

***Inauguration Speech by Gregory P. Crawford,
22nd President of Miami University, October 10, 2016***

**Meaningful Connectivity: Miami University
in the 21st Century**

Welcome

There are so many to welcome here today – Miami University students, faculty, staff, and alumni – plus our friends, special guests, emeriti, and state and educational leaders; those from our campus communities including Oxford, Middletown, Hamilton, Luxembourg, and West Chester; and many from Cincinnati and throughout Ohio. For my wonderful wife, Renate – we’ve been a terrific team for nearly three decades – and for my daughters, Ally and Michaela, and my parents, Phil and Dolores – your unwavering support means so much. Thank you for such a warm welcome.

Miami has a long history with ROTC units in the Navy, Air Force, and Army, so I extend a special welcome to our active duty United States Military, veterans, and ROTC cadets – please stand and be recognized. Within the Miami family, we also have several students who’ve been awarded the Purple Heart and decorated for acts of bravery. Our deepest appreciation goes to all of you for your courage in defending our country.

Today we open a new chapter in Miami’s 207-year history. Our gathering celebrates the entire story of this amazing university – its proud past, its promising present, and its bright future that we’ll shape together. The world needs Love, Honor, and our mission-driven vision to use our knowledge and skills with integrity and compassion to better our global society. We are One Miami, not only geographically on multiple campuses, but also historically, through three centuries.

After 103 days on the job – but who’s counting? – what excites me most is how connection is so central to our life at Miami. I’ve known for a long time about Miami Mergers – Renate’s sister and brother-in-law are a Merger, and they have been a terrific example of Love and Honor for as long as I’ve known them. I’ve also felt connected to Miami through the great Coach Ara Parseghian, a son of Miami who studied and started his career here and became part of Miami’s Cradle of Coaches.

Just as the pioneers in Southwestern Ohio needed a college in the 19th century, just as the advocates for social justice in the 1960s needed Western College, which is now united with us, so Oxford, Ohio, the United States, and the world need Miami in the 21st century. Our long narrative propels us into the future on a trajectory of scholarship and service, with unsurpassed passion to build a community of excellence.

Each of our centuries has come with its own challenges, which we have successfully met. The 21st century is a time of rapid change and increased globalization. Despite great advances in areas like medicine and technology, we see widening gaps between rich and poor, inequalities and inequities, and sometimes-fearful reactions to rapidly evolving demographic, economic, and technological trends. At the very moment when we have become more instantly connected by communication than ever before in human history, we find ourselves deeply divided over culture, race, religion, and wealth distribution. Simultaneously, there are more opportunities and unlimited options for life and career paths.

In order to meet these challenges, we must overcome division by achieving what I call “meaningful connectivity,” finding synergy and synthesis among the vast diversity in our world to solve problems. In the coming months and years, you’ll hear me talk a lot about the importance of entrepreneurial thinking, partnership, inclusivity, community, unity, and society – all of which require and advance meaningful connectivity.

The Four Mindsets: Where We Excel in Holistic Learning, Social Justice, Change Creation, and Virtuous Leadership

As we open this new Miami chapter today, I want to describe to you four mindsets that undergird meaningful connectivity: holistic learning, social justice, change creation, and virtuous leadership.

First, I'll describe these mindsets, sharing where Miami already excels; then I'll focus on how we will build on that excellence.

First: Holistic Learning is the heart of our identity at Miami.

True to its mission, Miami upholds an unwavering commitment to liberal arts undergraduate education as the training ground for transformational thinking and global citizenship. We honor the original meaning of a liberal arts education – focused on the effective formation of free persons and citizens – while applying modern design thinking to shape students with the characteristics and competencies for 21st-century success. There is an intrinsic correlation between a liberal arts education and innate curiosity, emotional intelligence, commitment to diversity, critical thinking, and creative problem solving.

Some media reports would make you think that the liberal arts are no longer relevant, that they are a remnant of 12th century education. Those here today know that is false. The liberal arts are not skills, core competencies, or computer codes. They cannot be mimicked by computers or memorized. They are the essence of holistic learning, the way we understand our deepest selves as human beings. And they engender in us an insatiable quest always to keep learning.

Don't get me wrong: training for a skill or vocation is important. But specific jobs and whole industries can become obsolete. Consider, for example, cartographers in the advent of the GPS. Telephone operators were replaced by automatic voice mail systems – which, come to think of it, many of us don't think is an improvement. And what happened to encyclopedias, Camelot Music, and Blockbuster Video? Some say that in the near future, postal carriers, travel agents, cab drivers, and cashiers will be replaced by machines and autonomous vehicles. At the same time, technology will open opportunities not yet imagined.

