Remarks to the Purdue University Board of Trustees
David J. Williams
Chairperson of the Purdue University Senate
May 16, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The very first time I spoke to you I began my remarks with a story. A story about a young Chinese student I met at Starbucks who couldn’t understand me when I welcomed him to Purdue. This eventually led to the establishment of Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange, or PLaCE.

This being the last time I will speak to you I want to begin with another story. A few days ago I got up, as I always do, rather early in the morning, and went outside to get our copy of our local newspaper, the *Journal & Courier*, from our driveway. I came back in, opened the paper in our kitchen, and read a headline that said, “Senate leader will consider barring the import of live deer.” I thought to myself, when and why did I make these comments? Now granted, it was quite early in the morning, and I was not yet fully awake, but my reaction was an indication of what can easily happen to the Chairperson of the University Senate, and was something I had promised myself I would not let happen to me, for I have seen it happen to previous chairs. As Chair, you are easily seduced into thinking you actually are the Senate, and people are hanging on your every word. We all know this is not the case. It was also an indication of why we are only in this position for a year.

And what a year it has been. Just enough time to get to really know each of you, to get a few meaningful things accomplished, and to influence others. It’s important to realize the Senate Chair does not have any power, but can have influence, and it’s very important to understand the difference between the two.

It’s time for me to return to being me. I have reinvented myself….again….and am in the process of developing a series of seminars on the history of veterinary medicine that have been quite successful in the College of Veterinary Medicine. I love teaching and I love my students. One can’t ask for much more than that, for that’s really why we are here.

At midnight on Saturday, May 31st, I will likely be asleep on Flight 9357 on my way to London for a return to the University of Cambridge when my term will officially end and Patty Hart will become the new Chair of the University Senate. I know you will treat her in the same manner you have treated me this year.

With all this being said, I’m always available for a cup of coffee, Tom, if you ever just want to chat. And JoAnn, I think you owe me a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon.

So my friends, thank you, and Hail Purdue.