

A Few Questions and Answers

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Brothers and sisters, colleagues, and friends, it is a privilege and honor to gather with you today in this Brigham Young University Annual University Conference. It is a special occasion for me, being my first such conference in my new capacity. I look forward to the discussions, presentations, and recognitions while we are together.

At the outset, you should know how much I appreciate the contributions made by all those who have gone before us. My gratitude is rapidly expanding as I see how strong the university is and witness the strides that have been made. Of course, my thanks most proximately go to President and Sister Bateman—whose work over the last years is clearly evident to all of us—but I also feel as if I am standing on the shoulders of Presidents Lee, Holland, and Oaks, who have been dear friends and colleagues in other settings. Likewise, I honor also those I have not known personally but who, too, did so much in their time.

I hope you know that I take this opportunity very seriously. I have thought in some detail about what I might say and have sought the counsel of the President's Council. I am grateful for their input and suggestions—both those that I have included and those not taken. As is usually said at the beginning of Church books

by individual authors, all that I say is my own responsibility solely and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of the President's Council, BYU, or our sponsoring organization.

I have been delighted with my experiences as I have started to meet some of you—perhaps during my visits to each of the colleges, at a devotional or forum, in a lab or classroom. Perhaps it was at a new faculty orientation, at a faculty meeting, at Women's Conference, in the library or Wilkinson Center, or in any one of a myriad other places or settings on campus or in our BYU community.

Each of you has been cordial and welcoming. Sharon and I express our appreciation for your thoughtfulness, help, and patience as we become comfortable and situated in this great adventure.

As I meet and visit with different individuals and groups, I notice certain recurring questions, spoken or unspoken. Sometimes they come directly to me and, on occasion, to others thought to know me well. This is natural. I am new, and most of us are not well acquainted. It is understandable that you would like to know

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something about who I am, my vision for the university, and perhaps my disposition toward or experience regarding the major issues and opportunities we enjoy here at BYU.

In that spirit, as part of our initial and, in some cases, ongoing dialogue, I thought I might try to identify and address some of those recurrent questions. There are, of course, more questions than I can answer—even if I knew the answers. Some questions are ones I hope we, as a BYU community, will work on together. Others may never have final answers, though we will be blessed in our ongoing efforts to grapple with them individually and as a community. So today will, I hope, be part of our continuing campus conversation in which I so appreciate your welcoming me. Our group is too large to take questions from the floor. We will do that some more when we can be together in smaller groups, but today I'll try to deal with some of the queries that I have already received.

Making the Change from the U to the Y

Let's start with an easy question first.

Question: "Is it true that as a requirement of my appointment here at BYU I was required to retiler the bottom of my swimming pool to change the big red U to a big white Y and that Sister Samuelson had to change the Go Utes license plates on her Mercedes?"

Answer: We have never had a swimming pool. Sharon drives a Ford Taurus with boring, standard-issue license plates. I would, however, call your attention to the fact that I have learned that my initials (COS) may on an upcoming appropriate occasion allow me to ride with a certain familiar mascot in a vehicle called a COS-MOBILE.

My Own School Days

Now, some very personal questions that tend to come from the more courageous among us, often meaning the students: "Has school always been easy for you?" "Have you ever been in academic trouble or failed a class or been on

probation or expelled?" The short answer to each of these is no, but candor does demand some explanations and perhaps two or three examples. I have never received an F or E. Nor have I been placed on academic probation, but once I was put on probation when I was an 11-year-old in Primary.

I had the honor of being a safety patrol officer, for which I had a little red flag on a long white pole to assist the other children across the street after Primary. The matter that got me into trouble was that my associate in this assignment and I felt that we needed to delay the children from crossing the street until there was a car coming for us to stop. This was not met with uniform enthusiasm, and probation resulted, following a very direct correction. That ended my law enforcement career, but also my probations. It is not my intent ever to impede your proper progress.

