

Paired Aspirations

JAMES R. RASBAND

As I begin today, I want to recognize and thank my predecessor, Brent Webb, for his remarkable service during his time as academic vice president. As a dean, I worked closely with Brent. I knew he was brilliant: he never seemed to forget a thing I wrote to him. And I knew he always acted with integrity: I never had to worry that what he told me would be inaccurate or that others were getting a special deal unavailable to the Law School.

Until the last couple of months, however, I don't think I had the full picture of the load he carried. I keep finding myself asking, "How did Brent do it?"

Part of the answer to that question will probably just remain a mystery to me. Mostly I chalk it up to his incredible bandwidth and his willingness to dedicate his gifts to the university. And sharing those gifts was a real sacrifice. Brent stepped out of the classroom that he loved and put on the backburner an extraordinary research trajectory that had seen him author or coauthor some 200 publications and direct millions of dollars in research activity. Brent is here today, happily sitting with his engineering colleagues. Please join with me in thanking him for his sacrifices to build this university that we all love.

If Brent's work as academic vice president was not enough to give me some feelings of inadequacy, those feelings are added to by the leadership of his predecessor, John Tanner. As you know, John was a Milton and Renaissance scholar and a Renaissance man. Most of us in this room will remember his *Notes from an Amateur*¹ and his remarkable annual university conference addresses.² John embodied the very best of the humane arts and letters project of this university—its inquisitiveness and its joyful search for truth and beauty.

If Brent embodied our broader desire to push the frontiers of knowledge in science and engineering and if John exemplified the power of the humanities to understand and shape the way we think about the world, I am not sure exactly what I exemplify. Surely proof that there is always regression to the mean. Perhaps also a testimony to the old lawyer joke that lawyers, like sharks, travel in packs—even in university administrations.

James R. Rasband, BYU academic vice president, delivered this address in the faculty session of university conference on August 28, 2017.

Truthfully, it is a high honor to serve as the academic vice president and to labor alongside you to build this great university. I have long loved BYU. My first experiences here were as a child in the late 1960s and early 1970s—I will spare you the pictures of my long hair and the splendid lime-green leisure suit I sported at the time. When my parents married, my mom had not yet completed her degree. So each summer for several years, my mom, my brother, and I drove to Provo from California so that my mother could work on her English degree. We lived in the old Heritage Halls, and my brother and I spent our summers playing in the canals that used to wind through the complex.

As far as I could tell, my mom didn't really need a degree. She was the sort of person who took charge of every meeting and council room into which she walked. But she wanted a degree. She wanted to learn from some of the best minds in the Church. She wasn't satisfied with what she knew. She wanted more. So we spent our summers at BYU, and I came very early to see BYU as the place to come if you wanted to make more of yourself and to see that education and the pursuit of light and truth were the path to that goal. I did not really understand much about the project or mission of this university, but I was convinced it was an ennobling one. And I still am.

I remember how my mother's love of literature was fueled by Richard Ellsworth, Allie Howe, and others in the English Department. My mother's love of studying the gospel came partly from Robert Matthews and Ellis Rasmussen. Then, in the early 1980s, my own love for literature was spurred by Steven Walker, who stirred my passion for J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, and by Catherine Corman—now Catherine Corman Parry—who brought Chaucer to life. It was my turn to see the Book of Mormon in a new light because of Terry Warner, our emeritus colleague in the Philosophy Department.

During that same time, my wife, Mary, learned to love chemical engineering from John Oscarson and Ken Solen. A turning point in Mary's education was Paul Hedman's pulling her aside a couple of days after a presentation and telling her that he had looked at her grades and that she could do better. (Remember the pre-FERPA world? And, for Mary's sake, I should add that her grades weren't that bad.) He ended up asking her to work as his research assistant, and later he encouraged her to pursue a master's degree in chemical engineering, which has been a great blessing in our lives.

