvisational university. I promise it will make you and me uncomfortable, and we may need very different laws and structures to make this possible, but this will be our future, or there will be no future. We require sophisticated conversations about where we will make investments and to what end. These new partners will include businesses, independent investors and nonprofits.

The changes we seek may require new ways of structuring our governance. To expand the community of engaged partners, we must change our policies and practices (while preserving our values) and we must redefine our internal incentive and reward structures to encourage their participation. I offer four possible examples of cross-cutting innovations:

1. You all know the numbers – we currently have an endowment of $563 million while our peers draw on endowments of $2-14 billion. So, alumni and friends, we will need your support to push the University of Arizona into the new century with resources more congruent with 21st century university needs. Help us make re-energized philanthropy a part of that future.

2. You have also heard me on many occasions talk about the critical shortage of physicians in Arizona and the role that a lack of Graduate Medical Education slots plays in that shortage. As we work to ensure the success of our two medical schools, Governor Brewer and others here today, we could join together in advocating for a new federal policy that would permit eligible states to seek waivers to the federal cap on residency slots through Medicare with the goal of enabling Arizona's access to
federal funding support for an increased number of GME positions. The cap on GME slots enacted by Congress in 1997 was particularly devastating to states that have experienced high population growth since the cap, had relatively few residencies in 1996 and had a relatively small pre-existing supply of physicians. This description fits Arizona perfectly! According to the 2010 census, Arizona is the 16th most populous and second-fastest growing state in the nation, with a population increase of 24.6 percent between 2000 and 2010. Seventy-five percent of Arizona medical school graduates who complete a residency here in Arizona stay in the state to practice medicine, but only 28 percent of our graduates who complete their graduate medical training elsewhere return to Arizona. We could lead the nation by jointly developing support, identifying local champions in other affected states and coordinating with sister institutions in states facing similar challenges.

3. UA could adopt a program review and management process that is truly outward-looking. Using external reviewers from the broader community rather than solely disciplinary-based university colleagues, we would conduct more frequent reviews designed to expose our effectiveness in integration and application in every endeavor and discipline. This process would yield a very different view of ourselves from the outside-in rather than the inside-out.

4. Finally, we can reach out to clinical partners in Phoenix to ensure the future success of our NCI-designated Cancer Center and our Phoenix College of Medicine.
Effective university-government partnerships, new business partners and new philanthropy are just a few examples of ways in which we can make our boundaries more permeable and our innovations more cutting-edge.

More than two decades ago, in Scholarship Reconsidered, Ernest Boyer challenged the current incentives for faculty, definitions of faculty work and the meaning of scholarship. Boyer classified four kinds of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and teaching. These are not new constructs, but a serious university-wide implementation of integration and application into the current focus on basic research and creative work, teaching and service would have a profound impact on our university and would enable us to achieve the goals in my first request to you this afternoon. And so my second call to action is for the faculty of the University of Arizona to redesign the reward system for faculty, specifically including promotion and tenure provisions in every field that truly recognize integration and application, as well as basic discovery and creative work. Faculty, I ask you to spread your wings and lead.

Our processes for acknowledging these accomplishments in integration and application are still very crude and will need careful design. Senior faculty mentors will need to guide young scholars and artists in thinking about the questions they ask in multiple ways, planning ahead to gather their data or design their research to answer questions in multiple realms and respond to different cultural and artistic needs.

In the new world-class academy at the University of Arizona, Wallace Stegner would have been eligible for promotion and tenure, and Crossing to Safety would be possible through many paths that we create together.

Continuing the theme of integration and application, we will further strive to advance cross-cutting innovations in the nature of human knowledge. Knowledge is organized in categories invented by humans. We designed it; we can redesign it. The University of Arizona has the
cultural, physical and virtual infrastructure that will advance innovations in education, research and community and global impact. Rather than struggle to preserve what is for its own sake or in an attempt to show respect for the past and present, we should embrace disruption and opportunism. Like an undersea volcano, we will bathe in the energy, nutrients and turbulence that can be huge assets when we seize the opportunity they represent. To paraphrase historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, well-behaved people seldom make history. And we intend to make history, so maybe the volcano is an apt metaphor for the future we will make!

What does it mean to create the future in a knowledge industry like ours? Mixing metaphors but in the hope they fall within the bounds of conceptual congruity: I have long been captivated by the concept of punctuated evolution advanced by Stephen Jay Gould – the paleontological equivalent, perhaps, of an undersea volcano. Grand change sometimes comes as a great surprise after long periods of stability. Since the Second World War, we have benefitted from a model of the great American land-grant research university that served our national needs splendidly. But 2008 changed all that, and we now know, looking back, that the signs were there for a long time before the great punctuation.

