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## Presentation to PVAMU Administrators

George C. Wright

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## Presentation to PVAMU Administrators

August 16, 2004

Good morning. The start of a new school year is always a very important occasion. It is the occasion for those of us in Administrative positions to reaffirm the goals and vision of the University and to make the commitment to do an even better job that we have previously. **I would not give a presentation of this magnitude, taking the time of so many Administrators, unless I truly believed that some very useful things can come from this meeting.** Given the importance of the occasion, I shared a working draft of my remarks with the Vice Presidents. One of them remarked that many of my comments are personal and suggested shifting the emphasis from “I”—GCW to the “President.” I sincerely hope that my comments do not sound boastful, or that I give you the impression (which would be false) that I have all of the answers, or that I am above making mistakes. But because I have been a Professor since 1977 and an Administrator since 1985, I hope some of my experiences, that were both good and bad, can assist you in doing your jobs. Also, while many of the comments I make will be pointed and critical, there is no question that as President of this fine Institution, I need to applaud and stress the things that we are doing well and to challenge all of you, myself included, to continue improving the overall quality of this University. Working together last school year, we made progress; this is a better school now than it was this time last year; and it will be a better school this time next year than it is right now.

Some of the comments that I will make will not be new to those of you who you have heard me speak more than once: **I believe that it is important to consistently emphasize my goals and philosophy, rather than coming up with something “new” to rally around.**

### *New MANAGERS Stand & Introduce Yourself*

Mention the “key” new Administrators. Comment by Dr. Laretta Byars. Mention the new roles of Dan Williams and Thomas-Smith. That they have assumed more responsibilities will enable me to devote more of my time to external activities.

I want to share with you a very simple thought that has guided much of my personal and professional life.

1. In every job that I have held, I have appreciated the opportunities afforded me; and I strived to do the best I could in each and every one of those positions, to not simply keep those jobs, but I also tried to enhance those jobs, to use them to make new contributions than had been made previously in those positions.
2. People take the things they have for granted. Surely you know someone who took their marriage for granted and would give anything to have it back. Recently I read about a senior citizen being swindled out of \$70,000. Now, all that person wants is her \$70,000 back. I suspect the same would be true for most of you if you suddenly no longer had your current job. If you agree with me, then what are you doing, that truly makes a contribution on your job? What are you doing to enhance your job?

My first year as President was a very exciting, interesting, fast moving time. This all started on my first day with the dedication of the new Architecture Building. I am very pleased with so many things that happened here this year, such things as the refunding of some major projects by the National Science Foundation and the Department of Defense; new projects such as the multimillion dollar one recently acquired by the Texas Instruments Endowed Professor of Electrical Engineering, Dr. Vaman; the recognition of some deserving contributors to making PVAMU what it is today—namely, the Honorable Wilhelmina Delco; that on this campus we hosted such national figures as Congressman Cummings of Maryland, Congresswoman Lee, Dr. John Hope Franklin, Ms. Nikki Giovanni, Secretary of Education Rod Paige; the acquisition of funding to support two new Endowed Professorships—one in Nursing and one in Education; and the establishment of the Undergraduate Medical Academy.

Key Point: **I inherited a good situation.**

Steps have been taken to enhance fund raising; Director of Development, working with the Capital Campaign Committee. Overall giving to PVAMU has increased by 25% over one year.

During my first year, I listened, observed, and learned a great deal about this University and the people affiliated with it. In turn, what have you learned about me? I hope you discovered that

1. That I am an early riser;
2. That I use e-mail, all day and night;
3. That I love to tease and make people laugh—comes from being in Black History. However, that I don't make fun of race, religion, sex because I know that humor is a double-edge.
4. That my favorite food is “junk” and “cheap.”
5. That I love to read, especially about History and Geography. My all time favorite is Richard Wright's Black Boy. Why? Because the author challenges his “place.”
6. That my all time favorite movie is Godfather—Part 1: Why? Action filled movie. He listened and separated goats and sheep; took “care of all the family business.”
7. That I “argue” with people in my office all the time.
8. That I don't like nor tolerate “bullies”; don't like people who **are scared to do their jobs and are not smart enough to know who to be afraid of**. For instance, some of you are more afraid of a faculty member than you are of your Dean or the Provost. Some of you are afraid to challenge a staff member.
9. That I have zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior. I am serious about this, **and that I will end misbehavior on this campus by employees**. Sometimes people “mis-read” me on this, believing that they can wait me out. I will address this issue at length in my presentation.