This university and its faculty, past and present, have had a profound and multigenerational impact on me and on my family. I can think of no higher praise than to be counted with you as a member of this faculty. The enduring influence you have in the lives of students, in the lives of their children, and then in the lives of their grandchildren—and on and on as your impact ripples through time—is profound. I don't need any more evidence than my own life to know that what we are about here is just what President Spencer W. Kimball described in his address to faculty at our annual faculty workshop nearly fifty years ago: "education for eternity."³

As I have pondered my first address to the faculty and found myself in various discussions with colleagues, I have felt some urge to declare for one side in the familiar tensions we can feel in our university stewardship, some of which President Kevin J. Worthen mentioned in his address this morning.⁴ We know the list: teaching and scholarship, faith and intellect, breadth and depth, experiential learning and theory, and diversity and unity. Our Mission and Aims embrace each of these paired aspirations.⁵ And the weight and sometimes stressful burden of doing them all falls most heavily on the faculty. Personally, there are times when I have yearned for a clear road map to tell me exactly which one was most important in

which context. As the academic vice president with responsibility for the rank-and-status process, I also feel this quite keenly. But for reasons I will explain, I believe the tension we feel is an important and necessary part of what President Gordon B. Hinckley once described as the great “experiment” of this university.⁶

It would surely be an easier project—not just in terms of time management but also intellectually and spiritually—if we were not faced with hard questions and choices. But I believe we would be poorer for it. Ultimately, I am convinced that part of what we must learn by our experience, and part of our effort to build a great and faithful university, depends on deep and sometimes frustrating engagement with our paired aspirations. That engagement requires us to discern when seemingly competing aspirations are actually harmonious, but it also requires us to recognize that there is no free lunch, and sometimes we face challenging “good, better, and best” choices between our paired aspirations.⁷

As we know from Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21:

There is a law, irrevocably decreed . . . , upon which all blessings are predicated—

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

Thus, paired aspirations sometimes require us to choose which blessing we most want to obtain as a faculty and as a university.

From my vantage, embracing the challenge of pursuing aspirations in apparent tension is consistent with the restored gospel’s expansive perspective, which, over and over, rejects either-or choices in favor of both-and possibilities. It is not faith *or* works but faith *and* works.⁸ It is not a choice between body *or* spirit but a recognition that both body *and* spirit constitute the soul of man.⁹ It is not either priesthood authority *or* a priesthood of all believers but both a priesthood line of communication *and* a personal line of communication with the

Lord.¹⁰ The examples could multiply, but the point is that we are meant to learn and grow by wrestling with paired principles in some apparent tension.

Teaching and Research

Let me now share some thoughts about the paired aspiration at the heart of our university project: the aspiration to be both teachers *and* scholars. Our mission statement establishes that “the mission of Brigham Young University . . . is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life.”¹¹ To achieve that mission, the statement sets forth “four major educational goals”: first, teaching “the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ”; second, providing a broad general education that teaches students to “think clearly [and] communicate effectively”; and third, providing deeper instruction in the students’ field of choice. The fourth goal is the charge to pursue “scholarly research and creative endeavor among both faculty and students.”¹² That teaching *and* research both show up in our mission statement is no accident.

This paired aspiration has always been part of our history. You know the history and promises. The remarkable 1879 promise of the apostle John Taylor was that we would “see the day that Zion will be as far ahead of the outside world in everything pertaining to learning of every kind as we are today in regard to religious matters.”¹³

Karl G. Maeser urged that “the spirit of the Latter-day Work” should infuse not only “teaching the alphabet or the multiplication tables” but also “unfolding the advanced truths of science and art.”¹⁴

President Kimball charged in his 1967 “Education for Eternity” address that the “faculty has a double heritage” that they must pass along: the secular “knowledge that history has washed to [the] feet” of mankind with the new knowledge brought by scholarly research and the vital and “revealed truths sent [to us] from heaven.”¹⁵ Reinforcing this charge, in his 1975 second-century address, President

