

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT HOUSTON SUMMERS' PREPARED REMARKS
UNC Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, March 24, 2016

"The opportunity of a lifetime only lasts the lifetime of the opportunity". I have this quote taped to my locker over in Eddie Smith and I try to live by it because it instills in me a sense of urgency. An urgency to take full advantage of the opportunities we have to better those around us... having said that...

I'd like to say thank you... Thank you to the Board and to everyone in this room, my wonderful executive team, and the 350+ individuals that served alongside me in this years administration.

Like I have said before these "thank you" s are not out of simple habit, but out of deep gratitude.

For this year, I have grown in appreciation for what goes into making this University the incredible entity that it is. But, even greater than that, I have had the opportunity to see your sacrifices and hear of the sacrifices of those that came before us... all to ensure that this University remains great.

You know...a year ago, people were asking me what I wanted to be able to accomplish and what I wanted to do. And I believe I responded to nearly every one of those questions with "I just want people to know I cared." Some chuckled and said that's nice and others simply told me they thought that showed a lack of specific goals. But, I had something different in mind- I knew that by approaching every situation with a deep sense of empathy and commitment that we, as a whole, would be able to make substantive changes. And it wasn't solely up to me to determine what those changes were going to be. I could talk about NPHC Plots, Continuous Enrollment, etc. etc., And make no mistake about it, those are wonderful, wonderful things that so many people have poured their hearts into... and for that I am grateful. But this isn't about what we have accomplished... this is about a call to press on.

Mother Teresa once said, " Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love," and that is the mentality that my team and I attempted to carry throughout this entire year. We did not expect to do great things; however, we were bound and determined to do all the small things with an extraordinary amount of enthusiasm, love, and compassion.

Make no mistake about it, we still have a ways to go, but it is very important to realize how far we have come in such a short period of time. We must continue to challenge ourselves to truly understand the purposes of higher education...

In part...It is to prepare young minds to solve to most complex and intractable problems facing the world today. It is to foster an environment where individuals feel apart of the whole and contribute to a culture of excellence. It is to ensure a college degree is not only a wish, but a tangible reality for all those who desire one. And most importantly, it is to serve all involved, in such a way that they themselves are compelled to serve. It is those purposes and that reciprocal servitude that will sustain higher education and our University for centuries to come.

Back in November, Rachel Gogal, Student Body Vice-President ...she has done such a wonderful job this year... came across a column in the DTH written by Tim Reilly on August 13th 2012. Tim dated Eve Carson for three years before her passing and the following words, in particular, stood out to me...

“ The love and community which Eve spread to all of us was not the result of some divine chance. It was a conscious orientation. It was Eve’s choice.”

I’ve talked a lot this year about One Carolina and what that means to me...that to me is an iterative process of refining our commitment to one another through responsible policies and practices. That is what I believe my predecessor, Eve, believed.

Carolina is a place of excellence. It is a place of extraordinary achievement. Carolina places the world of knowledge at our feet and begs us to search it over and over again with an insatiable curiosity. Yet, Carolina is more than an opportunity to be educated... Carolina is a community. Carolina does not merely breed scholars, it breeds remarkable young men and women who care because they were first cared for... Tim Rielly said it best, “ Like Eve, let us have the courage to choose to be excellent. (But more importantly) Let us have the courage to choose to be excellent with a heart.”

In closing, I want to remind everyone again that we must preserve our commitment to affordability and to the true purposes of higher education. We must preserve our commitment to excellence in every area, but, first and foremost, we must preserve our commitment to compassion and to one another.

Thank you all for such an amazing opportunity. It has been an honor to serve you and I hope and pray that I have the opportunity to do so again in the future!

Thank You!