

Chairman Dr. Tom Lane, Members of the Delta Board of Trustees, Members of the Delta Foundation Board, Presidents Emeritus Boyce and Carlyon, distinguished guests, colleagues from other colleges, faculty, staff, students and members of the Delta community.

I want to begin my remarks by recognizing some significant people. A special thanks to all of our current and past Trustees, many who are here today. You have provided the vision and guidance that has assured that Delta College has served the needs of this community.

With great pride, I thank our outstanding faculty and staff and all of our distinguished retirees who have joined us for today's celebration. You continue to make Delta College the institution it is—recognized nationally and valued locally.

I would like to recognize and introduce our son John from San Diego, California and finally the one person who has been with me every single step of the way for 32 years, the person who has served as my partner, my advisor, my friend –my husband Steve.

It is a pleasure to be together today. We come together to celebrate Delta College's rich history and its bright future. I am honored to be a participant in today's event. Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, I accept with humility and enthusiasm the opportunity to serve as president of Delta College. Still thinking of ourselves as relative newcomers to this place, Steve and I want to thank the college community and the larger community for having welcomed us with warmth and grace. As many of you know, I consider leadership to be an act of service, and it is in this spirit that I pledge to continue listening and learning, and—with you as my colleagues—providing leadership for this remarkable college community.

Before I begin...I want to express my public thanks to the many people—family and friends, teachers, mentors and colleagues, both former and current who have touched my life and helped me to grow as an educational leader.

I also want to thank Marty Fitzhugh, Dr. Bob Emrich, Terry Rock and all the members of the planning committee who labored to make this inauguration event a success.

My husband Steve and I publicly thank our family members, those present and deceased, whose love, nurturing, and support have brought us to this great community...

A friend of mine, also a community college president, shared with me that her inauguration was one of the most memorable days of her life—next to her wedding day and the days of her children’s birth. She was absolutely right. I am filled with emotion. However, this day is different. It belongs to all of us who are a part of this college community and all it has achieved. It is an important chapter in the story of this college, linking the past to the future.

Today is a celebration of the drive and the spirit of those whose vision and undying commitment to educational access paved the way to making Delta College one of this country’s most highly-respected, leading community colleges.

Much of that progress evolved under the leadership of Delta College’s third president, Dr. Peter Boyse. During his 12 years as president, Delta College was transformed. Dr. Boyse extended the vision of Don Carylon who saw “the college in the cornfield.” He moved Delta College forward—building invaluable partnerships with local industries and business and with other educational institutions. Dr. Boyse secured funding to transform and renovate our facilities.

In a transition of a college presidency, it is not only how the president prepares, but also how the president’s spouse prepares. Barb Boyse---Steve and I want to express our deep appreciation for all you have done to make our transition so enjoyable.

Betty Carlyon, thank you for your support of Don for all the years and the dedication, wisdom and grace with which you and Don continue to serve our College. We appreciate you.

With appreciation, I accept this opportunity for leadership, knowing I “stand on the shoulders of giants.”

Let me begin with the word “inauguration.” The meaning of the word comes out of religious ritual.

To inaugurate was to consecrate, to invest, or to install a leader in office. Through this symbolic rite of passage, we feel connected with each other and with something greater than ourselves. It is a calling forth from within.

We also share in the responsibility signified by the action. We inaugurate a community of leadership. I do not and can not lead this college alone.

CELEBRATE

Having now recognized some of the key shapers of this institution, I want to celebrate their contributions.

We gather together today to honor Delta College, to celebrate our students and our alumni and to move forward together.

Everywhere I have been invited to speak in Mid-Michigan, I have asked audience members to raise their hand if they or someone they know has attended Delta College. That field of raised hands is a testament to the hundreds of thousands of lives of students touched by Delta College.

Watching the growth in our students is energizing, inspiring, challenging, and personally rewarding.

Just as our efforts have made a difference in the lives of our graduates, they in turn have made a difference in the lives of others.

The law enforcement officer who responds to your emergency was probably trained at Delta College. The nurse who calms you, the firefighter who protects you, the auto technician who fixes your car, the dental hygienist who lectures you on the virtues of flossing are likely Delta graduates.

Would all students currently enrolled at Delta please stand?

Students, I pledge to you that we shall continue to support you in your learning. Your success means our success; your success lights brightly the future of our area. I pledge to you my unqualified support and that of the entire Delta community.

Students, please remain standing while I ask the entire faculty to stand.

Faculty: you have heard me say you are the heart of our college. I reemphasize that sentiment today as a rededication of my commitment to you and a promise of the support and affirmation for your dedication to learning and all it entails.

With students and faculty standing, I now ask all support staff to join them.

The aim of life of each individual must be to help others to realize their potentialities. This is the core of the community college philosophy. For many of you as our support staff, you represent that vital first contact for our students. Many of our students come to us with self-doubt, hesitancy and uncertainty. Their very first moments on our campus are critical. Your attitude and actions can make all the difference for them. Please be assured of my commitment and support to you.