What I said about failing any classes was technically correct, but on one occasion I came close, at least in my perception at the time. One of the key premedical courses was comparative vertebrate anatomy, and it was well known that an A was absolutely essential to medical school admission. I was a serious student and worked hard but consistently received C's on my tests, and that was my final grade. Incidentally, I was naïve enough not to know that the third of the class that did exceptionally well had old tests from the course and the professor always used the same tests!

I was crestfallen and felt that my aspirations had been trashed. Happily, a wonderful premed counselor helped me understand that this was not necessarily the end of the world and probably would not be unless this level of achievement became a pattern. Fortunately, it did not.

About 10 years after this comparative anatomy course trauma, I became the admissions dean of a medical school. I then learned that the common wisdom of my undergraduate years was a myth. In fact, the admissions committee was well aware of the testing practices

of this anatomy professor and thus tended to discount the importance of his grades, rather than giving them the prominence that others, including possibly the professor, had attached to them.

While I am confessing, I should also probably add that I received a C my very last quarter as an undergraduate. (As you see, I'm ancient and went to college before semesters were invented.) I had already acquired more credit hours than needed for graduation (something we do not recommend), had been admitted to medical school, and was beginning to recognize how narrow my college education had been to that point and how grade-driven I had become (a usual necessity for admission to a professional school).

With my sister Carol—I have two sisters—I enrolled in a personal finance class. Again, I am confessing, not recommending. I decided that I would just listen to lectures, read the parts of the text that truly interested me (I'm afraid the selection was not extensive), and not study or prepare for examinations further. My sister, who got an A, was chagrined and embarrassed, but I remained true to my quest and earned a C.

I've admitted that school was never really easy, but I can identify a few discrete examples of things that made it more enjoyable. The first occurred early in grade school. I was not an early reader. My mother, who had been a first-grade teacher, encouraged me all that she could, but for some reason I was not interested. A defining moment transpired at the beginning of the third grade. Mrs. Brown, our teacher, evaluated our entering reading competence and determined that I was more suited to take the B, or easier, version of the *Weekly Reader*. This was based on her evaluation of my poor reading skills.

I was shocked, my mother was embarrassed, and together we agreed to change things in short order—which we did. My fifth-grade teacher could not understand my mother's elation when it was reported at parent-teacher conference that I had developed the "terrible habit" of always

having a book open in my lap even when the class was supposed to be working on something else. I have never gotten over my love of reading or my appreciation for Mrs. Brown.

The second, and perhaps more important, component in my progressive enjoyment of educational pursuits that I will mention began shortly after my trauma with comparative anatomy. By then, Sharon and I were engaged and had planned our marriage over the Thanksgiving holiday so that we could have a little honeymoon without the necessity of missing school. I was the student; she was teaching school. I had a compelling problem and decision to make, and Sharon supported me fully in my general quest to be a serious student and even in the specifics that I will describe.

I was enrolled in the embryology course that really was key to medical school admission. The kindly counselor who helped me put comparative anatomy in perspective was also my professor in this class. Therefore I absolutely needed to do well! I've given my defense and now will share the offense for which I have received frequent ribbing for almost 39 years.

Sharon and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on Wednesday morning. After the temple ceremony, the pictures, and the wedding breakfast, she and my brother drove me to the university campus, where I spent the afternoon in my embryology class and lab. I was on time for the wedding reception that evening!

A very good friend was the TA for the class, and he told the professor of my circumstances because on the very next Monday a major exam for the class was scheduled. I had been doing well to that point, and the professor was compassionate. He told my friend that we could probably disregard that upcoming test if I did well on all the others. I, of course, knew nothing at that time of this agreement.

Monday came, we were home from the honeymoon, and I took the test. I didn't fail and, in fact, got 100 percent correct! I had prepared well—but I emphasize only *before* the wedding—

and was finally convinced that advanced, persistent preparation really does pay! Dr. Newby, the professor, called me in and said he was tempted to ask specifics about the honeymoon but wouldn't. He did say that clearly, in my case, marrying the right girl was the most important correct decision I had ever made. I have recalled often the truth of that statement. She did, and does, make me a much better student, even in the face of my obvious limitations.