10. To the Vice President who told me to shift the focus of my remarks from “me” to the “President,” I realize that this next point runs the risk of coming across as “negative” to some of you, though that is not my intention. I find it frustrating that so many of our events or meetings start late and then run long. Some of the longest programs or presentations I have ever set through (actually day dreamed and slept through) were during my first year here as President of PVAMU. Throughout last year, I attended a number of banquets and dinners that lasted far too long, with everybody speaking and getting an award! I kept saying to myself as the program droned on and on, “these folks don’t have enough to do on their jobs or in their lives.”

I truly do not mean to “call out” anyone but, if any of you are involved in Homecoming Activities for this Year, we simply must shorten those programs, especially the 3-hour Homecoming Parade.

We are, so we proudly proclaim, a University of the First Class. Well, no First Class University hold events that last as long as ours.

If it is your intention to run me off or to kill me here on the job, you will not do so by denouncing me. You will do so by making me sit through a long event! Seriously, every time we have a program, we are doing so in the name of the University and we must conduct them in a highly professional manner. Why can’t we adopt the slogan that President William Harvey has for his campus, Hampton University? If you are “on time” you are late!

11. Have you ever heard me say that an issue is “Philosophical?” What does that mean? I have some “Philosophical views of Leadership” that govern my actions. I will now explain those at length to you.

## Philosophical Views of Leadership

To serve in leadership positions, I had to understand a number of things:

**First of all, I must always act in an ethical manner.** All of the Academic Administrative positions I have held over the years **are positions of trust** in the sense that the institution has placed a great deal of resources and decision-making in my hands. For one thing, I took a vow never to knowingly tell a lie, that I would be truthful in all of my interactions. Also, whether I like it or not, **I am a role model for others.** So are you. The people who report to you watch you very closely. Administrators, here is a question that I hope you will answer to yourself: are you the “right kind” of role model for students and staff at PVAMU?

**Second, I understand that I am held accountable.** This is clear from dealing with the Texas A&M System Board of Regents. The glory can be spread around, but I must accept responsibility for my actions and the actions of those for whom I am responsible. In other words, as President of PVAMU, I am held accountable for the actions, or lack of positive actions, of all Administrators. I take this very seriously.

**Third**, while I will always seek input from others and it is important that I understand the viewpoints that differ with my own, **I have to make the tough decisions, decisions that quite often are not popular.** My Administrative jobs, every one of them (beginning as Director of Afro-American Studies at UT Austin where students presented me with a list of 10 “Non-Negotiable Demands”) have required that I make tough decisions. I am amazed by the large number of Administrators who do not want to make tough (and thoughtful) decisions. They pass the buck up to their supervisors. At UTA, Dan Williams and I called these Administrators “Carrier Pigeons.”

**Fourth**, I must be a good listener. It is often said that one never learns anything while talking. A successful Administrator must be willing to listen to a wide range of people and groups and give them time to state their case.

**Fifth**, as an Academic Administrator who believes strongly in the concept of faculty governance, it is necessary to have faculty “input” to the positions that I advocate. I fully understand, however, that not everyone will agree with my position. **But, it is my intention to act in such a consistent and ethical manner that even when people disagree with me, when 50% are unhappy about my decision, they know nevertheless that I have been fair with them and weighed their concerns before moving in the opposite direction.**

### Conclusion on Me



I am optimistic. But more important, I know how difficult the job will get from here. This summer at the National Alumni Convention, I told the Alums that there has not been a “Honeymoon Period” for me here at PVAMU. Instead, I said, I was in my “Second Marriage.”

### **“The Concept of “Serve at the Pleasure of the President”**

While I have no doubt that all of you are intelligent, have worked hard, and have made contributions, I personally believe that everyone here—starting first and last with me, is extremely fortunate to be in the positions we occupy and that despite our ability, we benefited from some “luck” and probably some “mentoring.” Someone smarter and just as deserving as you and me have not been afforded the same opportunity as you and me. This is most surely true about me.