Kimball urged “rolling back the frontiers of knowledge” and said, “There is and must be an excitement and an expectation about the very nature and future of knowledge that underwrites the uniqueness of BYU.”¹⁶ Our obligation, he said, was to be “bilingual”—to “speak with authority and excellence to your professional colleagues in the language of scholarship, and [to] also be literate in the language of spiritual things.”¹⁷

Note again the embrace of paired duties. We have “a double heritage” and should be “bilingual.” In addition to our dual duty as faithful scholars, President Kimball emphasized our dual duty as teacher-scholars: “While the discovery of new knowledge must increase, there must always be a heavy and primary emphasis on transmitting knowledge—on the quality of teaching at BYU.”¹⁸

At the inauguration of President—now Elder—Dallin H. Oaks, President Harold B. Lee likewise said that BYU

has been established to the end that all pure knowledge must be gained by our people, handed down to our posterity, and given to all men.

*We charge you to give constant stimulation to these budding scientists and scholars in all fields and to the urge to push back further and further into the realms of the unknown.*¹⁹

There it is again—a charge to teach *and* to explore. I am in awe of how this charge to develop “budding scientists and scholars in all fields” is being fulfilled. We have recently been ranked number five in the country among all universities for having our students go on to receive a PhD.

These examples of an institutional charge to pursue teaching and research and creative works were made prior to the adoption of our mission statement in 1981, but thereafter the same counsel continued. At the inauguration of President Cecil O. Samuelson, President Gordon B. Hinckley praised the “spirit of fellowship on this campus between teacher and

student” and emphasized that we also “must continue to strengthen our scholarship in every discipline that is followed here.”²⁰

At the installation of President Worthen, President Henry B. Eyring stated, “The vision at the founding [of this university] was that all here will seek truth not for themselves alone but will also distribute what they have learned to bless others.”²¹ President Worthen reiterated this dual mission even this morning.²² I may have belabored the point too long, but I hope it is clear that our dual obligation as teachers and scholars is longstanding.

Given that both teaching and research aspirations allow for infinite magnification, we might be tempted to decide that one such infinite project is enough. But there isn’t really peace in that route. How, then—it is fair to ask—are we to navigate between these paired aspirations? As I remarked earlier, I have sometimes yearned for a checklist, but things of such importance rarely work that way. We are left—and I am convinced we are meant to be left—to learn by our experience.

One navigational star that should resolve some of the tension we sometimes feel is that teaching and research are often mutually reinforcing. This is the core insight behind our mentoring focus. When faculty work closely with undergraduate students in a lab, in a studio, or on a research project, the research itself is a form of teaching.

It should also reduce tension between the dual teacher-scholar aspiration to recognize that if we want our students to become lifelong learners, we too must be engaged in lifelong learning, and research is a key manifestation of our learning passion. Our teaching is also benefited by our engaging in the discipline of performing experiments or writing papers. Most of us have had the experience in which an idea or argument just won’t write because our ideas can’t survive the discipline of the clear exposition demanded by the written word. I have always appreciated the story of the individual who, when asked what she

thought about a particular topic, responded, “I don’t know. I haven’t written about it yet.”

As another tension reducer, President Kimball observed:

You can, in fact, often be more effective in the service you render students if students see you as individuals who have blended successfully things secular and things spiritual in a way that has brought to you earned respect in both realms.²³

I remember as a student being in awe of the intelligence and credentials of the faculty—and I am still in awe of you—and I remember taking confidence from their thoughtful and faith-filled testimonies of the restored gospel.

As a final tension reducer, I trust that, if we are faithful, some of the research insights that might otherwise be lost because of time dedicated to teaching can be made up by the blessings of the Spirit. As we learn in Doctrine and Covenants 88:67, “That body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.” But, in my experience, this is not typically the Lord’s way. As I noted before, there is a law irrevocably decreed,²⁴ and attaining light and knowledge most often is a function of obedience to the laws of learning and requires significant time, work, and study in addition to faith.