Everyone at Delta College teaches. I want the College support staff to listen very carefully. You too, are teachers. You may never give a lecture; you may never grade an essay or exam. But your lessons are no less articulate, your judgment no less visible.

In each building you clean, each lawn you maintain, each problem you repair, each space you renovate, you teach the importance of the physical place to the learning experience; you teach stewardship of the state's resources; you teach the dignity of work.

In each application you handle, in each financial aid form you review, in each disability service you provide, in each extracurricular activity you support, the Student Services staff teaches the importance of treating people as individuals; you teach inclusion and sensitivity; you teach personal responsibility.

Coming to work with this commitment means you are transforming Delta College on a daily basis. You are connecting yourself to the college with the single thought of: **I am an important part of this learning environment.**

Would all professionals and administrators now stand to join this group? In your hands lies the management of Delta. You also bear responsibility for shaping a Delta culture that is both learner-centered and learning-centered; one that affirms our highest priority of "Student Success." Your decisions carry great impact. You have my pledge of commitment and support. As

you carry out your responsibilities, please recall the words of Walter Lippmann that “the springs of greatness lie finally in the conviction to serve the truth, and not opinion to do what is right, whether or not you are sure to succeed. This is the way of greatness.”

Please remain standing.

Would the members of the Board of Trustees now please rise? One of the reasons higher education in this country is the best in the world is the presence of volunteer boards who agree to guide their colleges on matters of policy and direction. To you falls the overall responsibility for the general welfare of this great institution. I pledge to you not only my commitment and support but also my loyalty. As you address our challenges in the future, draw sustenance from these words of Langston Hughes;

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die,
Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.

Ladies and gentlemen, you see before you a precious resource for Delta College—our human capital. Through a harmony of interests, they form the core of Delta College as “Colleagues in Learning.”

Ladies and Gentlemen – their roles may vary widely but their strengths are fiercely bonded in their allegiance to our students and this community. Please join me in honoring their accomplishments, their noble purpose, their continued dedication, and their bright future.

Please be seated.

IMAGINE

Now we look ahead to imagine the future together. It is our responsibility not only “to imagine the past and what it means, but to imagine the future and what it holds.” Faculty members help students **imagine** their best selves. We help each other **imagine** what possibilities lay ahead.

I have a positive and optimistic view of the future. I see us moving Delta College to an even higher level of achievement and excellence.

Simply put, Delta College will serve as a model for community colleges.

The first building block is a focus on student success and student learning. Whatever the purpose a student comes to us—and we can help shape that purpose—we shall be prepared to provide the instructional support services necessary for success.

A second building block is ----Quality. --- Excellence is our goal, not just in instruction but in everything we do. We strive to improve ourselves continuously.

A third component centers on ---Accountability—The hallmarks of any professional in the educational sector are self-imposed rigorous standards. We shall set ambitious goals and measure our progress towards attaining those goals. We have an obligation to ensure the public investment and be good stewards of fiscal responsibility.

We have a responsibility to be ever more inclusive, more diverse. Serving the value of diversity is the core of the community college philosophy. It means working to bring in underserved populations and provide a welcoming, affirming environment for all. This means, in part, ensuring that our profile of Delta employees across all divisions reflects the community we serve.

Technology is not a fad; it is here to stay. We have an obligation to prepare our students to compete in a technological, global environment.

Partnerships with both the public and private sectors will be necessary. Limited budgets, strained resources, and escalating needs for services, make it necessary. We have wonderful models here in the success of our foundation to help improve educational quality and in Q-TV, our PBS station, and its many community partners.

As citizens of the state of Michigan, we have important economic and educational decisions to make. Despite one of the strongest higher education systems in the country, Michigan is losing some of its finest graduates to other states. We at Delta College have an opportunity to help shape the future so that more of our collective sons and daughters will be able to secure jobs here in Michigan.

So, you have a brief sketch of my vision for the future of Delta. However, it is important to keep in mind that a vision must be commonly held and

supported by the entire community; moreover, the clarity of a vision requires an introspective examination.

In March, we will invite the college community to participate together with faculty, staff, and the board of trustees in forming our mission and vision for our future. We will shape it together. This is an exciting time at Delta – a time of **imagining** and making possible new things, of dreaming together about how our mission shapes new opportunities.

A group of people imagined a college in a cornfield and planted the seeds. Don Carlyon nurtured that corn, Pete Boyce saw it to maturity. And now, we must re-seed and diversify. We will continue to ask, “How does Delta make a difference in the lives of students?”

Robert Frost said “What we do in college is to get over our little-mindedness.” His words ring true today as they did during the Great Depression. Frost invited us to resist the temptations that come with the comfort of what we know and what we already are. He urged us to embrace new ideas... new initiatives...to embrace change. We must be equally determined not to settle for what we have become, but rather to strive for what must be our destiny. Our journey must continue.

It is no surprise that John Kennedy loved Robert Frost as I do. Kennedy said, “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the present are certain to miss the future.”

Looking ahead, my inaugural wish for you is that we join together with a single-minded vision to ensure that Delta College remains first and foremost committed to the success of our students. It is through our students’ optimism and courage that Delta College will find its future.

Thank you