President Lapp Gives Final "State of the University" Address

By Paul Yoder

EMU President Joe Lapp’s "State of the University" address conveyed the institution’s challenges and difficulties in the current times.

The address, given during the University Forum held December 13, outlined many of the concerns and plans in response to financial and enrollment stresses. President Lapp also addressed concerns regarding EMU’s relationship with MC USA.

In his opening remarks, Lapp acknowledged that institutional leaders take hardship too personally at times, noting, "I want to laugh at myself, but seem to find it difficult to do so with the situation as it is." His comments set the tone for much of the address. President Lapp identified the strain put on the university as "the roaring nineties are over and the national, state, public and private economies are again experiencing great stress." Especially pertinent to EMU is the decrease in Virginia Tuition Assistance Grants. However, Lapp was clear to acknowledge that these limitations are not being suffered only by EMU, but by other colleges also, both public and private.

Recent dips in enrollment only compound financial difficulties. Lapp said he "asked the cabinet to plan the 2003-2004 budget on a no-growth sce- nario," which means budget figures will be calculated using the same student enroll- ment numbers that exist this current school year. Lapp also exhorted all faculty members to seek out and encourage prospective students because "without adequate enrollment we cannot be financially strong.

Lapp also announced that the Southern Association of Christian Schools has decided to take EMU off probation as of December 10. The accred- itation agency had placed the university on probation for insufficient resources and staff in the historical library.

Another change is the required registering of male students age sixteen and older from certain countries consid- ered more likely to produce ter- rorists. These include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. They are required to go to a designated special registra- tion office to be photographed, fingerprinted and interviewed about their intentions in the US.

Students granted visas before the new registration reg- ulations are also required to register. The INS offices were not originally prepared to han- dle the surge in paperwork, though, and EMU students who traveled to the closest office in Arlington, VA had to endure hours of waiting in lines.

The bulk of the changes affect student visas, even though only three of the 19 men involved in the World Trade Center attack had student visas. Those with business or travel visas continue to travel unchecked while students’ reg- ulations tighten. Delo Blough, director of International Students and Scholars, said, “Students are the only group of immigrants that they can get a handle on.

The new face of the INS will most likely discourage some from applying for student visas, especially those from the "terrorist state." It remains to be seen, however, how this will affect the number of interna- tional students at EMU in the current year.

By Erin Hurst

Excited chatter and tearful goodbyes filled the air twice last Thursday at the science library and chapel. For the stu- dents going on the Latin America and Europe cross-cultural, 7 a.m. and noon were momentous hours, loaded with all sorts of emotions.

The first farewell began just before sunrise when students leaving for Guatemala, their friends and their family members gathered on the sidewalk. Some students loaded their luggage and began the goodbye hugs with some reluctance, while others seemed anxious to get on the road.

Melissa Horst, a senior leaving for Guatemala, had mixed emotions about the trip but was still excited to leave.

Junior Caleb Steily was a bit worried about the food in Latin America and possible illnesses; he was looking forward to the sun, warm weather and people in Latin America.

Doug and Cristina Graber-Neufeld will be leading the 14- week study, which will have an environmental emphasis, satisfy- ing the lab science requirement. The breakdown of the trip is as follows: Seven weeks in Guatemala City, one week in the rainforest of Belize, one week of independent travel, three weeks of service/learning and two weeks in Mexico (on the northern and southern borders).

The group consists of Doug, Cristina, and Alex Graber-Neufeld; and 17 students–12 seniors, two sophomores and three freshmen.

Sophomore Mary Liskey is excited yet nervous, as it will be her first time flying. Sophomore Amy Bowman looks forward to her first time flying. Sophomore Lisa Ehst said she can’t wait to get on that bus.

The horn blew and the stu- dents piled on the bus. After Don Clymer called for the last two stu- dents to board the bus, the crowd of friends and family members gathered around the bus for a prayer and a final wave goodbye.

The second day of the Europe cross-cultural group met at the same place to leave for Austria. Leaders Hugo and Mary Ann Boschmann seemed enthusiastic about the trip. Although this is the first EMU cross-cultural that the couple has led, they took a group to Marburg, Germany seven years ago with Brethren Colleges Abroad. They seemed excited about the itinerary and the chance to return to Marburg in April. The semester includes five weeks in Vienna, one week in Berlin, another five weeks in Vienna, one week in Marburg, Germany, one week in Mittersill, and one week of independent travel.

Mary Ann expects that one highlight of the trip will be the final week at Mittersill. This twelfth-century castle is now a Christian resort where the group will spend the week taking finals, relaxing, and enjoying the ski slopes.

During their time in Vienna the students will be living in apartments throughout the city. Having grown up in the country, Junior Matt Styer looks forward to this experience and the opportu- nity it will provide to get to know the people in the group bet- ter.

Sophomore Mary Linsey is excited yet nervous, as it will be her first time flying. Sophomore Alex Graber-Neufeld said boldly, “I am ready to go. Get me on that bus.”

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