

Transcript of Dr. Bushway's Inaugural Address on May 31, 2019

Thank you, Dr. Jo, for that generous introduction.

Thank you to all of you for being here today -- the members of our board of trustees, faculty, students, alumni, and staff; delegates from learned societies and other institutions of higher education; and members of our community, including Mayor Winstead.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to honor -- and possibly embarrass -- my family. If you have attended commencement, you have heard me say that I believe that no one achieves milestones alone -- I certainly owe my family for so much.... Putting up with my bad attempts at humor for over 30 years -- at risk of them not speaking to me later, can you guys stand up for a minute?

But, seriously, we are indebted to each of you for joining us today. Particularly on a beautiful Friday afternoon in the summer in MN!

And before we go further, I want to thank the team of people who organized our festivities today -- our events team, led by our Vice President of Marketing -- Kathy Hagens and including Beth Beutell and Amy Marie Lemanski along with the incredible Nancies -- Nancy Johnson and Nancy Healey.

On a personal level, I can't deny that this this is a gratifying day for me. Sitting here on stage just now, listening to the earlier speakers, I am touched and honored. Each of us should be so lucky -- while we're still alive, that is -- to sit in a room while people we admire and cherish say wonderful things about us. Thank you for that.

A presidential inauguration is, in part, a powerful way to build up a new leader -- to let that leader see and experience the support they can draw from and the confidence others have in them.

But equally important, an inauguration is a reminder of the significance of the University. Each of the earlier speakers talked about how highly they value this institution, how much their experience here has meant to them, and how important the mission of our university is -- to them and to our community. Safeguarding that is a serious thing.

As Dr. Jo and Dr. Allenburg presented me with this beautiful presidential medallion, I definitely felt its weight. I was reminded of the very serious responsibility you have placed upon me. I thought about our students, who have entrusted their futures and dreams to us. I thought about the patients who will depend upon our graduates for healing and health and wellbeing. I thought about our faculty, who have devoted their hard-earned expertise to training the next generation of health care professionals. I thought about our staff, who work so hard to create this amazing environment where learning happens. I thought about our alumni, who represent this university so well in their professions and communities, and who -- in turn -- count on us to maintain the very highest standards and reputation. I thought about our community and business partners, who rely on this institution in many ways. So, yes, this medallion can feel heavy.

But as I felt the weight of that medallion, I noticed something else. I noticed that I didn't sink under the weight. Instead -- looking out at all of you -- breathing in the unity and strength of our University, I felt myself rising, standing a little taller. Surrounded and bolstered by your support and your partnership, I find that am more than able to bear the weight of the responsibility placed upon me today because I am not truly bearing it alone -- I am bearing it as an integral part of our extraordinary community.

So before I go any further, I want to say, just for the record: I officially and enthusiastically accept the responsibility and the great honor to serve as the 8th president of Northwestern Health Sciences University.

I will do my utmost to continue to deserve the confidence you have placed in me today, and to live up to your expectations for me as president of this university.

You know, I will always be grateful for finding a home here. Thank you for welcoming me. From my first day, the spirit of collaboration has been so strong and everyone I met was happy and eager to help me learn -- and -- let's face it - I had a lot to learn. In serving this institution and our students, I have been able to bring together two of my lifelong passions -- health care and higher education.

These two sectors are essential to the wellbeing of our communities and our nation. The work in these fields is challenging and interesting and fulfilling... and endless. And... it's no secret that both of these fields are in dire need of innovation and change. Both are too costly, too complex, too inward looking, too bound by convention, and too quick to say, "well, that's how we've always done it."

As a psychologist who practiced for more than 20 years, I have long understood the power of integrative care -- of treating and honoring the whole person, and drawing from the best of multiple disciplines to achieve wellbeing.

As an educator -- whether it was at the US Department of Education, Metropolitan State University or now here at this institution -- I have always been focused on innovations in higher education. I have been honored to work alongside national leaders -- some of whom are with us today -- in developing and promoting competency based education practices and policies to try to better serve our nation's needs.

So, At NWHSU, we live in the crossroads of both of these complex fields -- health care and education. It is incumbent on us to help create the solutions. I firmly believe that the healthcare problems in our nation cannot be solved without us, our disciplines and the work of

my colleagues from other Chiropractic and massage colleges here today. At our institution, we are exploring new ways to refine our curricula to make our students' learning journey more personalized. And to make their learning more integrated, as well. To give our students -- across programs and disciplines -- opportunities to interact intentionally with each other, around patient care. To have evidence-based conversations and to understand the unique benefits that each of our disciplines can bring to the goal of healing -- or as Dr. Sweere would say, to the relief of human suffering.

We've made important headway in integrating our practitioners with those in other fields to bring new solutions and alleviate pain and suffering. Our partnerships with the Mayo Clinic, the Westside Clinics and the University of Minnesota have demonstrated the tremendous value and potential of integrative therapeutic approaches in helping patients -- even those with the gravest illnesses -- to achieve greater wellbeing and improved quality of life.

But the most powerful testament is the impact of our graduates. Our alumni now total more than 7,300 -- in all 50 U.S. states and more than 20 foreign countries. I think a few stories will illustrate the point.

For example, Ken Swanson, who's a graduate of our massage therapy program -- and who you heard from earlier -- Ken is a massage therapist at Regions Hospital in St. Paul. He spends part of his time in the ER, and he recently told me the story of a patient who had come to the ER with severe pain and asking for pain medication -- Ken was able to treat this patient with therapeutic massage -- and the patient was discharged without the need for potentially addictive medicine.