Brigham Young University Today

Let us shift our focus toward BYU and our current circumstances.

You should know I am becoming acquainted with the Mountain West and other affiliated athletic conferences. We convene in person and telephonically on a regular basis. And I am one—if not the only—General Authority whose stake conference assignments are determined by Cougar game schedules.

Another common question: President Dallin H. Oaks arrived, and shortly thereafter BYU had a law school. “Will my arrival be followed by the announcement of a BYU medical school?” No. We are grateful for the professional training and impact that our J. Reuben Clark Law School and Marriott School of Management have on campus, in their professional circles, and around the world, but I think it highly unlikely that we will be adding a medical or dental school or other professional schools anytime soon.

We will strive to continue to improve in all that we currently do. For example, with the tremendous generosity of people like Ira Fulton and his family, for whom the College of Engineering and Technology will soon be named, we will do more at a higher level of achievement than ever before.

Regarding new disciplines, I would fully expect that when and as appropriate, but not prematurely, we may well add new programs not currently found at BYU. Part of this will be the natural consequence of the emergence of

new disciplines as the frontiers of knowledge and the way we organize them continue to expand.

Selection and Mandate

Now, some often-asked questions regarding the relationship between Brigham Young University, our board of trustees, and my role as BYU president:

Question: “How were you selected to be BYU president, and do you come with a special mandate or charge?”

Answer: I would not normally raise this topic on my own, but since the question has been asked frequently, let me mention some of what President Hinckley has publicly said about such things. One such occasion was a recent commencement at a public institution of higher education in this state. President Hinckley noted that the president of that institution was in transition. President Hinckley quipped that in the Church Educational System we just call someone and sustain them before the people, and the person is ready to function that day—no elaborate search committees, no politicking, no jockeying for position.

That was certainly true in my case. I received a phone call one day asking if I would meet President Hinckley in his office. After greeting me, President Hinckley basically asked one question: “How would you like a change of scenery?” We members of the Seventy are used to moving to different assignments. I had been at Salt Lake headquarters for a few years. So I thought, “Afghanistan, here I come.” What I said was, “President, whatever you would like is what I would like.”

With great kindness but also with considerable brevity, President Hinckley indicated that President Merrill J. Bateman, who had served wonderfully well as BYU's 11th president, was being reassigned to full-time Church service. President Hinckley said he would like me to serve as BYU's 12th president. I was, of course, surprised but pleased. At first Sharon thought I was spoofing her, as I sometimes do. However,

she soon realized I was serious. She was as honored and humbled as was I with this unexpected but exhilarating opportunity.

Was there a charge? “You’ll do what is right,” President Hinckley said. Subsequent to that time, President Hinckley has called to see how our Provo housing is coming but has not given further new or specific direction. Elder Eyring, as Church commissioner, and the board arranged for us to have a nice university residence here in Provo. Sharon’s one request was a double oven. We are now in the process of moving in and are anxious to be here full-time physically, as we are already emotionally.

Those of you familiar with the governance of BYU will understand that—unlike many other institutions where policies are largely determined by their presidents—BYU is fortunate to have a fully knowledgeable, participatory, and engaged board of trustees, executive committee of the board, and commissioner of education.

As BYU president I meet monthly with our board of trustees, which, as you know, is chaired by the president of the Church; cochaired by his two counselors; and composed of several members of the Quorum of the Twelve, the senior member of the seven presidents of the Seventy, and the general presidents of the Relief Society and Young Women organizations. I likewise meet monthly with the executive committee of the board. Each month Elder Henry B. Eyring, as Church commissioner of education, meets with me and the BYU President’s Council to review and give counsel on university matters.

So we as a university are board-led, something for which I am very grateful. That is not to say that we are micromanaged, because we are not. The president is given sufficient latitude to get himself into significant trouble on his own!

