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University Relations, "Chancellor addresses Regents' committee" (2006). *Campus News Archive*. 1758.
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Chancellor addresses Regents' committee

Summary: In a recent presentation to a Regents' Committee, Chancellor Schuman cited two strengths that UMM brings to address its challenges. "The first are our historical core strengths – faculty, staff and students. The second are new initiatives."

(March 15, 2006)-"I cherish our college's past, but I envision the coming years as outshining our bright first four decades. The sun is rising on the prairie of west central Minnesota, not setting, and sunrise on the prairie is incandescently beautiful. With your understanding and support, with the help of the central administration of the University, and with the blessing of the people of the state of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Morris will continue to thrive as a center for the finest teaching and learning. I look forward with great optimism. UMM has a distinguished past, but it is moving towards a glorious future. If I may quote Shakespeare to you one last time, I am convinced that 'what's past is prologue.' "

With these words, Chancellor Sam Schuman concluded his remarks during a presentation to members of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents Education Planning and Policy Committee March 9 on the University's Minneapolis campus.

Following a classic Shakespearean opening reference, the likes of which he has been aligned throughout his UMM tenure, Schuman shared with the Committee "two serious challenges facing [the Regents'] campus in Morris," along with two new initiatives at UMM that will overcome those challenges and allow for the continued prosperity of the campus.

The challenges, said Schuman, are, first, student recruitment -- specifically as it relates to UMM's demographics, the perception of UMM athletics by some high school students, a previously unstable and under-funded admissions office and communication effort, and more competition from the Twin Cities campus for undergraduate students. The second challenge, said Schuman, relates to fiscal dilemmas.

"We will meet these fiscal challenges by increasing enrollment, seeking continuous expansion of private giving to UMM (UMM exceeded the goal set for the campus in the last all-University Capital Campaign by about 400 percent), and increasing revenues from new and entrepreneurial sources," said Schuman.

Schuman cited two strengths that he believes UMM brings to address its challenges. "The first are our historical core strengths – faculty, staff and students. The second are new initiatives.

The two initiatives – a focus on developing sustainable energy resources, and a strong interest in the nations of the emerging world are in one sense curiously opposite: one emphasizes local, close to home resources, the other moves us to the other side of the world," said Schuman. "But they do not, like railroad tracks, march off to eternity on parallel lines: they come together. And, they are enriched by our traditional focus on service learning and on undergraduate research. I am enormously excited by the way in which Morris and the University of Minnesota, Morris, can become a

laboratory, a teaching and learning center, and a leader in finding and disseminating systems of renewable energy for small, rural regions in the developing world. If there is anything that rural China needs, it is wind power and bio-fuels we can help them figure out how to make that happen. If we do that, we will do well, and we will do good."

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.