Or the example of Dr. Mike Mortenson, who earned his doctor of chiropractic here, is working with the Veterans Administration health system in Fargo -- which is one of a growing number of VA sites to offer holistic therapies for veterans. Dr. Mortenson -- a veteran himself, who served in Somalia in the Marine Corps -- treats pain and injury for veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan,

and also helps older veterans, who in some cases have been living with chronic pain for decades.

Or, Stephanie Hylla— who you also heard from earlier – Stephanie has built a well-respected and busy clinic in Mankato – treating a variety of health concerns with acupuncture and Chinese medicine – again reducing the need for risky and less effective pharmacological or surgical interventions.

Or Dr. Mary Beth Minser, who earned her doctor of chiropractic here as well. She has built a very successful practice here in Minnesota -- a practice that is a valued community asset in St. Cloud, and one that has done so much to promote women in the profession.

There are hundreds more stories I could share. So many of our graduates who serve not only as healers but also as leaders in their professions who are promoting and improving health in their communities.

Northwestern Health Sciences University has always been willing to push the boundaries -- and always with healing at the center. Almost 80 years ago, our first chiropractic leaders, faculty, and students, were courageous -- often in the face of skepticism and very direct opposition -- in pursuing the goal of patient wellbeing.

This institution has seen many changes since those early days.

And yet, our single-minded – or some might say defiant -- spirit has persisted. Through all of that change, the **soul** of this institution -- its passion, its courage, its focus on healing and health -- has remained vibrant.

One of those courageous leaders is sitting right there -- Dr. John Allenberg, who led this institution as past president and presided over some of the university's most important

moments of growth and development -- moving to our current location, which has been such a wonderful home for us; and expanding our program offerings in a significant way. Would you join me in thanking Dr. Allenberg?

[Pause for applause]

I have benefitted so much from his friendship and advice as I take on this role, and I thank him for his generosity.

Also here with us today is Dr. John Wolfe, who is a distinguished faculty member and a graduate of Northwestern Health Sciences University. Dr. Wolfe is a third-generation doctor of chiropractic and the son of our founder, Dr. John Wolfe. Dr. Wolfe is not only a doctor of chiropractic, but also an attorney -- and a talented musician. He was over there at the piano, playing that lovely music for our processional. Thank you for sharing your talent with us today.

[Pause for applause]

As I take on the role of president, I am acutely aware that today we are supported by the work of our predecessors. Today we are strong, stable, and sound. And one of my most important responsibilities is to protect that legacy. But just as important is to look forward to the future -- and not just to anticipate what that future might bring, but to actively shape it.

This is a time of tremendous opportunity for Northwestern Health Sciences University. Throughout the history of this institution, we have acted with courage at key moments to grow and improve and make an even bigger impact for the professions we serve. I think we're at a moment like that today. With the nation's opioid crisis and pain management challenges, the need for new approaches to health care has never been greater. The politics of this are always

changing -- and too often, they are divisive. But I think one thing is clear: the nation's health care system needs us and our professions to address the complex needs of our citizens.

What role will we play in this? How will we help to shape the future of health care in this country, and beyond? I think there are some important things that we can do -- that in some cases we're already going -- to get there.

For example, as I mentioned earlier, we are already taking important steps to improve access to and success in our core programs -- and we can do more, including innovative delivery models for learning, investments in our science labs and support for all students, regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or disability status.

Also, we must continue to explore how we can become a more useful lifelong resource for health care providers. So that could mean expanding our continuing education offerings, giving not only our alumni new opportunities to sharpen their skills and continue to grow, but allowing professionals in adjacent professions to learn more about the benefits of collaboration with our professions. It could mean expanding the degree and credential options we offer, providing new pathways into the healing professions. It might mean growing our campus store so that it is an even more powerful resource both for our students and for practitioners across Minnesota and beyond. And it will mean that we create innovative and cutting edge clinical services -- such as with the emerging Sweere Clinic.

And we also have a crucial role to play in shaping the conversation around health care. I think it starts with becoming an even more trusted community resource. We are fortunate to have a distinguished faculty with a vast reservoir of knowledge and expertise at this institution. And, our faculty add to that knowledge every day, through their research and practice. By leveraging our remarkable people, we can become even more vocal, more visible, and more vital in the public discourse regarding health and wellbeing -- informing the public as well as key policy makers.

And another important way we can make an impact is to have the courage to grow. To look for new opportunities and be open to them when they present themselves. To be nimble and decisive. The reality is that, in a health care space that is changing constantly, facing pressures on multiple fronts, and in a higher education environment that is increasingly more competitive, the institutions that succeed and flourish are the ones that grow -- that deeply value their roots while seeking new ways to increase the impact they make.

So these goals are ambitious. They're serious. They matter. Meeting them will take hard work, fresh thinking, and some risk taking. Meeting them may require each of us to enter new territory, which might not feel comfortable at first. Might even be annoying. But as our predecessors have done at this institution, I know that we will summon the courage to act decisively and wisely at key moments. To shape our future and play a central role in the larger context of health and wellbeing in our society.

Yes, our future includes some weighty goals and challenges, and there are times when that weight will feel heavy. But I have great confidence in the people here at Northwestern Health Sciences University. I look around this room and see talented, driven, caring people. I know that we will not sink under the weight of our goals. We will feel our communal strength within us, and we will stand taller, and rise up to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you for joining us here today.