Differences of Opinion

All this leads to another very natural question: “President Samuelson, you’re a General Authority of the Church, but you’re also the

president of BYU. On BYU matters, can we disagree or even argue with you?”

My response is, “Of course.” Open discussions are the lifeblood of universities, including BYU. We face many complex issues, and each of us may have different perspectives that we need to share with one another. What we each do inevitably affects each other. It is natural and expected that we be candid and frank with each other. And I have every expectation that the vigor of our dialogue will be matched by our mutual respect.

General Authorities

A related question: “Occasionally we hear that one or more of the General Authorities wants us to do this or not do something else. How do we know how to handle these situations?”

Answer: It is the policy of the board that General Authority requests to use university resources should come through established channels. This is also true as we make requests of the Brethren. It is reflexive, and wonderful, that we each want to be responsive to opportunities to build the kingdom and help the Church. We want to follow and support the Brethren. In this respect, much wonderful work is accomplished—most of it quietly—by many here at BYU. One advantage of my having worked where I have for the past few years is that I am comfortable checking with the Brethren and others of our leaders and Church associates regarding their priorities and suggestions. This helps clarify if and when direction is in fact coming from appropriate authority in Salt Lake. Also, because we have the established reporting line I mentioned earlier, we can be sure that instruction or direction to us is coming through proper established channels.

I want to underscore my appreciation for the fact that our established channels of communication with our board of trustees, executive committee, and Church education commissioner are two-way in their consultation and

communication. I hope that I can listen to them as carefully as they listen to us.

Let me share two further observations. It is my understanding of our doctrine that even the process of searching for religious truth often requires us to study things out in our minds—sometimes over extended periods of time. Often we need in the “process of time” (Moses 7:21) to consider multiple and perhaps contending perspectives before arriving at the assurance of a conclusion on which to act. Although we may have the natural tendency to “hasten [the] work in its time” (D&C 88:73), we also must remember the virtue of patience and the promise that “all things must come to pass in their time” (D&C 64:32).

I also know that an inspired answer given for one situation or at a certain time does not mean that it will always be the answer in other circumstances. We believe, after all, in continuing guidance—all preceded by the spirit and process of open discussion, study, and consideration. After appropriate deliberation, once university decisions are made, I hope we will all wholeheartedly implement and support them. In my thus-far limited BYU experience, I give you all high marks for your cooperation as we meet our opportunities and problems.

Second, let me also note that, on occasion, I may be asked by our board to take a certain approach or to implement a certain policy. On those occasions I will be as clear as possible as to the source of our directions. I know you will want, as I will, to follow that guidance in letter and spirit regardless of how much or little discussion has preceded it or even if it varies from our personal preferences or perspectives.

A Case of Nepotism?

Now a personal, family question: “Is there any conflict of interest or nepotism in having a BYU vice president directly related to the BYU president?”

The vice president mentioned is, of course, my sister Jan Samuelson Scharman, who is

responsible for Student Life. Elder Eyring addressed this question in April with the deans, directors, and department chairs.

Let me share what he said then. Elder Eyring indicated that the board of trustees had carefully considered the question of Sister Scharman and me serving at BYU at the same time. (The board’s response, I am told, is even recorded in its official minutes.) According to Elder Eyring, the chairman of the board, speaking for the entire board, had declared our simultaneous service “a delightful arrangement.” Jan and I are both aware of the burdens and blessings this opportunity presents. Established university policy does allow for siblings to work at this level with express board approval.

As our policy precludes, I did not hire Sister Scharman. She was here at BYU before I arrived, and, as another member of the First Presidency quipped, may well be here after I have gone. I do not approve Vice President Scharman’s salary. That is, as with all President’s Council members, a matter for the board of trustees.

Rank and Status and Teaching

Our next question is a fundamental one that relates to the mission of Brigham Young University. It is this: “How do we reconcile rank-and-status decisions that some say unduly reward scholarly productivity and outward, professional involvement at the expense of teaching with the repeated injunction that BYU’s fundamental mission is to be a great undergraduate teaching institution?”

