

3-1-2005

State of the University Address 2005

David A. Caputo Ph.D.
Pace University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/sua>

Recommended Citation

Caputo, David A. Ph.D., "State of the University Address 2005" (2005). *State of the University Addresses*. Paper 5.
<http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/sua/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Administration at DigitalCommons@Pace. It has been accepted for inclusion in State of the University Addresses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Pace. For more information, please contact rracelis@pace.edu.

State of the University 2005
President David A. Caputo
Monday, March 14, 2005, New York City
Tuesday, March 15, 2005, Westchester

As we enter the ides of March and what I am sure we all hope will be a rapidly approaching spring, I am pleased to welcome you to my fifth State of the University address. It is a great honor to be the president of this outstanding institution, and the many attributes and accomplishments I will be discussing this afternoon are due to the dedicated and committed work of Pace University's Board of Trustees, administrative staff members, a truly distinguished and caring faculty, successful alumni, and our students who provide us with our reason for being.

I am pleased to tell you today that your University is preparing well for its next century of leadership—we still have major challenges and opportunities ahead, but with our usual resolve and commitment, they will be accomplishments when we are done dealing with them.

Now let us consider the future we face. Reaching 100 years of distinguished service is not an easy task nor should one assume it just happens. It is happening in Pace's case because we had leaders, not just in the presidency, but throughout the board, the faculty, the staff, the students, and our alumni who cared deeply about our mission, *Opportunitas*, and what it meant for those who wanted the chance for an outstanding education.

Pace's tradition is one rich in nurturing our students, in providing them with the best possible graduate and undergraduate education and in preparing them for the realities of the world they must face. Self-sacrifice, self-discipline, hard work, and commitment characterize Pace's past and present and must remain our core values into the future. We must not waiver nor can we afford self-doubt as to our continued success. Now is the time for each and every one of us to renew our commitment to *Opportunitas* and this great University.

Our road ahead is not an easy one, just as the road traveled in the past has not been easy. With increasing alternatives in higher education and the changing nature of how higher education is delivered, it is imperative that we adapt and change while at the same time maintain our core values of *Opportunitas* and quality education. In a society characterized by increasing competition, we must improve not only how we educate our students but we must do so knowing that we must remain economically competitive and accessible. Perhaps a comment by Tolstoy is applicable to the situation we find ourselves in: "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." Or perhaps Thoreau was correct when he said: "Things do not change, we do." For our collective success to be achieved we each must rededicate ourselves and our efforts and we must enforce change and understand it as essential to the world around us.

We need both individually and collectively to realize that the world is a much different place not just today, but every day, since rapid change is a daily occurrence. Whether it be in terms of the knowledge created, new teaching and learning techniques, or the increasingly complex needs of our students, we must grow intellectually and adapt in all we do. Failure to do so will result in a university that does not continue to improve, a university that becomes quickly outmoded, and a university that does not respond to today's and tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

I believe this University and our University community has shown a remarkable resiliency and a remarkable ability to change, to grasp new ideas, and to implement powerful and positive changes. Please permit me to mention several ways this has occurred and continues to occur.

First, our faculty continues to develop and implement wise and academically sound curriculum changes such as the new comprehensive core curriculum, which is now being recognized as a national model. I want to congratulate our faculty on this accomplishment and point out that there are many other similar accomplishments—from the new programs in Education, Nursing, the Law School, Computer Science and Information Systems, Dyson, and Lubin—to the imaginative and innovative strengthening of our already well established programs such as accounting, with its plan to establish a Center for Global Financial Reporting, a center that will receive substantial support from the Lubin Trust. Just recently, the Pace Academy for the Environment sponsored a national conference that presented an imaginative way to share each campus's

environmental resources so the sum of the whole exceeds the sum of the parts. John Cronin, Michelle Land, and the faculty participants are to be congratulated for such forward thinking. Now it must be accomplished.

Second, our Pforzheimer Honors College continues to be a major success with its innovative use of technology to broaden teaching opportunities and its outstanding faculty and students. We need to continue to ensure that all Pace students have the personal and academic attention they deserve and which is so important for their subsequent success.