**A Key Point: As I said earlier, and it is worth repeating: As Administrators, we hold “Positions of Trust.”** To people who report to us, to people outside of the Academy, we—College Administrators--seem to have it made. Often, unlike private industry, we don’t worry about “profit and loss” (maybe we should). We seem to have “flexibility.”

**Those who fail as Administrators do their “jobs” i.e., the mechanics, the technical aspects, but invariably they either (1) have poor people skills or, (2) or believe that being the “boss” allows them the privilege of acting in a certain manner. Clearly, they don’t have the trust of the people who report to them.**

**[A Major Point]:** It is clear to me that at PVAMU, more than any University I have been affiliated with, there are far too many Administrators, Professional Staff, and Classified Staff who do not understand that they are “accountable” on their jobs. Whether they understand it or not, we are accountable to the state and federal taxpayers. We are also accountable to all of our constituents, private granting agencies, donors and alums, who give us support, and our students—and their parents—who pay the bills.

It is possible that some of the PVAMU employees who ignore accountability, may not know what is required of them. Indeed, all of us must be clear on the responsibilities that go with our jobs and the jobs of the people who report to us.

### **Levels of Employees:**

**(1) Classified Staff** work specific hours, have clearly defined job tasks. Yearly evaluations are important.

**The Classified Staff** need their jobs and health insurance. As a group, they are probably more loyal to PVAMU than us, Administrators.

**Negative:** Classified Staff often feel under-valued; that their input is often not sought or listened to. There is no question that they receive modest salaries.

**Key Point:** All of us should appreciate and respect the people who comprise the Classified Staff. They will follow our example not our words.

When disciplining Classified Staff, especially when leading to suspension, denial of pay increase, promotion or termination, we must inform, document, probably adopt “progressive” discipline steps. **Have you fairly—and critically—evaluated your staff? Have you put in writing their shortcomings as well as their strengths?** It is clear to me that some of you have failed to do this. Why? Because your staff are disinterested, come to work late, and are very surly. Is it because they take their “cue” from you? Some of you holler at your staff (and students) and demonstrate poor leadership skills, by making inappropriate remarks around the staff. As mentioned, I did a lot of observing during my first year.

**(2) Faculty:** “the heart of the University.” As Administrators what should be our goal toward faculty? Assist, enhance, and then “stay out of their way.”

**Discipline:** Faculty must adhere to the rules. We have an appeal process that must be followed concerning the rights of faculty.

**(3) Administrators:** All of us—starting with me—“Serve at the Pleasure” of someone. Ultimately, it is the Regents who are in charge of the University.

During my interview with the PVAMU Presidential Search Committee, the first question raised was more of a statement, and a rather direct one at that; the person noted (from having read a newspaper article about me) that as Provost at UTA, I had removed a large number of Administrators. I responded by saying, “That during my eight years as

Provost, I recommended to the President that a number of administrative changes be made that involved Department Chairs, Directors, Associate Deans, Deans, and Vice Presidents. It was clear to me that these individuals failed to either understand the challenges confronting UTA or could not make the tough decisions that their jobs required.”

**[A major point] I take very seriously that I “Serve at the Pleasure of” either the Chancellor and/or the Board of Regents.** I am not fearful or paralyzed by the concept, or if someone new is named Chancellor. Indeed, on every Administrative job I have held the person who hired me left his/her position before I did, meaning that I had to develop a relationship with a new boss.

I always respond to the concerns of my boss. Yet I even find the “right” way to disagree: Why? Because if I don’t my boss will mis-read my action. I seek their advice. **I never, ever, never make the mistake that some of you have with me: that it is yours. I am not the permanent President of PVAMU!**

**It is important for all of you to understand how I will apply the concept of “Serve at the Pleasure of” with you.**

1. I will treat you as I want to be treated. I will not judge you by race, sex, politics, etc. Have you ever discussed these issues with me? **NO!**

2. That there is no compromising on the law, rules, and regulations.

3. **Understand that much of what we deal with is “Philosophical.”** Therefore I will try to have your “buy in” to my view; will listen and even argue with you—no grudge. I will acknowledge when you are right and we should do it your way.

