

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good afternoon. Today we meet at this new and magnificent Abu Dhabi campus. Welcome to a new and potentially momentous academic year. I hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable summer and are ready for the excitement of the year ahead.

I would like first to congratulate all of you on being here today on this beautiful and impressive campus that holds great promise for the future of our university. This wonderful campus represents, architecturally, our ambition to be a world-class institution dedicated to the service of our students and our nation. As we move to this new campus today, we express our complete confidence that Zayed University, God willing, will continue to develop as a major institution for excellent and relevant higher education. We are indeed grateful to the Government of Abu Dhabi for providing such an extraordinary new campus for teaching, learning, and research. And as His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan said this morning, we are determined to use this campus well and to become the great university for the great city of Abu Dhabi.

Friends and Colleagues:

We are beginning our fourteenth year at Zayed University. It will be a year filled with many activities and changes. We will hold two major events during the course of the academic year. The formal opening of our new campus is scheduled for early December and will coincide with the 13th annual Arab Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research meeting during which we will host Ministers from 22 Arab nations. In the spring of 2012 we are organizing and hosting our fourth international conference on Women as Global Leaders which will give us a spectacular way to communicate our value to the United Arab Emirates and the rest of the world.

On the academic side, our first graduating class will celebrate its tenth anniversary. Our graduates have moved into careers in government and all sectors of industry, many becoming leaders in their fields. They are among the most highly sought after graduates in the country - articulate, bilingual, motivated and ambitious.

We estimate approximately **2,700** new students will begin their studies with us this fall.

The University expects a total enrollment of almost 7,000 students this academic year...3600 students in Abu Dhabi and 3400 students in Dubai.

Larry Wilson, a former and very savvy provost, will again lead the academic program. He and I will strive to provide you with the best leaders possible for all elements of the University.

We will move vigorously to improve our Academic Bridge Program.

We will concentrate on strengthening the Colloquy program in the areas of information technology, science, and quantitative methods.

We will all, the experienced teachers in University College and in the majors, help our students master both English and Arabic since, as His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan declared, "We are all language teachers."

The internship program will receive renewed energy and attention as will leadership, service learning, and entrepreneurship.

We will redouble our efforts to involve students in useful research.

We will develop a plan for Zayed University and the future of Dubai, along the lines of the Abu Dhabi plan. And as His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan said, we aim to become the Great University for the two great cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Our organization will experience some changes. These will be widely discussed before implementation.

We will surely consider and will probably approve some new academic programs.

We will establish important new institutes. The Institute for Islamic World Studies will shift into high gear.

We will all be assessing our work and supporting various accreditation self-studies.

We will refine our student affairs practices and procedures. We will utilize our two fine campuses and interact more with our students.

We will graduate young men and women who have met the standards we have set. Our graduates must continue to meet the demands of the labor market.

Renewed efforts by the majors and supporting units will increase the success of our graduates in obtaining satisfying employment.

We will offer new graduate programs in all colleges.

Our Development Office will continue its difficult yet successful work.

In addition, we will focus on our national responsibility as an employer ourselves by hiring and developing UAE nationals as faculty and professionals. We are developing careful plans for attracting and retaining National workers. We will be asking every Dean, Director and manager to demonstrate their commitment to the hiring, development and engagement of Nationals in their work areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you can see, we will be so busy with so many valuable activities that we may risk losing sight of the primary goal set by our President His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan this morning. But because it encompasses conceptually all of those activities, remembering the goal will actually be fairly simple. We are dedicating this year to expanding and strengthening our partnership with the communities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, a partnership for national progress.

We will respond to the call of Sheikh Nahayan this morning. We greatly value his vision for the university and are fortunate to have his leadership and his strong commitment to making Zayed University a prominent institution of higher education in the region and the world.

As you all know, the leaders and members of the communities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai are already our active and generous partners. They provide us with strong support and follow our progress with great interest. For our exemplary partners we are grateful.

We, too, are energetic partners. We have, as those of you who inaugurated the University in 1998 know full well, always aimed our activities at national progress. Our students have been national students. Our academic programs have responded to national needs. Our research has concentrated on national issues. Without Dubai and Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates, without the vision and leadership of Sheikh Nahayan, we would not be assembled here today, and Zayed University graduates would not be at work in their communities. We have had from the beginning a share in national progress. Even you newcomers will know almost intuitively that this year's special goal, **Partnership for National Progress**, is a familiar and fitting goal.

Our President, Sheikh Nahayan, is simply asking us to be the smart, innovative people we profess to be, and to reinvent our ways for achieving that goal. With the wide participation of all of you, Provost Wilson and I will design and implement a structure that will allow and encourage us to be the great, intellectually vibrant university we aspire to be. We will proceed confidently.

I have observed you, staff and faculty members who are beginning another academic year at Zayed University, and I know that you will accept the challenge. You know your cities, you know the U.A.E., you know your students, and I know that you will have exciting ideas for magnifying our partnership for national progress. You, new members of our Zayed University community, naturally come with new ideas about everything. That's why we

hired you and why we welcome you so warmly today. We want you to participate in the reinvention of our engagement with our communities starting right now. Indeed, we must all start thinking right now. What can Zayed University do to further its Partnership for National Progress in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai? The nation depends on our university to furnish effective and realistic answers to that question. Your imagination and your dedication to the noble cause of Zayed University will make this year a memorable year.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today I want to assure you that I am totally committed to the issues raised by Sheikh Nahayan this morning. And I am also convinced that his confidence in our ability to meet the challenges of the future is well founded. For one of the core values imbedded in our University mission is team work. This has been the key to our success in the past and will continue to be the key in the future.

Thank you again for your commitment to our university and for all your hard work. Let us all work together to accomplish all our goals and initiatives. Let us each help move the United Arab Emirates, the cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and Zayed University forward.

Congratulations on this new and magnificent campus. My best wishes to all of you for a successful and enjoyable year.