

Daniel E. Hall
Miami Hamilton
State of the Campus Address 2009

Welcome back!

And what a year you have returned to and what a year we just had. Miami Hamilton continues to grow in enrollment, in staff, in new programs, and in the quality of our facilities.

Never before has the campus grown so much in one year. In last year's address to you, I referred to our 10% increase in headcount as *amazing*. I am not sure how to characterize 17%! Yes, we are up 17%, date in time. We will break the 4,000 mark for the first time in the campus' history this fall, quite possibly reaching 4,200! The numbers are even more encouraging when you dig deeper than the grand total. The number of upper division students is up 44% (as opposed to a 8% increase in lower division students), indicating that our intention to grow our bachelor's degree population is working. Our new BIS program, for example, has nearly 400 majors! Additionally, our minority student representation is up, and Saturday Select, our alternative delivery program, has grown to over 300 students.

Everyone – the media, experts in higher education, economic pundits – are attributing the enrollment increases in campuses like ours to the slowdown in the economy. No doubt, the economy is a factor. But don't allow your hard work to be marginalized. With the exception of 2005, we have had years of enrollment growth – long predating the economic downturn. No, it isn't just the economy.

Why are new students, from an increasing larger radius, choosing Miami Hamilton over the many competitors in our region? It is our outstanding teaching, our curricular and pedagogical innovation, smart scheduling, our intentional focus on adult learners, a staff that is student-centered and caring, a modern, well-maintained physical facility, creative and penetrating marketing, strategic recruitment, and a community that is committed to our success. For this, every person in this room can be proud! Of course, we need to manage our growth.

Quality is our bedrock and we must be vigilant in guarding against losses in quality as we respond to large increases. Increasing class limits is not the long-term response to growth; the campus is committed to increasing the instructional, staff, and classroom resources. In the past few weeks, we have tried to stay ahead of the numbers, adding to the advising staff, opening new class sections, and adding new faculty.

While we are responding to our enrollment challenges, we need to maintain our momentum with our new initiatives, including further developing the BIS and planning other new bachelor's degrees.

Another significant initiative is to more deeply connect to our communities. One element of this effort is to continue the implementation of the service elaboration document for faculty. Through our Center for Civic Engagement the two regional campuses presented the Service as Central Series, which brought nationally known experts in public scholarship and service to the campuses and provided a forum for discussion of implementation of the elaboration of service. The Center for Civic Engagement, in conjunction with the appropriate academic leaders, will work with faculty this year in the development of service plans, assisting faculty and staff in making community connections and finding ways to support disciplinary and institutional service as well, and will coordinate, in partnership with Jen Moning, the service learning component of the BIS.

Also contributing to our community initiative is Miami Hamilton Downtown. Do not underestimate the impact MUHD has had in making the academy relevant to our community. Last year, over 1,500 people attended over 150 events. Our public has benefited from educational programs, discussions of philosophy, politics, and contemporary and controversial matters; they have enjoyed music, have danced, have explored ethnic and racial issues, and so on. On the other hand, faculty and staff from all three campuses have used the venue as an outlet to discuss their scholarship, to test their ideas, and to "give back."

I emphasize that the philosophical objective of all of this is to rise to a new level of engagement, one that transcends volunteerism. Imagine if we could harness the collective intellectual and creative powers of this campus for the public good. Imagine if we were united in an effort to educate students not only in their chosen academic areas, but also to prepare them to be responsible, contributing, and productive citizens – of our campus, community, state, nation, and the world.

Indeed, we are living and working in an increasingly diverse and global world. A college graduate that does not appreciate people who are different, who is not open to differences in thought and behavior, and who doesn't understand that we are operating in a global economy is not prepared for success; is not prepared to be a good *local* citizen.

For this reason and others, the campus is committed to taking its meager international efforts of the past to a new level. Fortunately, going global is very Miami. MUO has a long history of study abroad, of recruiting international students, and of offering international and area studies programs. Currently, MUO has a goal of sending as many as 50% of the native students abroad

and we are purposely increasing the number of international students on the Oxford Campus. For our population, sending large numbers of students abroad is not realistic. But I argue, as a first generation student myself, that the need for our population to have diverse and international experiences is more important than for children of college graduates. We shouldn't allow our student demographic to deter us from creating international opportunities for our students any more than we allow it to influence the quality of education we deliver. The campus' plan, under the leadership of our newly created Office of International Initiatives, has been designed precisely to serve our diverse population of traditional and nontraditional students. It includes study abroad, bringing international students to us, cultural programming, business and industry development, and faculty and staff opportunities. This past year, under the thoughtful leadership of Chen Ferguson, the campus has made significant strides in building an international program.