4. I will not tolerate your unwillingness to carry out the agenda, etc., that we have discussed and agreed to. **Key Point: If it is not illegal, immoral, unethical, then I have a “right” to do it a certain way.** Yet some <sup>Administrators</sup> ~~employees~~ persist in not doing it the way I would like to see it done. **That then is Philosophical: and you will not remain in the job.** I extend this concept to your Vice Presidents, Deans, indeed to all Supervisors. **In other words, in my Administration, all of you as the Head of a Unit is empowered. This is a key point with me.**

5. Some advice from me: No matter how much you need a job, you should not work in an Administrative position at PVAMU if you don’t believe in the honesty, integrity, etc. of your supervisors, and especially me.

6. Don’t stay here if you differ with the mission of PVAMU.

**Another Key Point: In your appointment of agreement letter, for the new fiscal year, there will be a statement that should have been included in the past that you will be required to sign: “Serve at the Pleasure of...”** Every year at the UT System this statement was included. The A&M System adheres to the same policies, but has failed to reinforce this. I am reinforcing this.

**Concluding point on “Serve at the Pleasure of.”** This concept has helped me over the years to fully understand the level of accountability that goes with my job. A very significant aspect of my job is communicating with my boss, being clear on his/her expectations. “Serving at the Pleasure of” has on three occasions led to my realizing that on “principle” I might resign given the outcome of a meeting. <sup>Two</sup> True life examples: (1) An action that would have undermined opportunities for women and minorities (do understand that to me all of us are “minorities” in some situation); (2) an action that would have promoted voluntary segregation of our students by race when I believe that a major part of the problem is that our students have far too little contact with “others.” What are your principles? Are you willing to stand up for them? **“Serving at the Pleasure of” helped crystallize this for me.**

At UTA, there was an Administrator who differed with the President, Deans, and me regarding admission standards to certain programs. Right before the start of a semester, he refused a request of the President to process an application and admit a student. When informed of this incident by the President—who was holding me accountable—I met with this Administrator and removed him. He then replied that it really was not a principle with him after all!

Here is my “principle” and I will repeat it on several occasions during this presentation: At a public University, we must provide good “Customer Service,” meaning we must open on time, respond to requests, and a host of other things. **Administrators, please hear this crucial point: As President of PVAMU, I am going to operate under the belief that when your employees refuse to come to work on time, do not serve our students or the public appropriately, that they are in fact, being guided by you—the Administrator--who has a different “principle” than I do about the importance of providing good “Customer Service.”**

Therefore, just like I will be removed by the Texas A&M Board of Regents if I, or even you, fail to follow through on their mandates, you will be replaced by someone who shares my principle on Customer Service.

## My Goals as President of PVAMU

Starting first with the Presidential interview process, I have been questioned repeatedly about my vision for PVAMU. I respond by explaining that while I have some specific beliefs about the things that should be accomplished, it is important for me, a newcomer not only to PVAMU but to an HBCU as well, to spend time learning about the History and Culture of the University and meeting and hearing from all of its “stakeholders.” Furthermore, I believe that while it is necessary to sketch out, let’s say a five or ten year vision that has clear measurements to insure that the goals are being achieved along the way, **it is equally important to be aware of the changing landscape that occurs in society and especially in an institution that is as dynamic as a University.** That said, I do have some goals, some immediate, some long-term, for PVAMU.

I am uncertain as to whether or not this first one is actually a goal or a mandate; but I am clear that if we are not successful in doing this, then we will not reach our major goals. **At PVAMU at every level, we must provide the services that come with being a First Class Institution. Everyone who works here, whether it is faculty in the classroom, staff who answer the telephone, or administrators who interact with the public, everyone must conduct themselves in a highly professional manner.** We must be on our jobs on time and perform our tasks effectively.