It is for this reason I want to introduce a new initiative the library leadership has presented. It is a plan to make the library an information commons and a unique academic and intellectual place for our entire faculty, staff, and students. Under the plan, both the Birnbaum and Mortola libraries and eventually our other libraries would use the information commons concept as a central theme. The provost and I are committed to finding the funding for this and will try to find sufficient funds so the project can begin during the next year.

Third, both our planning for the Centennial Celebration, less than ten months ahead of us, and our Centennial Campaign are off to outstanding starts. Ivan Seidenberg [president and CEO, Verizon Communications, Inc.] has agreed to be our national chair, and we are doing well and making progress toward our goal of completing the silent phase in time to publicly announce the campaign in 2006. We have extensive support from all of our major constituencies, and we will be broadening this campaign in the months and years ahead to reach everyone who is part of the Pace community. When you are asked to participate, I hope your response will be positive and a reaffirmation of your faith in the University.

Fourth, as a community, we have been resilient. As we approach the fourth anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, we remain concerned about future threats but we also realize that it is important not to be overpowered by fear and anticipation. Our community has not succumbed to the terrorists and the aftermath of their attacks by withdrawing, but rather our collective response has been to rebuild our spirit and our faith in the future and to make sure that Pace is stronger and more resilient now than it was nearly four years ago. We all should be justifiably proud of that accomplishment and I salute our community for having achieved it. Our Center for Downtown New York has been a leader in assisting with the rebuilding, and I will be announcing a renewed academic focus for the center in the next few weeks that will have greater involvement for Pace faculty from across the University.

Fifth, our students, as they have done for the past 99 years, continue to excel whether it be in student investment competition, Fulbright nominations, meeting the challenges in the urban classroom or the International Moot Court, applying their nursing education to assist those who are ill, competing in the Model UN, applying theory in the labs, or contributing to the improvement of our society through public service and outstanding Project Pericles initiatives. Pace students have long had and continue to build on a record of great accomplishment. To all of our students, my congratulations for a job well done and a history of success and accomplishment we know you will continue. I, for one, have great confidence in the future because I know Pace students will be shaping it.

Now before you think that I am excessively naïve or a hopeless romantic, it is also important to point out the challenges we face as a community.

I think the most important thing is that we need to remember that we are a community and that we must work together if we want the community to advance. We have spent too much time talking past each other and not engaging in realistic dialogue. We must maintain the ability to communicate and to trust, knowing that while we may have different views, we all share a common passion for Pace's success both now and in the future. So I am requesting that we each recommit ourselves to openness and trust, and that we all work together to resolve any differences and to meet the challenges we face. In my opinion, the following are the additional major challenges confronting us.

First, the University must continue to strengthen its financial situation. This year's enrollment shortfall has put a unique strain on our budget and even though last year's financial performance was one of our strongest in recent years, we have had to endure a series of budget reductions and restrictions this year due to enrollment decline. In the past, I have always used a small portion of our new revenue to start and develop new programs and initiatives. For this upcoming budget year, except for a modest sum of funding needed for the centennial, a needed security audit, and four new faculty positions (all part of the *Second Century Strategic Plan*), I will not be asking for additional funding for new programs in this year's budget.

Instead, I will be reallocating already budgeted funds that had been previously set aside for presidential initiatives.

I have also asked Executive Vice Presidents Joseph C. Morreale and Rick N. Whitfield to take a critical and comprehensive look across the University to ascertain what can be eliminated, reduced, or done at less cost. In an ever-increasingly competitive environment, we must strengthen our core programs, develop new and innovative programs to meet the changing needs of our students, and reduce and consider eliminating any programs where we are not as competitive as we need to be or where programs have become obsolete or been bypassed by the vagaries of time and student demand. This type of judicious program review began last year and needs to be continued on a yearly basis.

Second, we need to recover our enrollment, and I have asked the provost to institute a far-reaching retention plan that will not only help us retain our students, but which will be a model for others. We also need to continue to recruit our students with great energy while at the same time considering new marketing and recruitment efforts. I look forward to welcoming a vice president of enrollment management who can work with our outstanding current Enrollment Management and Student Services teams to ensure the positive Pace message of world-class curriculum, outstanding faculty, a Tuition Guarantee Program, the Pace Promise, the chance to learn in the world's greatest city and an outstanding suburban location in Westchester County, as well as a diverse and culturally rich campus environment is fully heard and understood by prospective Pace students.