If these various truths reduce the tension between teaching and research, do they eliminate it? As suggested by my reference to Doctrine and Covenants 130 and the principle that blessings are associated with obedience to related laws,²⁵ I don’t believe so. In the end, honesty—and at least as much insight as I can muster from my own experience—compels me to recognize that we must make hard choices between teaching and research. We can’t have it all.

If we must choose, how is it that we are to do so? Surely it cannot be that we opt for one to the exclusion of the other. I have long appreciated, for example, that at BYU quality teaching really does matter in the rank-and-status process. A long list of publications or performances

on a vita or a raft of research grants do not obviate the need for quality teaching.

If choosing only one path is not viable, what principles might help us balance between teaching and research? One principle that President Worthen has invited us to consider is our motive. Is it pride and the praise of the world that drive us, or is it a desire to serve our students and serve the Lord?²⁶ As President Worthen said in his 2014 annual university conference address:

We are and will remain a student-centric university, one that focuses on the development of our students above all else. With every major decision we make, we need to ask ourselves how this endeavor can enhance the educational experience of our students.²⁷

This inquiry about what enhances the experience of our students may appear to suggest a narrow ambit for scholarship, but that is not necessarily so. Consider the close mentoring experience of a student in a lab or studio and think about the doors to graduate school and employment that open as a result of such collaborative work. Contemplate the habits of mind and heart that students are able to observe in a close mentored-research setting. Even for those disciplines in which working alongside students is more challenging, pursuing research teaches lifelong learning by example, energizes the mind of the faculty member, and builds the university’s capacity to launch its students into opportunities that will allow them to serve and lead in their families, their communities, and the Church. Again, motive and our heart matter. If students are at the periphery of our university contribution—or in the rearview mirror—we ought to realign our focus.

To borrow from a metaphor President Worthen used in his inaugural address when he challenged all of us to “go to the mountains,”²⁸ the faculty are both climbers and climbing instructors. As scholars and creators,

we hope to summit new and challenging peaks. As teachers, we are charged with teaching our students climbing skills and also filling them with a desire to climb. Teaching climbing is easier if we also love to climb and if we have seen the magnificent vistas afforded by a summit. But our mission is not to spend all our time climbing. Our core mission is to teach climbing skills and, where possible, to make guided forays in which we lead students to the summit with us. Sometimes, of course, this will slow us down. But because of the strength of our students, having them along for the hike can also spur us and energize us, and our mentoring successes suggest that students often can carry quite a bit of the load.

From the evaluative side in the rank-and-status process, we must recognize that the quantity of what we produce—the number of peaks we will climb—will sometimes be less than what might be produced if teaching loads were lower or citizenship obligations less. This should not trouble us because it is inherent in our institutional choice. Although we as faculty might climb fewer peaks, we will be responsible for more summits, achieved by our extraordinary students.

If we recognize that the quantity of what we produce may be less, and even if we trust that motives matter, we will surely still feel some lingering tension about the paired obligation of teaching and research. But I am persuaded that we are meant to confront precisely that tension. It is part of our mission and part of the grand experiment identified by President Hinckley.²⁹

The nature of paired aspirations is that they invite conversation and discussion about an appropriate balance. I hope that will be the case, because we learn when we counsel together. As we counsel together as faculty members, I also hope that the very recognition of the tension will engender some of the humility President Worthen discussed this morning.³⁰ Part of that humility may be recognizing that our preferred balance may be

just that—our preference—and that we need to recalibrate with reference to the other part of our dual duty. It takes real humility to be personally introspective about our motives and about why we may have shied away from either aspiration. But being less defensive, less sure, and more open to letting the Spirit guide our allocation of effort will lead to greater peace in navigating the paired aspiration of teaching and research—or any other duties in apparent tension.