Hence, at Miami, our work is not limited to a student's four years on campus or to merely preparing them for their first jobs. It is to prepare them for a life of leadership and citizenship, to instill in them the capacity to adapt to constant change, whatever their major or career path. Though we put a date on diplomas as if a student's education is complete, that date marks the start of the next 40, 50, or 60 years of their lives.

In the words of Marni Goldberg, one of this year's "18 of The Last 9" outstanding young alumni honorees: "In the nine years since [my graduation], I am amazed by the profound effect Miami has had on my life. My four years in Oxford were life-changing. ... With each passing year, it's become clearer that walking across that stage in 2007 wasn't an end to my Miami experience, but rather just the beginning."

The mindset of holistic learning is ultimately about teaching students how to think. At Miami, our faculty encourage them to do that from day one. The First Year Research Experience allows students to participate in small, faculty-led teams. This semester, our first-years are studying the development of neural circuits in invertebrates and investigating how memories can change over time as part of behavioral neuroscience research. They design and implement a study, analyze data, and present results – not only absorbing knowledge, but **creating** it!

Programs such as Inside Washington, Inside Hollywood, Luxembourg, and Interactive Media Studies in San Francisco and Cincinnati immerse students in some of the most exciting and challenging experiences of their lives.

From a more personal perspective, in high school, I was interested only in being a physicist. In college, with more exposure to humanities courses, my breadth of knowledge transformed me. I entered college wanting nothing more than to be a physicist. Thanks to the arts and humanities, I graduated with a fuller understanding of what it means to be a human being.

To those who say liberal arts are no longer useful, I say look at the way more than 95 percent of graduates from all of our campuses are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation. Look at the company we keep as a Public Ivy (Berkeley, UCLA, Michigan, University of North Carolina, Virginia), the company we keep as the top public teaching institution in the United States (Princeton, Yale, Brown, Rice, Wake Forest), and the company we keep among universities with the most alumni leading Fortune 500 companies, including Stanford, Princeton, Wisconsin, Notre Dame, the U.S. Military Academy, Cornell, and Harvard ... **and** we top them all with the number of women leading those companies.

Take a closer look and see the power of this “12th century education” that remains so relevant today – the holistic education that is the liberal arts thrives here, and as a result, our graduates thrive as Miami does, as a top public university in Ohio that is respected across the nation and around the world.

Second, our mindset of Social Justice is not merely a discipline or research area; it is in our DNA.

Miamians hold a deep appreciation for the unique role that universities can play in challenging injustice and promoting inclusive excellence. We leverage the power of a well-informed community to impact positive societal change and, in pursuit of the highest degree of excellence, are dedicated to something that transcends ourselves.

Over the course of more than 200 years, Miami has sown seeds of social activism – from Western College’s storied connections to Freedom Summer and our extended civil rights research to grassroots efforts such as Project Civility on the Middletown campus. We intersect learning and research for the greater good: prime examples being the Regional Campuses’ Center for Civic Engagement that partners with and benefits more than 100 community organizations; the Engineers Without Borders globally-oriented student organization; and the Center for Community Engagement in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine, where education and architecture together provide an inner-city setting for learning that lifts up those areas.

Miami’s Center for Social Entrepreneurship brings together students of many interests and majors who want to leave their mark on the world. They are led by faculty who are passionate about creating solutions to persistent social problems – particularly for those who are marginalized or living in extreme poverty. Students seek strategies to address these social issues globally in a meaningful way, whether financial, educational, environmental, nutritional, or governmental.

This commitment to social justice and community engagement undergirds Miami’s 21st-century emphasis on diversity, equality, and opportunity as we move to a model of inclusive excellence.

Inclusion means welcoming every person and bringing together different backgrounds, cultures, races, nationalities, and perspectives. As our Code of Love and Honor says, “We respect

the dignity of other persons, the rights and property of others, and the right of others to hold and express **disparate** beliefs.” Our embrace of diversity pervades all of our activity and decision-making. It is not simply a matter of the majority’s sensitivity for the minority, but a comprehensive environment where each individual’s dignity is respected, their input sought, and their perspective valued, regardless of differences in ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, or any other identifying factor. Diversity and meaningful connectivity belong together.

This connective engagement of persons is critical to success in the 21st century. The challenges we face are too big and too complex for any individual to solve alone. The status quo and the single-perspective echo chamber are inadequate. Solutions arise from seeing serendipitous connections among seemingly unrelated ideas across disciplines. Research shows that people with more diverse sources of information have better ideas, and more diverse teams often outperform teams with greater individual talent.

