

WESTVILLE TALKING POINTS

- Thanks Michelle and welcome to this gathering of our Westville alums in these wonderful surrounds of Lyric Hall!
- I've only been president of Southern since August, but I've quickly learned about the wonderful loyalty and devotion that our alums display for their alma mater.
- It's clear to me that the members of our extended community are filled with Southern Pride – they love Southern and more importantly, they care deeply for our students
- I arrived in New Haven after four years leading Lyndon State College in Vermont, and before that I worked in student affairs administration at Queen's College, New York City.
- So I know public higher education well, and I'm thrilled to be leading Southern, an institution committed to access, affordability, and student success.
- As a social justice educator for more than 25 years, I am also thrilled that this is an institution dedicated to being a good neighbor and advancing the public good.
- In my first couple of months, I've been making the rounds – visiting with all of the campuses constituencies. I'm engaged in a listening tour – having met with faculty, staff, students, alums, community and business leaders as well as legislators and city elected officials.
- I want to learn as much as I can about New Haven and how we can better partner with the city and improve the lives of its residents.
- I am committed to New Haven – my partner Bil and I have purchased a home in Morris Cove, so I hope to be here a long time!

MY PRIORITIES

- I thought I would share with you the six presidential priorities that I've developed for Southern early in my tenure.
- I mentioned that I was a social justice educator, and my administration will be

committed to social justice, not just in word, but in action and in deed.

- We'll look to enhance enrollment management, by identifying and resolving issues related to financial aid and retention. Both of these areas are key to reversing the enrollment decline that we have experienced in recent years.
- We'll boost Southern's Profile. As I said during the interview process: "I'm a PR man!" I love to get out and talk about my institution I look forward to spreading the good word about Southern and all the positives it offers to our students, our community, and the State of Connecticut.
- We'll seek to achieving financial stability through the promotion of entrepreneurship, community partnerships and a greater emphasis on private fundraising. We are poised to launch our first major capital campaign, potentially to coincide with Southern's 125th anniversary, in 2018.
- We'll work to ensure student success: this is hugely important to me, and I look forward to building on the work that has already been done here to enhance academic excellence, remove obstacles to graduation and enhance the retention rate.
- And we'll implement our 10-year Strategic Plan: *Discover Southern, a University for the 21st Century*. This is a great plan and will certainly help Southern move into the future with much success and play an even greater role in New Haven's development.

SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS

- I also want to share some highlights with you, as there are many great things happening on campus – and being our near neighbors, I invite you to come and visit, if you haven't had the chance recently.
- Southern has been transformed dramatically in recent years: with the multi-purpose Michael J. Adanti Student Center, a new home for the School of Business and an expansion of Buley Library that has doubled its size, we provide our students with the best possible environment to learn and study.
- Recently, we opened a new science building, enhancing our ability to educate the next generation of Connecticut's scientists.
- The science building also serves as a base for Bio-Path, a new collaboration with the City of New Haven providing a direct pipeline for our students to enter the region's rapidly growing biotechnology industry.

- Soon we will be designing a new home for our School of Health and Human Services, which features an array of in-demand programs, such as nursing, a department that was recently rated among the top 10 percent of its peers nationwide.
- Our School of Business is moving closer to AACSB national accreditation, a rating earned by just five percent of institutions nationally.
- And our School of Education – which produces more teachers, principals and school superintendents than any other institution in the state – produces more award winners too! Jahana Hayes, Class of '05, was recently named the National Teacher of the Year.

BUILDING TIES WITH WESTVILLE

- As I mentioned, being a good neighbor is high on my list of priorities for Southern, and it building stronger ties with the neighborhood and downtown of Westville is a natural thing to do.
- After all, we are near neighbors, many of our students, faculty and staff frequent the eating and drinking establishments here, and we have a very strong alumni presence in the community.
- In fact, when we were looking to provide housing for visiting graduate students from our international partner, Liverpool John Moores University, we turned to Westville and have been able to lease a very nice apartment available for our visitors as a result.
- Universities nationwide typically have a strong connection to a nearby retail/commercial district – think Yale and Broadway, or what UConn has been doing in Storrs – and there is no reason that Southern cannot develop this kind of relationship with Westville, over time.
- Another of my goals is enhancing Southern's visibility and presence in and around New Haven, and that should start in our own backyard.
- So in the coming months, we will be talking with members of the Westville Village Renaissance Alliance about ways in which we can grow our existing partnership, to the benefit of both entities.
- If you have ideas along these lines, I'm very open to hearing them – I like to listen, and I like to act on constructive thoughts.

- I thank you for attending this evening, and I look forward to speaking with each of you personally, today and in the months ahead and sharing in your Southern Pride!