I am sure that as I learn more about the details of our rank-and-status policies, more about the full breadth and depth of our scholarly and creative productivity across all our different colleges and disciplines, and more about the remarkable learning and teaching and commitment to students that epitomize Brigham Young University, my insight will continue to increase on these important topics. I must say that I am gratified to learn

that many of you share the same perception I have that often our most effective teachers are also our most effective researchers and best community citizens.

I also mention the comfort it is to reflect with you on these matters from my previous experience as a tenured professor, as a department chair, as a dean, and as a vice president. I think I have been, at least in part, in your shoes.

Initial Observations

All that said, some of my initial observations are these. I hope you will recognize their sources and origins.

We are mandated as a sacred trust by our sponsoring institution to be a great undergraduate teaching university. Our mission is no less than “to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life” (*The Mission of Brigham Young University* and *The Aims of a Brigham Young University Education*, 1).

That mission includes four educational goals (*The Mission*, 1–2):

1. “All students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
2. “Students at BYU should receive a broad university education.”
3. “Students should also receive instruction in the special fields of their choice.”
4. “Scholarly research and creative endeavor among both faculty and students, including those in selected graduate programs of real consequence, are essential and will be encouraged.”

Approved by the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, this mission is part of the charted course of the Church as it relates to the educational process with which we are involved (see J. Reuben Clark, Jr., “The Charters Course of the Church in Education,” 1938).

Our BYU Aims explain that “a spiritually strengthening education warms and enlightens students by the bright fire of their teachers’ faith while enlarging their minds with knowledge. It also makes students responsible for

developing their own testimonies by strenuous effort” (*The Aims of a BYU Education*, 4). As “members of the BYU community,” we “rigorously study academic subjects in the light of divine truth. An eternal perspective shapes not only *how* students are taught but *what* they are taught” (*Aims*, 5). Indeed, we state that “in preparing for the bachelor’s degree, students should enlarge their intellects by developing skills, breadth, and depth: (1) skills in the basic tools of learning, (2) an understanding of the broad areas of human knowledge, and (3) real competence in at least one area of concentration” (*Aims*, 5).

I am grateful that each of us at “Brigham Young University has always cared as much about strong moral character as about great mental capability. Consequently, a BYU education should reinforce such moral virtues as integrity, reverence, modesty, self-control, courage, compassion, and industry” (*Aims*, 10). Indeed, as President Spencer W. Kimball emphasized and as our Aims proclaim, BYU “has no justification for its existence unless it builds character, creates and develops faith, and makes men and women of strength and courage, fortitude, and service—men and women who will become stalwarts in the Kingdom and bear witness of the . . . divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (*Aims*, 11; quoting Spencer W. Kimball, “On My Honor,” *Speeches of the Year, 1978* [Provo: BYU Press, 1979], 137).

We who believe in enduring to the end train for lifelong learning and service. “Well-developed faith, intellect, and character prepare students” (*Aims*, 12) to “bring strength to others in the tasks of home and family life, social relationships, civic duty, and service to mankind” (*The Mission*, 1). It is not wrong to look for the enduring fruits of our labors in the lives of the children and grandchildren of our graduates.

Put another way, Brigham Young University’s institutional objectives include educating the minds and spirits of students, advancing truth and knowledge, extending the blessings of

learning to members of the Church in all parts of the world, and developing friends for the university and the Church (see <http://www.byu.edu/president/objectives.html>). When carefully considered, we can understand, for example, why our research is done and is so important. It blesses the lives of our students as their understanding of real learning increases, and they are able to link these expanding truths with an enhanced quality of life. Remember, in all that we do, our mission is “to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life” (*The Mission*, 1).