Faith and Intellect

A second paired aspiration that guides our efforts is the relationship between faith and intellect, or faith and reason. As a matter of doctrine, these two aspirations share a common goal of pursuing truth. As Joseph Smith once said, “One of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’ is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”³¹ Latter-day scripture is clear that, to the Lord, “all things . . . are spiritual” and nothing is entirely temporal.³² We also know that “the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”³³

At the university’s 2015 commencement exercises, Dr. Robert P. George credited Pope John Paul II with a beautiful metaphor: “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.”³⁴ This is precisely why we are commanded to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”³⁵

We need not feel embarrassed, as urged in some academic quarters, that our pursuit of truth includes faith, nor is there any lack of faith in pursuing truth by diligent study at a university. I love the story President Henry B. Eyring once told about a conversation he had with President Kimball regarding the future of higher education in the Church.

President Eyring reported that he had suggested to President Kimball that, once the Savior returned, universities may no longer be necessary.

After what President Eyring described as “a lengthy silence,” President Kimball said that

*over the centuries universities [have] proved to be the most effective institutions we [have] developed to find, conserve, and transmit knowledge across numerous fields of inquiry, so why not expect that they would serve as well in the Millennium.*³⁶

Faith and reason must be paired for us to achieve what President Kimball described as the expectation that not only would BYU “become a leader among the great universities of the world” but “become a unique university in all of the world!”³⁷

President Hinckley echoed this idea when he said at President Samuelson’s inauguration:

*Here we are doing what is not done in any other major university of which I am aware. We are demonstrating that faith in the Almighty can accompany and enrich scholarship in the secular.*³⁸

Because we are human and the world beckons, we can begin to think it is possible to fly with one wing, but it isn’t. Truth must be pursued by study *and* by faith. Excluding the latter cuts us off from the pursuit of truth. As Psalm 36:9 says, “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” Most important, excluding faith would cut us off from the one truth to which all other knowledge is secondary—Christ’s promise in John 8:12: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

If study and faith are both part of the search for truth, the tension tends to come, as it so often does, in practice—in myriad individual and institutional decisions. Here again, retreating to our comfort zone and eschewing the challenge to learn by both study and faith is not the answer.

What are some principled guides? Once more the real answers are internal—our motives and our heart—and are difficult

to reduce to a checklist. If there must be a default, it is faith, partly because faith will compel us back to the value of study and reason. In this regard, President David O. McKay once said that by making religious faith paramount, this university “declares with Ruskin that ‘anything which makes religion its second object, makes religion *no* object. . . . He who offers God a second place, offers Him no place.’”³⁹

The temptation for many of us who have spent so much time and energy succeeding in Athens is that we sometimes want to rebuild Jerusalem in Athens’s image. But our ultimate aspiration is, metaphorically, to build a New Jerusalem, to, as President Kimball said, “become a unique university in all of the world.”⁴⁰ Our goal is not to build the same old Athens in a new location. Building a great and unique university is no easy project. Although in many cases the principles of truth that build up Athens will be the same as those that build up Jerusalem, in other cases our pursuit of truth will require that we go our own way and endure the skepticism that what we are building doesn’t match modern Athenian fashion. This doesn’t mean that we proudly ignore advances in building codes that would strengthen our own structures, nor does it mean that we are haughty and prideful in our difference. But what we must remember is that we build for a higher purpose, which requires that we build by both study and faith.

Experiential Learning and Theory

At this point in my remarks, most of you are probably convinced that I have forgotten the theme of this university conference from Doctrine and Covenants 105:10—“That my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience”—which seems to promise something on experiential learning. So let me turn to that subject for a couple of minutes and to the dual aspiration of teaching by experiential learning and teaching by theory and principle.