Inclusion is the opposite of suspicion and the enemy of mistrust. People who practice openness come to greater understanding and have the ability to work together for the common good. That’s why inclusive excellence is so important for our mission, and why it will be integral to everything we do at Miami. Social justice and inclusion call for virtues emphasized in our core values, such as respect, honesty, and openness.

In my short time here, I’ve already seen our students living this mindset in vivid ways. One day, outsiders came on campus to shout anti-gay and anti-Islam slogans. Overwhelmingly, our students peacefully and respectfully expressed their disagreement and shared their own messages of Love and Honor, respect, and tolerance.

Social justice and inclusivity require making these important human connections across group divisions with the willingness to engage other people fully, to respect who they are without

judgment, and in turn, to share who you are with humility, honesty, and generosity.

I often refer to us as One Miami. As One Miami on multiple campuses, we are a built-in model of diversity and synergy. In a world with too much shouting and too little listening, we are well-positioned to convene difficult conversations in search of common ground, based on fundamental respect for others. Such dialogue must be the starting point of any solution to the divisions among people today.

The third mindset, Change Creation, is the central challenge we must meet in the 21st century. Change is, indeed, a constant, and never more so than now.

The Miami community is united by an entrepreneurial mindset and a shared conviction that everything can be improved and every problem solved – and that we can be part of the progress. Ours is a spirit that believes everything is possible. Our teacher-scholar model encourages students to recognize opportunities that can generate value for society.

At Miami, experiential and collaborative learning converge with the continual exercise of translating the theoretical into practical benefit. Return on investment of a Miami education is defined not only by job placement and earning potential, but also by leadership capacity, the ability to adapt, and the opportunity for graduates to create careers for themselves and others.

We know that the changes we seek require the shared work of experts across different fields. Collaboration brings together a diversity of expertise, just as inclusion brings together a diversity of people, tearing down silos to trigger breakthrough discoveries.

Decades ago, a chance remark by a scientist in one field, overheard by a scientist in another field who recognized it as a solution to his problem, led to rapid advances in genetic engineering; today, such interaction is far more organized and deliberate – meaning more opportunities for unexpected discovery as well as more systematic pursuit of synthesis and innovation.

When great minds converge across disciplines and bring fresh perspective to tough challenges, we can expect groundbreaking results. Such collaboration can extend to colleagues in other universities and beyond the academy to include partnerships with government, industry, and not-for-profits. It expands our resources and helps us focus on questions that will expand knowledge and solve our grand challenges.

Collaborating for change creation is also a central feature of the entrepreneurial mindset needed to bring the benefits of research discovery to society. Here, the interaction involves not only the researchers who make the discovery, but also the financial experts, marketers, business leaders, and others who compose a successful startup team. The Altman Summer Scholar Internship Program and Startup Weekends at Miami are obvious examples of ways our students benefit through collaboration with each other and industry. This magic happens not only in business fields. The change creation mindset is applicable across all disciplines.

For instance, as part of the Doctoral Undergraduate Opportunity Scholarships (known as DUOS), graduate student Michelle Veite this semester is mentoring an undergraduate student, Dan Regan, in Professor Michael Kennedy's lab. They are striving to discover a biomarker that could lead to early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. Dr. Kennedy, an Ohio Eminent Scholar and professor of chemistry and biochemistry, leads Miami's Center for Structural Biology and Metabonomics, an Ohio Center of Excellence where 20 undergraduates and four doctoral students are profiling

databases for children's diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. The center's research is part of a collaborative consortium with Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, and Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital in Cleveland. So consider: Here we have collaborations within collaborations, where undergraduate students, led by graduate students, mentored by a professor, in partnership with hospitals statewide, are all connected by the goal of creating change to solve some very big problems.

To facilitate effective change, collaborators need to consider others' ideas as well as their own, and they must be willing to venture into places that have not been explored, to take risks, and to overcome difficulties in cooperation with other members of their team. The virtues required for such change creation are trust, generosity, and especially courage.

The fourth mindset is Virtuous Leadership, which provides a path to accomplishing the good things we want for everyone, moving beyond division and misunderstanding.

In response to the demands of today's dynamic global environment, Miami is committed to preparing broadly proficient thought- and service-leaders who are positioned to advance humanity. Miamians are inclined to make higher education more meaningful through the pursuit of truth and are constantly seeking the good in others. We cultivate intellectual virtues – compassion, curiosity, courage, and a commitment to diversity – alongside an insatiable desire to know and a keen capacity for reasoned deliberation.