As you have recognized, I have spent considerable time reiterating the basic documents that detail BYU’s charted course, mission, aims, and institutional objectives for a reason. These are the foundational documents that set our course. One of my main responsibilities is to be sure we are rooted in and proceed according to that which is established and secure. This is who we are, why we are, and what we are. Our great responsibility is to select from the myriad opportunities that await us each day so as to contribute to our larger, established identity and purpose.

Academic Focus

Let us continue our discussion and questions.

“Where as BYU president do you see your attention being focused?” I have already learned that many things demand my time and effort, and all are not optional. As I consider where I might best focus my discretionary energies here at BYU, I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to what I call our soft, or academic, infrastructure. I want it to be as solid as the wonderful physical, or hard, infrastructure of this beautifully appointed, well-equipped campus.

I am not saying, of course, that we will not build any new buildings while I am here. We will complete our current building projects, and they will bless us all. Other building projects

will develop, which we will undertake with board approval if and when full funds are raised. But the physical infrastructure may be less my initial focus precisely because we are already quite well provisioned for—even in the face of obvious deficiencies in some key areas. I want us to be as good as we say we are and as others think we should be. I am convinced that our human deficiencies are more often our major impediments than are our physical circumstances. Let us together continue to raise the bar in the quality of our learning and teaching, our scholarly and creative works, our outreach and services. Although what I have said applies to our students, it applies equally well and importantly to all of us in the university community—whatever our assignment or role.

Student Mentoring

Student mentoring has had much recent discussion and is vital in our faculty-student relationships in every discipline. We all know that for our students to do well in their next steps, they usually need detailed, personal letters of recommendation and other interventions. They may need a phone call from one of us to an associate or friend in a key graduate program, school, or internship. For these efforts to be effective and credible, we need to know our students well. They need us to mentor them.

But there is something new and increasingly important in our ongoing effort to capture and challenge the full capacities of our many gifted undergraduate students—in ways that advance our common scholarship and development of academic skills as well as our efforts to solve real-world problems. So our focus on student mentoring will continue.

We still have much common and individual work to do regarding the definitions and application of mentoring to the sciences and humanities, to book and article cultures, to creative and scholarly efforts, to the myriad ways in

which BYU is an undergraduate teaching institution, leavened by our ongoing consequential research and creative contributions, important graduate programs, and our considerable service duties.

Salary and Resources

Now a practical question: “Do the Brethren realize that for most of the faculty and staff, we are behind most of our national peers in terms of salary and sometimes other resources?”

The short answer is yes. There will continue, and probably should always be, a dynamic tension between our teaching commitments, our research and creative demands, and the resources to accomplish what we want to do. Likewise, the board is unapologetic in its view that an element of sacrifice continues to have importance as a component of the offering we make in our BYU service. It is vital to note, however, that they will do all in their power to insulate us from the financial threats and crises so common in the first half of our institutional history.

We will probably never have all the lab or classroom space; all the disposable time or travel money; all the equipment, facilities, or other resources we might desire. We will continually revitalize our efforts by replacing that which is less necessary or timely with that which is more pressing or urgent. But—unlike cousin institutions that frequently find themselves bucking the waves of changing financial tides—due to the generosity of our sponsoring Church and our own careful prioritization and internal reallocations, we will have enough to succeed.

Extramural Funding

A related question: “How do we feel about various potential sources of extramural funding? What can we properly do to access these funds more effectively?”

I see this as one of my roles and responsibilities to help us garner the resources necessary to accomplish our vision and purposes.

And I will work hard with each of you in that effort, though, as I have mentioned in some of my college visits, I expect you to be at least as interested in that effort as you expect me to be. We are well situated with our development and LDS Foundation associates to do even more than the impressive work already accomplished, but our success does depend on all of us as we work together carefully under the direction of our deans, chairs, and others in leadership.

Likewise, we will carefully but actively look to private foundations and even government sources that do not compromise our principles or mission. In all of this we will coordinate closely with the board, as we do with every major initiative.