I have tried to say this in a catchy way: **At PVAMU, we will become known for our “Blocking and Tackling” both on and off of the football field.** Recently, someone reminded me that not everyone is familiar with my football metaphor. In football, especially at the college level, the successful teams run the ball and perform the basic plays exceedingly well. All year long, I have emphasized this point, and I believe that I have made some headway. I do realize, however, that for the parents and potential students who are awaiting word about a scholarship, for the alum who called the campus and was treated rudely etc., that they don't believe anything has changed, in spite of what I am saying. **Administrators: if you truly do not believe that my emphasis on doing the basic things well is as important as I am making it out to be, you have a responsibility to let me know this.** Why? Because otherwise I am going to judge your entire operation on how well (or poorly) you perform in this area. Indeed, I am going to judge you by your employees not giving an honest day's work to PVAMU. I will judge you by your employees not knowing the Chancellor's name when he or his secretary calls your office. I will judge you by the complaints I receive.

**Why is Blocking and Tackling so important? Why am I putting such emphasis on this?**

1. It speaks to a person's commitment to the job, and this applies to students, staff, faculty, and administrators.

2. It speaks to your reputation. My belief: that whether fair or unfair, in the larger society there is a belief that black people, as individuals, and black institutions, don't operate in a timely fashion. There are white people I know at UT Austin, Duke, and above all UTA, who are always late. There are people I know who were always late at PVAMU during my first year. Do you want me to name those of you here today who are often late? **Our being late reinforces the stereotype about "us," even if you are not one of "us!"**

3. When I have told black and white political leaders, foundation directors, and others who have had an association with PVAMU that we will be blocking and tackling, **it has resonated with them because of their experiences of PVAMU having a lackadaisical attitude.**

A. A highly respected Foundation, after not giving PVAMU any support for five years, gave me \$25,000;

B. A government agency said unless I intervened they would stop giving us over \$1 Million a year;

C. A Fortune 500 Company said that they would no longer give internships to PVAMU, until I shared my vision of PVAMU with them.

D. **Key Point: I convinced all of them that we are doing things differently. I have paid for my salary, if I were to start receiving one!**

E. What about the people around me? Look at Executive Vice President Dan Williams, who is highly respected within his profession. Does he respond back? Does he do e-mail? Does he look professional? Look at Mary Smith. Comes early, then stays late.

Never loses her “cool” when people act unruly. Everybody who deals with me compliments her.

But Dan and Mary came here with me. What about others, do they “block and tackle” as well? Deborah Dungey, who impressed me right from the start with her level of competence and excitement for the job, most surely “blocks and tackles.” Fred Washington, who works for Dan Williams, does an outstanding job at whatever tasks are assigned to him. I have been impressed with the thoroughness and commitment to the job of Lettie Raab. The same can be said about Larry Raab, He is always here and is willing to take on any assignment. As a unit, the people in Physical Plant do a very good job, take pride in this University and how it looks. I don’t mean to be bias, but I am proud of how the other three people in the President’s Office, work, these are Carol Campbell, Lisa Stribling, and Colleen Harris. The other two Vice Presidents, Willie Trotty and Thomas-Smith, blocked and tackled for years and by doing so kept this ship called PVAMU sturdy and steady. I can say the same about the Deans who have been in their positions for years. Ultimately, if I had the time, I could go around this room and make some positive comments about most of you and what you have meant to this University.

4. Blocking and Tackling in the classroom at PVAMU. Course outline: how many faculty fail to give it out the first day? How many faculty do not have their course outlines on the Web? **Starting today, what are you Department Chairs and Deans going to do about this?** How many of you, as Department Chairs, fail to look at the Course Evaluations? Note: At the program on Wednesday, I will give the faculty 8 points that need to be incorporated into their student evaluations. How many faculty come to class late? How many don't look and act professional? As President of PVAMU, I will hold you accountable for the classroom performance of your faculty. Therefore, what are you going to do differently this year to improve their performances?

5. Blocking and Tackling: Inappropriate sexual behavior. I am very clear about this. As an Administrator you have no choice, legally, in this matter.

Give them examples: There are "vulgar people" involved in sexual harassment that everyone knows about but chooses to ignore. But then there are the "stalkers," the people who seek out their victims just as lions and hyenas do on the Serengeti.

A. In my first year as President, I have pursued to the fullest extent possible every case of inappropriate sexual behavior that has come to my attention. There will be more.

