



Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

“Learning to care for those in harm’s way”

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Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Naval Reserve (Retired)

Presidential Installation Address

TUESDAY, THE SEVENTH OF FEBRUARY 2006
ON THE BETHESDA, MARYLAND CAMPUS

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This afternoon we celebrate the people, the mission and the accomplishments of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. The distinguished visitors joining us today have all contributed to this university's development. The efforts of former presidents, especially Dr. Jim Zimble, have established a legacy that I aspire to continue as this University's fifth president.

We are especially honored that Senator Daschle and Congresswoman Byron have joined us today. I thank Dr. Chu, Dr. Winkenwerder, Mr. Alvarez and the Board of Regents, Dean Laughlin, Dean Hinton-Walker, Col. Jarrett and all of the friends of USU who, through your support, have brought us to this day. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Blanck, a friend of this university and of mine, for his inspiring remarks. The four Surgeons General have also been strongly supportive.

I am a single chapter in a book that includes a college president, a dean, college professors--my sister is one-- and school teachers like my mother who has been my best teacher. My dad has also been an important role model. He has exemplified a life in public service as a Naval officer, a Foreign Service Officer, and for the past half-century, as a college professor at a large public university. This book is still being written as we pass this academic tradition on to our son, Aaron, as he receives his Ph.D. this summer and pursues his own academic career.

My wife, Judy, joins me here at this new beginning. She has my heartfelt thanks, first for her endless effort in the successful raising of our sons and also for her example of service as a Navy nurse. We pass on this family tradition to our younger son, Patrick, as he begins his own career as a naval aviator. He is flying today or he would be here, too.

What was it that brought me here? This university offers something I could find nowhere else – a unique combination of education, research, and military service. In fact, it is the very special nature of this university that has brought us all here today – faculty, students, staff, and our distinguished alumni who share the common goal of providing good medicine in bad places.

This institution is singularly charged with teaching its students to care for those in harm's way. Our mission is not only about educating healthcare professionals; it is also about developing leaders. From the bayous of Louisiana and Mississippi to earthquake-torn Pakistan to the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, our university prepares doctors, nurses, and scientists who care for people and who treat patients injured in natural disasters, in peacetime and in war.

Our students rise to lead in each of our uniformed services: to provide health care to our military and their families at home and abroad, and to advance the health of our nation each and every day. We see them lead in medicine, nursing, public health and research just as our USU faculty do.

Our faculty serve as educators, clinicians and scientists. From developing vaccines for lethal viruses to fundamental research in radiation biology, our faculty advance the boundaries of science. They pioneer translational research to improve military medicine and the public's health. Our faculty conduct basic research that contributes to the protection of our troops in the field and our citizens at home.

In the seven months I have worked with you to pursue this mission, you, the people of USU, have impressed me with your clarity of commitment. The faculty, the students, the staff, the administration, the alumni – you all embrace this shared mission and bring your individual strengths and talents to its pursuit. In large measure, it is this shared vision that makes the people of USU unique and this opportunity for me such a joy.

Our students, from the day they arrive, make a commitment – a commitment to serve their country, their patients, and each other as they learn side by side. These students are not solely motivated to become doctors, nurses or scientists; they are here to become leaders in military medicine and in public health.

Our faculty are uniquely committed to public service. Whether they are officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Public Health Service or elsewhere in the federal service, they have chosen to pursue their careers as educators, clinicians, and researchers on behalf of their nation.

Another unique component of our teaching is the vital contribution of our enlisted men and women who provide opportunities for our students to learn military skills and medical techniques through medic training and battlefield exercises at Operation Kerkesner and Operation Bushmaster. Through these and many other daily interactions with our enlisted personnel, our students learn to become better officers.

Our accomplished alumni serve their country around the world. These men and women, who now serve at sea, in Balad, at Landstuhl, at Fort Detrick, on Native American reservations, at the National Institutes of Health, and at universities across the land, practice the clinical skills that we teach and that we refine through our research. They continue a tradition of excellence in military and public health medicine.

What enables these groups to be effective is the dedicated administrative support staff who ensure that we all have what we need to accomplish the tasks at hand.

When all these groups work together toward our shared mission, it creates a unique environment for learning and research.

Our students learn in a multi-service environment – one that emphasizes and capitalizes on the strengths of each service. Throughout their education, they discover what it means to be a military or public health officer and how to work jointly with the other services.

Students also benefit from our commitment to interdisciplinary education. Our nursing faculty and our medicine faculty teach across the curricula, giving students a distinct perspective in their learning.

Our faculty’s commitment and experience combined with their insights and creativity improves health nationally and globally. Faculty and students experience special research relationships afforded by our interactions with other federal agencies. One example is the enthusiasm of our colleagues across the street at NIH, who present exciting opportunities for collaboration and who are represented here by the Director, Dr. Elias Zerhouni. Another is our relationship with the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, represented today by its Commander, Major General Eric Schoomaker.

A critical element of our distinctive environment is our affiliation with the local military hospitals with whom we are about to embark on a transformative journey.

I am particularly proud that the university is an integral part of the ambitious and far-reaching plan developed by Major General Ken Farmer, Rear Admiral Adam Robinson, and Brigadier General Tom Travis. Gentlemen, thank you for your leadership.

As Daniel Burnham, Chicago’s great architect, said, “Make no small plans. They lack the power to stir men’s souls.” Make no small plans. They lack the power to stir men’s souls.

This “no small plan” was launched when Dr. Chu and Dr. Winkenwerder announced their shared vision last May.

With the creation of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, we look toward the horizon and see a world-class academic medical center with our university playing a vital role in it.

Thank you for the great privilege of serving as your president. I am inspired by our university’s past and I am excited for its future.

I look forward to expanding and strengthening our partnerships within the military health system, the United States Public Health Service, with other federal agencies, and with our nation’s great universities.

A new horizon is set before us; a horizon that USU and its people are uniquely poised to reach.

Now let us begin to stir men’s souls.