

Fall Convocation 2012
Provost Gould's Remarks
August 15, 2012

1. Good Morning.
2. To all new faculty and staff including international faculty, "welcome" to your first FHSU Fall Convocation.
3. To all returning faculty and staff, "Let me say 'welcome back'". To any of you, who do not fall into these two categories, let me say, we're delighted to have you with us for the 2012 Fall Convocation.
4. Once again, we've altered the agenda this year. We've made these changes to accommodate President Hammond's need to participate in the annual Kansas Board of Regents retreat. So without further adieu, let me introduce the 8th president of FHSU in his 26th year, Dr. Ed Hammond.
5. Introduce Chap Rackaway, Faculty Senate President.
6. Awards
7. Chamber Faculty/Teacher Reception on Sept. 11 at 5pm.

8. For the past fourteen years, I have used the next 30 minutes to report on either a select few of the most important new and/or continuing initiatives in the Division of Academic Affairs. Last year, I used this part of the agenda to introduce a new change initiative called “The Red Balloon Project: Re-Imagining Undergraduate Education” launched by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). FHSU joined this national association at its inception and has been a leader among the 430 member schools for many years. I urge to at some point take a look at the national Red Balloon course project created by a partnership between AASCU and FHSU led by Shala Mills. I’ve asked Shala to send you the URL for the project after the conclusion of this convocation. It’s a unique collaboration that is destined to augment and expand the FHSU “brand” nationwide. There may be room for similar efforts in your own discipline.

9. As I indicated a few moments ago, the Red Balloon Project is a national initiative to re-imagine and subsequently to redesign undergraduate education for the 21st century. The assumption is that public colleges and universities are facing a complex set of at least *three challenges*: (1) unprecedented

reductions in state funding; (2) increased *expectations* in what we can and should be doing at both the Federal and state levels; and (3) transformations created by the “game-changing” *implications of technology*. The Red Balloon Project is both a metaphor for change and a program intended to help institutions restructure to respond to these rapidly changing 21st century circumstances.

10. I asked you last year to treat this initiative like a university capital campaign. That is, we’d enter into a silent phase for a year or so with the effort on brainstorming and thinking about how to use the metaphor of the Red Balloon to shape some “forward thinking” about creating a learner-centered institution and your evolving role as a faculty member. I asked for a show of hands for some of you to become a “next generation” faculty member and 12 of you responded to lead this effort. We are now positioned to move forward. This year, we need to formally leave the silent phase and pursue “an agenda for action” built around the Red Balloon message; that is, education built around the power of collaborative learning and collaborative knowledge-creation (see YouTube video under heading of “Provost’s Desk” on my web site)

11. Last year, I told you that compared to previous so-called “crises” in higher education, this time is different. I still believe and I briefly refresh your memory of why I think this way and why I argue that we need to use the Red Balloon project to “disrupt ourselves” as Randy Haase would argue. As I reflect on this story in Federal Express terms, let me tell you where it leads.
12. Ultimately, I’m going to end up outlining the focal points of what I would term an “academic technology strategy.” This strategy will be guided by the leadership of “next generation” faculty and produce what I hope can be seen ultimately as the pathway toward two things: (1) a truly learner-centered institution built on the wkinomics world of collaborative learning; and (2) the establishment of a higher level of academic integrity for all our educational efforts by reducing the differences between F2F and online learning. In the end, my vision is simply the development of learning environments for our students---and not on- and off-campus kinds of distinctions.