B. Someone said that even if they were committed to ending these practices, how do they know that somewhere along the line, someone won't drop the ball? **That will not happen because ending sexual harassment and other inappropriate behavior is one of the cornerstones of my academic values.** Our students, staff, and faculty must have the proper environment in which to study and work. While you might not associate sexual harassment with "race," the way I respond to it is a by-product of my having seen people being forced to endure racial prejudice in the work place to keep their jobs. Personally, I have never been sexually harassed but I can imagine what it feels like because I know what racial harassment feels like. **Let's be clear: any Administrator who condones sexual harassment, racial harassment, or anything touching on these matters, not only is in violation of the law but has forfeited the right to their position.**

## **Inappropriate Relationships**

Inappropriate relationships often lead to charges of sexual harassment. This is a very complicated area, one where I believe we, as the PVAMU community, need to collectively discuss and come to some agreements about what is and what is not acceptable behavior.

Recently, I had a conversation with a long-time PVAMU employee, a person who cares deeply about this institution, and its students and all of its employees. I mentioned, really in passing, that while at UT, Duke, and UTA, I would go to lunch with a wide range of students, staff, and faculty, on a regular basis, “one on one” to build relationships, to demonstrate that they as individuals were important to me, and above all to gain insights about the University from their perspectives. To my shock, this person looked at me as if I had said something offensive. This person explained, in great detail, that I needed to understand the following: (1) that I was no longer at these other Universities but I was now at PVAMU which has a lot of “small-minded people” who would assume that if I went to lunch—or was even friendly with someone—then I was obviously involved in a relationship with that person; (2) that on this campus, somewhere between one-third and forty percent of the people had been involved or were still involved in relationships, the kind of relationship that by my definition are not appropriate, on this campus.

**Let me say very clearly and loudly that even though I respect the person who said these things to me, I do not believe that they are correct regarding the extent of inappropriate or consensual relationships at this University.** Any of us can err in assuming that a problem is much greater than it really is. But what the person did remind me of, however, is that much of the problems that an institution faces in the area of sexual harassment originated from what had been consensual relations. It is important that you as Administrators are clear regarding this matter at PVAMU.

**Relationships that abuse the “Position of Trust” that comes with the power a teacher has over a student or a supervisor has over subordinates (and certainly ones that become sexual) are inappropriate.** They violate both law and policy, and will not be tolerated here at PVAMU. Professors are in a position to mentor and guide students, but if they cross the line then they have destroyed that trust. Supervisors are in the same situation with subordinates, even if such relationships are “consensual.” Administrators, do understand that in this regard, “appearances” are just as destructive as the reality of the situation.

Please, PVAMU Administrators, do not misunderstand me: I am not advocating that you end acting in an humane way to the people you interact with on the job. But, I am saying that we must not engage in any destructive behavior that destroys the confidence that has been placed in you.

I prefaced my comments by saying that we, as a community, need to fully address this matter because there are some “gray” areas regarding relationships. Nevertheless, there are no consensual relationships between faculty and students or with employees and students. Ultimately this works as much for your protection as it does for the student.

There are no consensual relationships between a supervisor and an employee in their area, and probably between a supervisor anywhere and an employee. Other examples where there cannot be consensual relationships: non-tenured and tenured faculty in the same department; Department Chair with a faculty member in their Department; Dean with a Chair; Vice President with a Dean, and the President with anyone at the University!

It is no wonder that some supervisors cannot tell their employees what to do; they have compromised themselves. I am very clear on how to interact with the people in my office. I do the following:

- (1) I joke all the time—“clean as the Board of Health;”
- (2) “Love” from GCW to my wife;
- (3) I make sure that everyone in the office hears my compliments to a person.

**It is my intention to form a committee to produce a policy on Consensual Relationship that works for PVAMU. Also, we are hiring an EEO person to help stress the importance of our investigating all claims of inappropriate behavior here at PVAMU.**



Another goal: **I want every student who graduates from PVAMU to obtain not just a College Degree but a College Education.** What does that mean? It means that at this HBCU, our students will be challenged to think seriously about “race.” They will know how “complicated” the issues of race, diversity, and affirmative action truly are. I want PVAMU students to experience “culture” in all of its many forms. We must expose our students to a range of new and old ideas. **A key point: that our students will read some “good books.”** The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin helped me get through college. I have developed a reading list for PVAMU students, and I am happy to share it with anyone who wants it.