We will lead change through our distinctive strengths in multiple forms of diversity: intellectual diversity by elevating interdisciplinary collaborations, social diversity by building upon our tradition of access and inclusion, and diversity of context and place by expanding our global connections and deepening our regional roots. America is moving in our direction. Since the transformational era of Horace Greeley and Frederick Jackson Turner, when the young and ambitious were exhorted to “Go West, young man, go West and grow up with the country,” the U.S. has been a nation of transformers and innovators. The America of the future is diverse in the same way that the Americas were diverse before Columbus claimed to discover us. We are a community of multiple communities, and our commitment to knowledge must be equally diverse and complex.
We must be accessible to an increasingly diverse student body and prepare students for the global marketplace and an interconnected society where professional and personal interactions take place amidst myriad communities of difference. We know that the most innovative companies deliberately establish diverse work teams which increase creativity and problem-solving while helping to attract and retain talent. We must continue to improve on our tradition of strong diversity among the people of the University of Arizona with a renewed commitment moving forward.

Therefore, my third call to action to you this afternoon is that, together, we build on the University of Arizona's strength in diverse perspectives on knowledge, culture, art and transdisciplinary work. We must further redesign the University to avoid isolation and continuous pressure to specialize in ever-narrowing disciplines. We must embrace the ways of knowing embodied in our BIO5 Institute and our Confluence Center. And we must find ways to organize our financial incentives to reward, rather than penalize, the collaboration necessary for these efforts to prosper. We need the support of all of you as we push this frontier. The journey will not be free from criticism, and the ubiquitous presence of “rankings” and “ratings” may not immediately recognize the strength of what we do.

We will adopt innovative practices based on transparency and rewarding productivity, effectiveness and entrepreneurship. We will optimize our campus resources and virtual reach. Every dean and department head will understand the university-wide budget and the financial decisions we make. We will create engaged University citizens who know how our resources flow to achieve our goals. Broad understanding is needed of how we focus our efforts to increase bachelor degree achievement, how we monitor the tuition our students pay compared to our peers, how we finance online degrees and certificates, how we track the UA graduates who stay in Arizona, what each student and family pay for a degree, and how we assess our diversity and global initiatives. No mystery: knowledge is power. And
resources must be transparently directed toward achieving these goals.

**EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR ALL**

To achieve the next ideal identified through our planning process, educational excellence for all, we will provide every student at the University of Arizona with an innovative and student-centered experience of scholarship, inquiry, creativity or service to contribute to an increasingly diverse and global community within our great university. We will design engaging curricula that connect students to the local and global community; promote recruiting strategies that attract a diverse, local and global student body; provide support structures before and after enrollment to promote student success; and connect students to career paths through internships, research and other experiences.

Every faculty and staff member at the University of Arizona must be a partner in ensuring that each student benefits from the University of Arizona Experience. In our planning processes this fall, the Arizona Experience has repeatedly loomed large in the discussion — what this means is ours to design, but our fourth pledge to action is that no student at the University of Arizona will leave here without an engagement experience, one that deeply and personally integrates and applies the knowledge she or he is working to master. We pledge to produce graduates who are: *Global Citizens* with the knowledge, skills and desire to engage in a global society; *Engaged Leaders* who design and lead the future of their communities and their world; *Fulfilled Individuals* who engage in productive lives and personally satisfying work – and all of whom embody *Competitive Excellence* so that they are sought out by the best employers and graduate and professional programs.

Putting these features in place within bachelor's and master's degree requirements, integrating our community college transfer students successfully so they share directly in the experience and graduate from
the U of A, assisting students so that they complete the journey to a degree prepared to embrace their futures ... these tasks will make our aspirations real. And as we pursue these goals, we, like Marian Anderson, will “… always bear in mind that [our] mission is to leave behind the kind of impression that will make it easier for those who follow.”

RESEARCH, KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND CREATIVITY

The next ideal imbedded in our academic plans and aspirations encompasses research, knowledge acquisition and creativity. We will advance knowledge through creative inquiry and collaboration that inspires new insights into the grand challenges of our age.

We are the land-grant university for Arizona. We will construct the future just as we constructed the distinguished present! As Governor Hunt said, “The University is making a State.” As I have already said this afternoon, we will do this by promoting core strengths to address grand challenges: leveraging cross-disciplinary collaboration; hiring, nurturing and retaining outstanding faculty; and attracting, educating and engaging first-rate graduate students.

We will measure our success by support for our research contributions to graduate education, our growth in new ideas integrated and applied to new enterprises and our faculty's recognition by their peers in scholarship and creative work as we assess our impact on our society.

Research and creative work have never been easy or inexpensive, which is why the very rich and very powerful have often been discovery's major benefactors. World history is full of stories about the struggles of human beings to fulfill their creative impulses or pursue their thirst for answers to the great questions of their eras. In harmony with my first call to action, my fifth request this afternoon is for all of us to expand our comfort zone and, while preserving our values, invite new resources into the university in support of creative and research work, recognizing that our new partners will expect the
integration and application I talked about earlier as a given outcome of their participation.

