

GLI Address August 2008

Good Afternoon! Welcome to Bellarmine University, one of the best and fastest-growing universities in the nation.

As a longtime member of the GLI board, I am especially pleased to have you all here, and to have a few minutes to catch you up to date on our progress with Vision 2020. That's our plan to become the Premier Independent Catholic University in the South – and, thereby, **The Leading Private University in the Commonwealth and Region**. And I want to make sure everyone understands why it is important that we succeed in this enterprise, so that Louisville will have something it has never had before, but must have, in order to be competitive: A Nationally Pre-eminent Private University *of significant size and stature*.

We have a tremendous amount of work still to do, of course, but this Vision is actually taking place on this campus, and I want to tell you about that. You might leave here with a completely different understanding of what Bellarmine University is right now, and about how important its success will be for our community and region.

First, some background. Everyone knows that Kentucky, historically, has been in the basement when it comes to educational attainment. All of our leaders in Business, Education and Government agree that Kentucky must “double the numbers” of people with a bachelor's degree or higher if we are going to be competitive.

Bellarmino's Vision 2020 – to triple enrollment and double facilities, by building our undergraduate enrollment and by strategically adding several new and needed graduate and professional schools – is perfectly aligned with these goals,

and with the Brookings Institute's post-merger report on what Louisville needs to do to become a competitive regional city.

And so in the past two years we have set two new records in the numbers of entering freshmen, and these are students with strong academic credentials. You might be interested to learn that, this year, **forty-two percent of them come from out of state**. (Many of these bright young people will want to stay here to live and to work if they have an opportunity. So work with our career center if you're looking for top talent!)

Of course, to accommodate this intentional growth in our *student* population, everything else has to grow too. And so we are developing our 135-acre campus, and we are adding highly qualified, full-time faculty and staff.

We have built a new stadium for our Division I Lacrosse Team and other field sports, we have built a new residence hall -- and a second new residence hall has the roof trusses going on right now and will open here in December. When that happens, we will have almost 1,000 students living on campus, and that will get us to 50 percent of our undergraduates, which meets the Carnegie Classification for a residential university. Then we will exceed that number because we have two more new residence halls on the drawing boards, along with a parking structure, major renovation of Knights' Hall, expansion of dining facilities, new classrooms and new offices -- including a signature complex of buildings at the top of the hill that will be in front of, and connected to, Horrigan Hall. We have a Master Plan for developing this campus strategically, beautifully and well.

We added 28 new full-time faculty members this year, bringing our full-time total to 149, almost 80 percent of whom have terminal degrees in their fields. Our student faculty ratio is 13-1 and our average class size is 19 students. And we are adding at least 10 more fulltime faculty next year, so that our students will

continue to have the human-scale educational experience that is a hallmark of EXCELLENCE at Bellarmine University.

I just said the word “excellence,” and I want to talk about that for a moment in connection with Bellarmine. Here are some things you might not know.

- Bellarmine has been a top-rated comprehensive university for 14 consecutive years in U.S. News and World Report.
- The Princeton Review lists Bellarmine as one of the 368 best undergraduate institutions in the nation. (We are among only 15 percent of the nation’s four-year colleges and universities that make the cut each year.)
- Forbes has just ranked the nation’s colleges and universities, public and private together, (at Forbes dot com) and Bellarmine ranked in the top 100 in the nation, out of more than 3,000. We were 83rd in the Forbes listing. Just to give you an idea, Georgetown University is 76th, Notre Dame is 77th, Duke is 80th, Johns Hopkins is 81st, and Emory is 82nd.
- In The National Survey of Student Engagement, students rate their educational experience at their own respective schools. Bellarmine does better than the public universities in Kentucky, better than the average of 140 private university peers, and better than the national average of all schools. So, our students – who might be our toughest critics – love it here, compared to how students elsewhere feel about the education they are getting at those other schools.
- Meanwhile, The Kentucky Chamber just named Bellarmine one of the Best Places to Work in Kentucky.
- And one of our accounting students, with two Bellarmine degrees, just finished in the top 10 on the national CPA test – out of more than 76,000 students across the country who took it.

So we are not just growing, we are an excellent university that is *intentionally* growing while maintaining a focus on continued Academic Excellence for Lives of Leadership and Service.

Why does this matter so much? After all, Bellarmine is a relatively small, **private** university. We are not a giant public Megaversity run by the state, so why are we important to the public at large? Because we operate very much in the public interest. And the return on investment is astounding. Consider these points:

- Bellarmine University and the other 19 private institutions receive only 4 percent of the state's total appropriation to higher education. We get no state help with capital projects, we are excluded from programs like Bucks for Brains – in fact, ALL of that \$53 million expenditure for private higher education is in the form of direct financial aid to individual students. And that is very important to us.
- Meanwhile, however:
 - These private institutions provide more than One Billion Dollars worth of educational facilities, at NO COST to the state.
 - Bellarmine alone provides more than One Hundred Million Dollars worth of educational facilities, at NO COST to the state.
 - Kentucky's private institutions enroll almost a fifth of all the state's college students. Two out of three of them graduate in four years – a graduation rate that the larger universities cannot match in SIX years.
 - We turn out almost a quarter of this state's teachers – and at Bellarmine, every single one of them is dual certified, in the subject they are going to teach AND in special education.

- We turn out almost a quarter of this state's nurses – and by the way it is highly likely that a Bellarmine-educated nurse will be taking care of each of us at one time or another between now and the time we “join the choir eternal.”
- Our Physical Therapy doctoral program sends 46 highly skilled professional practitioners into the workforce each year, into a field whose entry level salary is about \$60,000.
- We hear a lot about the STEM initiative, to increase educational attainment in science, technology, engineering and math. Did you know that Kentucky's private institutions produce disproportionately more college degrees in math and sciences?
 - Forty-three percent of the state's physics degrees, 38 percent of the state's math degrees and 34 percent of the state's biology degrees are awarded to the 22 percent of Kentucky college graduates who attended Bellarmine and the other privates.
 - Our excellent Business School is AACSB accredited, which puts us in the top 15 percent internationally – and is listed in the Princeton Review as one of the Best Business Schools of 2009.
 - Speaking of international, a third of our students study abroad, and that number is growing – as is the number of international students coming here to study, and the number of international opportunities afforded our faculty and staff.
 - At this point, many people think, aha! – but your student body is composed of hand-picked, privileged students who can afford a high, private school tuition.
 - This is not the case.

- 43 percent of our students are the first generation in their families to attend college – and we just got a grant from Wal-Mart because of the great job we do with this population.
- And don't let the sticker price fool you –the real COST after financial aid is highly affordable, because we give millions of dollars in financial aid every year and we work with families to make sure they can afford a Bellarmine education.

So, Bellarmine is in the vanguard of this important work Louisville must do in increasing educational attainment so we can be competitive. And our Vision 2020 serves the public interest. We are a private university in the public interest.

Yesterday in this room I met with our faculty and staff to kick off the new academic year. And I can assure you that we are very enthusiastic, and very focused, about helping Bellarmine University become for Louisville and Kentucky what Vanderbilt is for Tennessee, what Duke is for North Carolina, what Notre Dame is for Indiana, and so on.

I hope you all will be enthusiastic for Bellarmine, too. And focused on helping us succeed. Because the states that are doing well are strong in BOTH public AND private higher education. So, for the good of this community and region, we need to succeed -- and you need us to succeed. And we need you to help us succeed. So we look forward to your very real and important engagement and support going forward!

Thank you for being here today!