

Welcome Reception Remarks

August 16, 2016

- Thank you Regent DeNardis, President Ojakian, Professor Stretch and Rob Demezzo for your warm introduction.
- My thanks to the search committee, to the leadership team, to our campus constituency leaders and all of you for the warm welcome and hospitality Bil and I have received both today and throughout the past month. We're honored and thrilled to join the Southern family.
- In fact, Bil and I have found a home here in New Haven and are looking forward to moving into the community.
- As you know I/we have visited the campus several times over the past few weeks – meeting with students, faculty, staff, and administrators. I'm looking forward to getting to know you and learning more about the community (internal and external) as I engage in a comprehensive "listening tour."
- From my very first visit to now, it is quite apparent that the members of this community are filled with Southern Pride – they love Southern and more importantly, they care deeply for our students.
- Yes, we face challenging times, but let's not forget, there are great things happening here:

- - We have a new science building and an expanded, renovated library that would be the envy of many campuses nationwide.

- - We have a new and unique Bio-Path collaboration with the City of New Haven that will provide a direct pipeline for our students to enter the region's rapidly growing bioscience industry.

- - We have an exciting new partnership with Liverpool John Moores University in England that offers an array of study abroad and research opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic.

- - We have a new resident theater ensemble on campus – the renowned Elm Shakespeare company, providing an array of workshops, field experience and learning opportunities for budding Southern thespians.

- - Our School of Business is moving closer to national accreditation, filing an initial Self Evaluation report with AACSB.

Our School of Education produces more teachers, principals and school superintendents than any other institution in the state. And we produce more award-winners too. In 2016, the Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Counselor of the Year and Superintendent of the Year were all Southern alums, capped by Jahana Hayes, Class of '05, being named the National Teacher of the Year.

We have a lot to be proud of!

- I am particularly excited about engaging with our Southern students. At Lyndon State I attended student events, I ate in the dining hall, I hosted student leaders, clubs and organizations at my home. I think it's important for me to be visible, and to be present.
- As I mentioned during the interview process, ensuring student success is hugely important to me, and I look forward to building on the work that has already been done here to remove obstacles to graduation and enhance the retention rate.
- I am also excited about moving towards the next phase of our strategic planning process – its implementation. This is a great plan and will certainly help Southern move into the future with much success.
- I also look forward to working with you to spread the good word about Southern. As I said in my first visit here: "I'm a PR man!" I love to get out and talk about my institution and all the positives it offers to our students, our community, the State of CT and New England
- As I begin my tenure as Southern's 12th president I ask:
 - In the spirit of our mission and in support of building a stronger community through social justice, I ask that together we make every effort to treat each other with dignity, respect, civility, kindness and compassion.
 - Be PROUD to be a part of Southern and share that pride with others.
 - Most importantly, let's do what we do best – welcome and care for our students as we begin this new academic year.
- Thank you for being here today, and for this wonderful warm welcome. I look forward to chatting with you at the meet and greet in the lobby.

- GO OWLS!