As you know, we take all major expenditures at the university to the board, regardless of the source of the funds. This approach has given us tremendous board support because we clearly signal that we understand that all funds at the university are sacred. This approach has also opened the way for us to pursue many new and ongoing funding sources, largely through a cadre of friends of the university who have been exceptionally generous in sharing their time, talents, advice, and means. And we are looking to push the frontiers of these efforts, including in the fall a possible satellite-enabled, worldwide broadcast to BYU alumni.

Future Changes

Next question: “Do you plan any significant changes of any sort in the near future?”

As I said, I am the new kid on the block and very much in a learning mode. I am just participating in my first cycle of resource planning. We are also gearing up for reaffirmation of university accreditation: a process that naturally provides a cross-campus inventory on where we are and where we might want to go—though I am conscious of keeping that effort focused, transparent, and cost effective. So, although we can and should expect

ongoing change in an organic and dynamic organization such as BYU, it is fair to say that I currently have no major or immediate changes planned. We have wonderful vice presidents, deans, chairs, and other leaders. Our staff people are generally superb. Their desires and needs, as well as the institution's, will be evaluated regularly.

Please do not take my honest current opinion as either a statement of perpetual status quo or as a broken promise if and when changes do continue to take place on this never-still campus. In referring to my medical background, President Hinckley said I was not appointed because BYU is sick but rather to keep it healthy. That I am committed to doing, even when it requires changes in our habits, priorities, or style as conditions around us evolve.

Enrollment, Expectations, Opportunities

Some have asked another question regarding enrollment limits: "Will they be lifted or liberalized? How can we broaden access to a BYU experience?"

Now we are moving into the area of questions I mentioned at the beginning—those to which I may not have an immediate answer but that we need to consider and work on together.

Although I cannot say at this point whether enrollment limits will be liberalized, I don't expect it in a dramatic way in the near term. I can say that we will want to look even more closely at the questions of how we better prepare our students before they come; how we better advise and help them determine (earlier, where appropriate) their majors and courses of study; how to help them make alternative plans when desirable or necessary; how we help them graduate with strong testimonies, schooling, and education; and how we help them find appropriate additional training or employment.

In this process I hope we can continue to work together to determine how best to help

our students in some other dimensions as well. For example, I feel strongly that we have an obligation and opportunity to continue to raise the bar on what we expect of our students. This includes their understanding and personal endorsement of their Honor Code commitments. When so many want to come to BYU, we want to be sure that those who are here recognize and maximize their opportunities. I believe we must ask our students to contribute to all that is BYU and not just take away knowledge and academic credentials. This means exemplary behavior in living as well as in scholarship.

I see a double-edged opportunity to help our students integrate spiritual and secular information and values for themselves but also to be able to articulate and share their understandings, testimonies, and values with those whose values or cultural backgrounds may be different from their own.

Pride and Complacency

And it is always worth asking how we minimize pride and complacency on our campus. We need to be aware of and take comfort in the prophecies made about the future potential and contributions of BYU, including what is now our present. But we must also be knowledgeable and cautious in the light of clear Book of Mormon warnings about the potential risks of affluent, successful societies that seem to me to be related significantly to what we have been blessed as a university to become in recent years. I take particularly seriously the counsel of Nephi in his wonderful discourse on the Atonement:

O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.

But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their god. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also. [2 Nephi 9:28–30]

Conclusion

I have enjoyed and appreciated this opportunity to gather with you today. I thank you for your support and forbearance.

I have tried to address some frequently raised questions in the interest of framing and continuing our essential campus com-

munication. I know the best answers are still being worked out and worked through, and I know that many of the most important questions are still to be asked. I look forward to doing both together with you and the campus community.

Finally, I want you to know that I know that the Lord's hand is on BYU and that the work of BYU is a vital part of the Lord's work. We are thus entitled to seek His blessings and are also entitled to be guided and protected in our quests to the extent that we live our lives in congruence with our charge. God lives, knows us, and loves us. I invoke His blessings on us as we begin this new academic year in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