We all must benefit from the new ways of knowing, integrating and applying knowledge, but we will have to be open to asking uncomfortable questions and inventing new ways of working, as well as new ways of knowing as part of this process.

**LOCAL AND GLOBAL IMPACT**

Our final inclusive theme within the academic plan is to work always to advance the local and global impacts of our knowledge creation, research and creativity to enhance the quality of life for the people of Arizona and the world. To do this, we will have to build on strong integration with other groups and institutions and forge multiple new avenues of engagement. And so my sixth call to action is that we intensify our efforts so as to redefine our land-grant mission through partner relationships with communities and industry and via innovative programs. These programs will mimic the impact of the agricultural experiment station in designing processes that lead to the discovery of new knowledge in all human endeavors, and they will disseminate our work through multiple means that mimic the role of the extension service in the integration and application of that knowledge.

We will do this through such means as increased capacity in fields of health sciences, STEM and broadened programs across the state addressing workforce shortages, and by fueling Arizona's economy by investing in UA startups and the new knowledge economy.

Recently, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology pointed out that fewer than 40 percent of students who enter college intending to major in a STEM field complete a STEM degree. Increasing the retention of STEM majors from 40 percent to 50 percent would, alone, generate three-quarters of the targeted 1 million additional STEM degrees we need in the U.S. over the next decade.
We will measure our success through service and engagement. Some of these activities are part of a great and longstanding tradition, such as 4-H and FFA, but even these incredibly successful programs have and will continue to branch into entirely new areas such as engineering and leadership, groundwater contamination and productive development of new anti-cancer compounds.

Others are newer, such as our move to establish new models for an American Veterinary Medicine degree. Still others will result in more degrees awarded in high-demand fields new companies started out of UA intellectual property, or innovative new ways to view and experience the humanities and arts.

In 1887, 25 years after the passage of the Morrill Act, Senator Morrill reminded us all that this broader vision has always been a part of the DNA of the land-grant universities, saying: “It would be a mistake to suppose it was intended that every student should become either a farmer or a mechanic when the design comprehended not only instruction for those who may hold the plow or follow a trade, but such instruction as any person might need.”

We will dramatically increase and capitalize on local roots with global impact in our scholarship, research and creative work. In order to solidify our position as one of the world’s primary solution-driven universities, we must aggressively broaden substantive relationships with scholars, institutions, private enterprise and governments abroad.

This level of intentional global engagement will pay specific, measurable dividends ranging from the ability to recruit internationally competitive scholars; garner significant research grants; create an immersive and globally relevant student experience; and help reposition Arizona’s economy on the global stage. The engaged University of Arizona of the future will be involved in major world issues, forming cross-cutting groups to join in designing big projects that invent the modern equivalents of the agricultural experiment stations and cooperative extension.
While agriculture will continue to be a huge part of our charge, we also will explore the frontiers of space with potential private partners (our space-based experiment station) or tackle the comprehensive challenge of aridity and climate (our drought experiment station) in the new era. These new engagements will revolutionize our future.

My enthusiasm and appetite for the opportunities before us are huge! How often do great universities with the foundation of excellence and distinction already achieved at the U of A get the opportunity to build on that great foundation with punctuated disruption that is constructive, not destructive?

In this time and place, at the University of Arizona, the words of author Anaïs Nin resonate for me now more than ever. She observed, “The day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

As we know, a college education was once something for the privileged. This is one of the reasons President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act. This fundamentally and dramatically made education accessible to many more people – a principle we follow down to this very day.

This is why we invested $168 million for student financial aid in Fiscal Year 2012, and why our students have some of the lowest debt upon graduation in the nation. It is also why we have promised 100 percent participation in the “Arizona Experience” for all students.

We are pragmatists, with an optimistic bent, who will shape the world. In 1906, William James laid out the new future for all of us in What Pragmatism Means. “The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many? – fated or free? – material or spiritual? – here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world.” Further, James said, “A glance at the history of the idea will show you still better what pragmatism means. The term is derived from the same Greek word pragma, meaning action, from which our words
'practice' and 'practical' come .... [W]e need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance.”

The University of Arizona will continue to lead our region and the community of public, land-grant research universities in its comprehensive engagement with the full spectrum of human endeavor. I call upon you today to join me in shaping our future by using the very simple criteria of the 20th century American pragmatists to judge the result: what will our conduct produce? What actions will we take?

We will answer the question of whether our experiment stations of the future will shape technology, art, culture and community. All the while, the modern version of extension we invent will commit us always to integrate and apply what we learn.

I call upon all of you to commit yourselves to the University of Arizona in new ways, for you may never know just how far the gift of your influence will reach. And, as we love and forever treasure the diversity of thinking and knowing nurtured in our past, let us use that richness to shape the future and ask ourselves, “What will our conduct produce?”

The outcome will be our measure, as we embrace “the risk it took to blossom.” Thank you.