First, in regards to study abroad, I am pleased to report that the campus' first exchange agreement, with Xi'an Jiaotong University, was executed just recently. This is the first of what will be many agreements that we will have with Chinese universities and eventually, with universities all over the world. Our new director of international initiatives, Chen Ferguson, is strategically selecting partners that will provide an array of different opportunities, historical, urban, rural, and so on. Xi'an, for example, is a historic city that was home to ten dynasties, the famous Terracota soldiers, and a city wall that dates to the Ming Dynasty. For students who are not ready for a complete Chinese immersion, Hong Kong may be the right choice. And there will be other choices.

Because many of our students are place bound or won't have the resources to study abroad, it is also planned, subject to final approval of the university, to bring an international experiences to them - in Hamilton, and now, thanks to MUM's new dean, Middletown. This will make our campuses very different and exciting places. No doubt, there will be cultural and other challenges and detailed planning and your support will be needed over the next year to get this right.

Additionally, the cultural programming that began last year will continue (e.g. music, art) and we hope to eventually identify faculty exchange opportunities, opening the door to international teaching, service, and research.

As I mentioned before, the civic and international initiatives are closely connected. Today, John Dewey's proposition that higher education should purposely advance civic life by inculcating democratic values and teaching civic skills takes on greater significance as we address, as a world community, how to work and live together. As an example of the fusion of the two initiatives, it is my hope that as we develop relationships with foreign universities that we

transcend traditional study abroad to include international service learning opportunities, as was recently featured in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Beyond students, I propose that we (you and me) need to be our community's thought leaders, helping our communities redefine themselves in a post-industrial era. Leading a discussion about the economic, cultural, and political dimensions of globalization, as we practice what we preach, is one legacy we can and should leave.

In recent discussions with a working group about the future of the Harry T. Wilks Lecture Series, the decision was made to adopt an international theme for not only the lecture, but for more events during the next two years. Although still in the planning stages, I understand that in addition to the Harry T. Wilks lecture, there will be events at MUHD, on campus, and we hope our partners at MUM will join us, adding to the schedule.

Speaking of MUM, last year I said to you, "the last major element of our metamorphosis is to begin thinking less as a campus and more as a regional system with three parts, MUH, MUM, and VOALC. The days of viewing our sister campus as a competitor must end." As has been true in years past, the Hamilton campus' senior staff is committed to working more closely with our colleagues at MUM and to developing and growing the Voice of America Learning Center. I believe the commitment is shared by our colleagues at MUM. Specifically, I have had the pleasure of working closely with the new dean of MUM the past couple of weeks. As a demonstration of her commitment to working closely with us, she has joined us today. Please welcome our colleague, Miami's director of international studies, professor of political science, and interim dean of MUM, Dr. Jeanne Hey.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention finances. While there are indications that the economy may be on the mend, it will be some time before universities and colleges will be whole again. But MUH remains strong. We ended the year with a surplus, reinvested in people, programs and facilities, and added to the campus reserves. But the state continues to suffer. Even though this Governor shielded higher education from cuts last year, he can no longer. A state scholarship that assisted low income students was eliminated within the past month (hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships for MUH students) (fortunately, Pell increased) and subsidy will to be reduced next year. MUH will see, for example, a half million dollar reduction in state support. Regardless, we are projecting a surplus again next year and as we stand today, no lay-offs, furloughs, or budget cuts will occur next year. As you may know, this is rare among universities, public and private. We have a fiscally responsible campus culture. We need to continue to take care in our spending and we need to keep the reserves strong – lest we may find ourselves making very difficult decisions in the future.

The work of the regional campus committee will continue to be discussed and acted upon this year. Unquestionably, this is a very important initiative that will bring changes in the way we operate. It has been difficult at times and some of the dialogue has been difficult. I am proud, however, that we have not allowed the differences among us to become personal, nor have we allowed them to detract from our core mission: students.

While we don't know the outcomes of the regional campus initiative, I am confident that our core will remain unaltered. MUH was created and the University remains committed to its regional campuses providing access and opportunity to higher education and to improving life in the communities we serve. The following letter from one of our students is a poignant reminder why we are here (read student letter):

You and I have been blessed to be part of this campus during a time of great, exciting change. Good fortune has befallen us – in the form of support from the State and university - presenting us with a significant opportunity. We can be proud of what we have done with this opportunity. But we must not become complacent or comfortable. We are transforming lives – the lives of our students and their children and their grandchildren. We have an opportunity to increase our impact, to produce better citizens, and to be better citizens ourselves. This moment in time is ours. Let's embrace it and let's capitalize on it. Thanks for what you do. I am proud to call you colleagues.

Now, as is our custom, we will meet our new colleagues, congratulate our colleagues for assuming on new roles, and learn about the facilities projects that are underway. We also have one announcement that must be made today.