We know that society is looking to universities for solutions, not only in science and technology, but also in the ability to uplift the well-being and mutual understanding of people across the globe. This transformation starts with ourselves individually and as a

community, the result of the education and opportunities for personal growth here at Miami.

An exemplary model of virtuous leadership at Miami rose to the national stage last month. Daryl Baldwin, director of the Myaamia Center, was the first Miami professor to receive a MacArthur Genius Grant and the first in Ohio since 2004. His passion has inspired the revitalization of the Miami Tribe's language and culture along with other cultural restoration beyond that of the tribe. Miami Tribe students are thriving here at levels far above the national average for Native American students, while many of their fellow students are gaining access to rich cultural resources and in-depth research opportunities tied to the preservation of language and culture.

We are shaped by Miami to dedicate ourselves to this type of service for a lifetime of meaningful connections and rewarding work. Virtuous leadership involves the virtues of humility, service, perseverance, and especially optimism. We acknowledge that we need to grow and change, and we dedicate ourselves to continuing the process no matter the obstacles. We also believe that the future can be better than the past – and that we can be leaders in making it better.

We have a strong foundation for virtuous leadership. Miami's Lockheed Martin Leadership Institute cultivates future leaders who can flourish through development of communication skills, change management, and self-knowledge. The Miami Humanities Center brings together faculty, students, and others to increase knowledge of culture and human experience. The JANUS Forum exemplifies the free expression of opposing views through civil and rigorous debate, helping develop leaders who can understand viewpoints beyond their own. A new co-major in arts management provides a path for those with a passion for the beauty and unifying potential of the arts to become leaders who ensure that artists thrive. Our successful Bridges and Summer

Scholars programs are opening the minds of high school students to the possibilities of their own leadership potential.

The scope of such contributions will only multiply as we include more perspectives, engage more partners on campus and beyond, and direct our success to the benefit of our city, our state, our nation, and our world. Virtuous leadership requires that we be engaged in important connections around the globe, but the surest hope for our success are the connections you see here today – the Miami family, our community members, and our friends gathered to celebrate our past, present, and future.

Meaningful Connectivity and Shared Experience

These four mindsets of meaningful connectivity – holistic learning, social justice, change creation, and virtuous leadership – are fundamental to what we will teach and practice at Miami to advance the remarkable story that has brought us to this point in our history.

Rooted in its exemplary past and present, Miami's vision for the future is unchanged from our founding intention, 207 years ago, to prepare students for useful, fulfilling, and successful participation in society. Our mindsets are a means to that end, and although I have talked about them individually, they are not isolated from each other. They are mutually informative and supportive within the experiences of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. I'd like to share one example of many that has brought together our alumni, our faculty, and our students in a powerful way.

You may have read the story about 16 Miami architecture students who designed sun shelters, greenhouses, and playgrounds to provide relief for Syrians living in a refugee camp in Jordan. The project was implemented through intensive Skype sessions. A

Miami graduate, Laurie Balbo, originated the project. She described it as “the biggest project the International Relief and Development Agency has going, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees was ecstatic.”

Professor Diane Fellows said, “It took three months, 6,000 miles ... all that effort. ... That much shade allows someone in 100-degree heat to find respite, to find refuge. ... Projects like this, when you’re working with people in different cultures, you’re connected emotionally.”

One of the students, senior Josh Gabbard, said, “We used technology to break down barriers that would otherwise prevent us from establishing a dialogue. The most important thing for me, though, was just realizing how significant the dialogue was. We may have been talking architecture, ***but the fact that we were talking at all was much more important.***”

This example of a shared experience is a living testament of the powerful connection that occurs when holistic learning, social justice, change creation, and virtuous leadership come together. It magnifies the “meaning” in meaningful connectivity.

Special Thanks

Before I conclude with two special announcements, I want to personally express my gratitude to those of you here today.

To our faculty – thank you. We’re all here because of you. You give us inspiration in and out of the classroom, and your scholarship and commitment to teaching are the very heart of this incredible institution.

To our students – thank you. When we see the world around us and the challenges we face, I know we’re in good hands. The world

needs your idealism and passion for its betterment. Even amid the great difficulties and divisions we face, keep your enthusiasm and optimism. When others call you idealistic, thank them. When others call you unrealistic, prove them wrong. When others talk about hate and intolerance, model Love and Honor. And never forget the quote that encapsulates your Miami experience: ***“To think that in such a place, I led such a life.”***

To our staff – thank you. Your commitment and dedication and your caring support of everyone in our community make Miami beautiful from the inside out.

