

The Inauguration of Dr. David Decker
Franklin University
May 16, 2008

Thank you, Chairman Lashutka, and good afternoon to you all, the friends and family of Franklin University.

It is a great honor to have been invited to participate today at the Inauguration of Dr. Decker. It is also an occasion in which I take a great deal of pleasure personally, because of my deep admiration and regard for your new President.

Dr. Decker's advice and counsel were invaluable to me as I put together the 10-year strategy for higher education that we released about six weeks ago. If you read the report, you know that adult education is a big component of our plan, and Dr. Decker played a major role in shaping my views on this important subject.

In fact, a lot of what we propose to do here in Ohio is right out of the Franklin University playbook. As Franklin has shown throughout its distinguished history, non-traditional students are highly motivated, but they need a support system tailored to their busy lives if they are to succeed. We seek to follow Franklin's example across the state.

As I'm sure you know, Dr. Decker played a key role in developing online programs at the New York Institute of Technology, before coming here last year. This is yet another area where we will benefit from his expertise, and seek to replicate his results.

The innovations in adult education that have been pioneered here at Franklin are examples of the nimble creativity found at so many of Ohio's fine private institutions. Although a large part of my responsibility is to the University System of Ohio, our state system of public higher education, I know that if we are to reach the

educational attainment goals set by Governor Strickland, it must be in cooperation with the state's private schools, which enroll more than a quarter of all college students in Ohio.

I am pleased that Ohio's private institutions, individually as well as through the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio, have pledged support for the goals of the plan, and are working cooperatively with me to achieve these goals.

And no one has been more enthusiastic in his support than Dr. Decker, who since his arrival here in Columbus has impressed me with his energy, his vision, and his passion for higher education. It is a comfort to me to know that I can turn to him for the benefit of his wisdom and counsel in the future.

So congratulations, President Decker, on this most auspicious occasion. And thank you for allowing me to take part in it.