Third, we need to continue to advance in how we educate our students and how we perform our administrative tasks. Both the new integrated phone system and the continued implementation of Project SPARTA will be of tremendous assistance. We must all realize that, yes, these are new ways of doing things, but they have a purpose common throughout all of Pace's history—providing the technology that permits us to concentrate on our students and their needs. So join with Vice Presidents Frank Monaco and Yvonne Ramirez and the SPARTA Implementation Group as they work to provide us with the best possible technology and use it as it was meant to be—an enabling technology that requires us to be informed and innovative users.

Fourth, we must work together to overcome concerns that have been raised about the response to faculty and staff needs. We have put into place a specific program to deal with the concerns raised on the Pleasantville campus, and if the plan does not work, we will consider other steps to make sure our administrative response meets faculty and student expectations.

Even in a very tight budget year, our emphasis will continue to be on the salary, benefits, and conditions of all Pace faculty and staff. We may not be able to accomplish the strategic objective of raises at two percent above inflation, but it will not be for lack of trying.

Fifth, we must be sure we take advantage of a number of great opportunities and challenges before us. These include the need to continue to move towards greater internationalization—a Pace delegation is going to China this week—and we need to continue to broaden our efforts to reach international agreements that foster faculty and student exchange. In addition, we need to continue our efforts to develop the global centers, and I remain hopeful that we will make significant progress in that area in the upcoming year.

We also need to be responsive to imaginative proposals, and there are two that have exceptional merit. A number of faculty have expressed considerable interest in Pace developing a program or emphasis on immigration studies given our rich and treasured heritage as an institution serving first-generation university students. I will ask the provost to form a study group to consider this idea and to broaden the focus to include migration studies so the great human migrations within this country are included. To begin this emphasis, I am pleased to announce that Pace is in final discussions with the Institute for American Irish Studies and its leader, Chris Cahill, about the institute being located at Pace and serving to promote programming and discussion about the many contributions the Irish-Americans have made to this city and this country. This can then serve as a possible prototype in the broader program. As the provost works with the faculty to develop a multidisciplinary emphasis and program, other possibilities supporting the rich cultural history of Pace should develop.

I will also be asking the provost to convene a group to implement an imaginative proposal we have received for a University-wide Center for the Americas. Former Argentine Consul General Juan Carlos Vignaud has

worked with me on this, and he is an excellent person to lead our initial efforts. This too would be a multidisciplinary center stressing the cultural, social, political, and economic interrelatedness of all the countries of North and South America. Bold, imaginative, and innovative—just the type of program this University needs to continue to invest in and develop.

Sixth, we need to reach a variety of important decisions concerning our physical plant. Substantial work is needed in our physical science labs and throughout Dyson College, and we need a comprehensive approach to meet our defined maintenance needs. We need to improve the recreational space on the New York City campus just as we did the Eddie Layton Student Union. We also need to take a comprehensive look at our entire space inventory and reach better decisions on how to fully utilize it. We will do this during the next year.

Providing the needed space for the Lubin School remains one of our most important University goals. We were disappointed that the revised, exorbitant cost of the facility we had hoped to be part of across the street had to be abandoned; however, it was the right and proper decision. We will continue to make this one of our highest priorities in the months ahead. Great opportunities exist in lower Manhattan, and we must be both imaginative and bold in pursuing them.

Our list of opportunities is as long as our challenges, but one thing is certain: we must use our centennial year to advance our *Strategic Plan* and the University.

In closing, I want to remind every member of the community that our collective action will determine our future. Your continued commitment to your University is imperative if we are to flourish in the years ahead. If we individually or collectively make up our minds that we cannot achieve the goals we have outlined in the *Second Century Strategic Plan*, then you are absolutely right and we will not achieve those goals. However, if we believe in our collective future and work together to make Pace a better place for our students and for each and every member of our community, we will succeed. The journey will be difficult and challenging but it is one worth following to enable this University to meet the changes confronting all of higher education and as we prepare to mark Pace's 100 years of meaningful contributions to New York City, the state, the region, the United States, and indeed the world. To do any less would be to ignore our past excellence and our continued commitment to all those we serve. I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the years ahead and especially throughout this year and next year as we both prepare for and then celebrate our centennial year and Pace University's many accomplishments.

Thank you for all you have done and will do for your University and its students. I look forward to our future.