To our alumni – thank you ... and, wow! You are models of leading a life of higher purpose. You’re nearly 213,000 strong, and you have had such an impact on the world. Our students today will follow your footsteps and your examples in their own journeys.

To the Oxford, Middletown, and Hamilton communities – thank you. You are our first and best collaborators in our mission to build model communities of inclusion and support.

To our Board of Trustees – thank you. You demonstrate Love and Honor every day. You exemplify our commitment to civil and respectful discourse, collective decision-making, and shared vision.

To my family – thank you. I’ve always asked you not to “say anything until you hear me out.” And no matter how crazy my ideas, you heard me out. Even when it involved riding thousands of miles on a bicycle or moving thousands of miles across the country.

To our leaders from the state of Ohio – thank you. I look forward to this incredible opportunity to lead Miami in partnership with

you, and could not be happier that this gem of an institution is in the great state of Ohio, my home.

To all others present here today – thank you. I know I have big shoes to fill, following President Hodge and President Garland, who are also honored guests today. I arrived confident that everything is possible, and everything about Miami confirms it. Let us never be guilty of not dreaming big enough.

Two Outstanding Examples of Meaningful Connectivity

Now, I'm honored to conclude these inaugural remarks with two announcements, one that exemplifies the virtue of generosity and benevolence and the other the virtues of leadership and grace.

At Miami, we are not starting a story from scratch. We are advancing one of the most remarkable stories of an American university. We can be confident that we'll have the resources to achieve our goals through reputation, ingenuity, discovery, creativity, and generosity.

A university is, in one sense, built of bricks – in our case, of red bricks – and mortar. On that score, too, Miami is at the top nationally – we have one of the most beautiful campuses in the country. But the unique character and ethos of the institution go beyond elegant landscapes, artistic creations, and stately architecture. Ultimately, it is the people who together compose the environment that simply cannot be replicated elsewhere. Inspiring faculty and dedicated staff mentor and support passionate students, who then go out into the world as Miami alumni and make their mark. They take their Miami values with them and change the world for the better. They are generous with their time, their talent, and their treasure.

Today, I am delighted to share an example of that generosity by announcing the most generous gift ever received by Miami University in its 207-year history. We all know how benevolent the Farmer family has been in helping to make Miami such an extraordinary place. Their vision and commitment have already propelled countless students into successful futures.

Now, through an unprecedented \$40 million gift to the Farmer School of Business from Richard T. “Dick” and Joyce Farmer and the Farmer Family Foundation, our students’ future is even brighter. And the business world around the globe will be elevated by the wisdom and integrity they bring from their education.

This very meaningful connection will greatly enrich support of faculty scholarship, students, emerging programs, and curricular enhancements. We won’t stop here. We’ll forge additional pathways to generate resources for academics, partnerships, scholarships, and more that will strengthen all of our efforts. Our passionate alumni will continue to share in our excitement to broaden Miami’s influence and positive impact around the world.

Dick and Joyce, and all the Farmer family, our heartfelt appreciation goes to you for the lasting impact this gift will have on the future of the university and our students.

As I mentioned earlier, my own deep connection to Miami includes my relationship with Coach Ara Parseghian of more than eight years now – not counting my childhood dream of playing football for him.

I’ve had the privilege of being on his team in the fight against rare disease. In his profound influence on my own life and career, I’ve seen how he embodies all that we’re talking about today. I’ve seen how the holistic education he received at Miami has contributed

to his character and his success. I've seen his commitment to social justice. At Notre Dame, he was the first to integrate the coaching staff and to start an African-American quarterback. I've seen him create change – not only on the football field, where he won two national championships, but in the lives of children and families afflicted by the rare disease Niemann-Pick Type C that took the lives of three of his grandchildren. I've followed his virtuous leadership – his inspiring confidence, his courage, his grace, his magnanimity.

His wisdom and commitment are evident in this quote:

“You know what it takes to win. Just look at my fist. When I make a fist, it's strong and you can't tear it apart. As long as there's unity, there's strength. We must become so close with the bonds of loyalty and sacrifice, so deep with the conviction of the sole purpose, that no one, no group, nothing, can ever tear us apart.”

Now that I'm at Miami, home of the Cradle of Coaches, I understand even more how Coach Parseghian exemplifies what it means to be a Miamian. I'm proud to award him my first President's Medal.

Today, we commence our new journey together as One Miami. With Love and Honor and immense gratitude, I thank you all for celebrating the beginning of that journey with us, and I am humbled and honored to be a part of the Miami family.

Thank you.