An important goal: **As President, I want to “Enhance the Value of a PVAMU Degree.”** As much as I want to increase the number of students, we must improve the “quality” of our students. In doing so, we will not walk away from the “under-served” and those needing a chance in college. **But, for PVAMU to prosper and grow, we simply must raise our admission standards and decrease the number of students who come in via the Provisional route.** We are making a major change in our recruiting strategy. Then, we must do an even better job of teaching the basics in all of our classes so that our students are much more sought-after by graduate and professional programs and future employers. As President, I want our entire University community to work with Don Byars in recruiting “better” students to this institution.

Perhaps an “odd” goal: **I will challenge inappropriate behavior, actions, and attitudes.** Actually, this is consistent with the goal of Blocking and Tackling for students: We must work toward ending Teenage Pregnancy; Outrageous Acts (at graduation etc); and the use of the “N” word. I am developing a speech that I will be presenting this Fall, “Are We Failing Our Students?” **The goal here is clear: I want students to leave this Institution with a degree in hand and have all of the opportunities to be successful in this world that you and I had; we want our students to make contributions—to make a difference—in society. To accomplish this goal, we must end behavior among our students that we know is destructive.**

Another goal: **PVAMU will become a more “racially diverse” Institution as a result of our aggressively recruiting students who have attended Community Colleges and above all Hispanic students.** I strongly support the concept of Diversity in Education and indeed, in every aspect of American Society. I believe that we benefit by having people of diverse socio-economic, gender, racial, and religious groups “at the table” where decisions are being made in this country, and I strongly believe that those of us in leadership positions at Universities have a responsibility of making sure this happens.

**A focus on Diversity is important for minority students, whether these students are found at predominantly White Universities or are at “minority Institutions.”** Regardless, they truly do not know their own history. (Mention Richard Wright’s, **Black Boy**, at UT Austin and now at PVAMU). Not knowing their own history has led blacks and Hispanics to often assume that the attributes that are essential for success are “white things”—to be shunned by them. Indeed, far too many students here at PVAMU know little about the black experience, and this must change.

**A very important goal: to increase the resources available to have a University of the First Class.** The OCR dollars are great but they will either be gone or incorporated into existing programs. Plus, OCR is a double edge sword, our 40 Acres and a Mule!!! The Capital Campaign of \$30 million dollars for Student Scholarships, Endowed Faculty Chairs, to support new programs, and a range of other activities is essential. We must aggressively pursue external funding.

**Another goal: I want a wide range of people to become involved in PVAMU, to assume a measure of ownership of the School.** This will lead to our being successful. Students must be involved. Faculty involvement and governance are essential. We need Advisory and Industrial Boards. We will be mindful of the concerns of elected officials. A key point: alums must be committed to enhancing the school. We need their financial support. But, we also need them to advocate for the school in other ways. We clearly need Alums to assist in the recruitment of outstanding students.

For my part, I am making alumni visits. Small sums of money are coming in for scholarships.

### **Activities for this Year**

1. External Acts with Alums and Potential Donors. Capital Campaign.
2. Legislative Agenda.
3. Working on Accountability.
4. Recruiting (1) more students; (2) better students; (3) Hispanic and Community College; (4) Scholarships.

### **Activities Within the University**

1. Are we failing our students? Working with them.
2. Visiting Academic Units.
3. Reviews of Academic Disciplines and Support Units: Computing, the Library, the Police.
4. Turning even more to the new management team to “run things.”

It is appropriate, therefore to hear from

Dan Williams

E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith.

Thanks for your time. We will get the job done!! I am excited as ever to get going. This is a good place. You have no idea what an honor it is to be President of PVAMU. You have so much to be proud of, so many outstanding graduates. You make such a difference in the lives of the students who come here. We will continue making progress.

Let's take 15 minutes and then hear from two of our Vice Presidents.