In his January 2015 address to the university community, President Worthen identified “three main ways we can learn: one, by study; two, by faith; and, three, by experience.”⁴¹ As you will recall, he taught the students:

*Your mortal experience will be a more productive part of your quest for perfection if you intentionally stretch yourself with new challenges, especially those that involve a real risk of failure.*⁴²

It is a subject for another day, but his advice is just as critical for faculty. Building this university requires taking on new challenges with some risk of failure and mistakes. We too will learn through our experience.

If improving our efforts to provide our students experiential-learning opportunities is important, those efforts are bounded and supported by the dual aspiration of education by study and by faith, which in turn focuses on guiding principles and theory. We, of course, are already doing much by way of experiential learning. Our lab disciplines provide many students with wonderful, outside-of-class experiential-learning opportunities; our clinical-work disciplines likewise include learning by doing; experiential learning is the core pedagogy in the fine arts; and wonderful experiential-learning experiments are going on across campus. Although this may expand the definition beyond typical usage, anyone who has experienced a work of art in an art history class or the text of a poem in a literature class might also lay claim to an experiential-learning experience. My point today is not to set boundaries around the definition, although I suppose that will soon enough be my resource-allocation duty.

Instead of boundary setting, my focus, as before, is on the challenging and necessary work we must do to discern the appropriate relationship between teaching practice and teaching theory and to then make the good, better, and best choices between them. In that weighing, teaching theory and guid-

ing principles continues to be critical. As the Aims document suggests, “The essential academic learning skills are the abilities to think soundly, to communicate effectively, and to reason proficiently in quantitative terms.”⁴³ The Aims’ use of the “skills” nomenclature makes clear that the goal is to enable students to apply their learning to the myriad circumstances that will arise in their lives.⁴⁴

It is principles that have staying power. To take a recent example, it was fun to experience the eclipse. But how much more valuable is it to understand why the eclipse happened and, even better, to understand the mathematical and physical principles upon which one can predict not just this eclipse but any eclipse in the future? Teaching theory and principles is thus foundational to application. At the same time, it was seeing the eclipse that prompted me to read more about how an eclipse worked. Thus the desire to understand theory and principle can be fueled by experience.

Our commitment to teach students core academic skills goes to the heart of our teaching mission. In a world in which evanescent celebrity on social media seems increasingly important, we must remain moored to our aspiration of education for eternity. It is not nearly enough to teach students about the hot political issues of the day or the skills they need for their first job. Our task is to teach them the principles by which they will understand and evaluate all future political debate and the skills that will allow them to succeed as employment opportunities change and evolve. Learning true principles is a skill that will last a lifetime—indeed, far longer than that.

Our goal in the scholarly realm is no different. It is certainly the case that much of what we do moves knowledge forward only incrementally and that our work will be surpassed in time by subsequent discovery. But our goal should be enduring influence. Our eye should not be to follow the latest fad or to win a current debate but to discern and

share principles in our writing, our art, and our experiments that will resonate even fifty years hence.

Although I admit to a personal lean toward theory and principle, I am convinced that experiential learning must be part of what we teach our students. And my broader point is that we should not feel like anything is amiss if we must collectively wrestle with the dual aspirations of teaching students both by theory and applied learning. We are meant to struggle with this question—not surprisingly—by study, by faith, and by experience.

Unity and Diversity

I turn now to a final aspirational pairing about which I won't speak at length today—unity *and* diversity. For us it is not unity *or* diversity but both unity *and* diversity. We will and should become more diverse. I mentioned previously the importance of counseling together, and diverse perspectives and experiences will be a boon to our effort to discern how best to accomplish our Mission and Aims. We won't always agree, but we can disagree charitably. By charitable disagreement I mean more than basic civility. Instead of mere civility, which is a baseline obligation, I hope we will listen—really listen—to each other and work to understand one another's views and statements in a charitable light. What an oasis of learning we would be if pursuing light and truth were the goal and if inevitable disagreements were handled with true charity.

The best description of our hope to be both diverse and unified is in our Aims document:

*The students, faculty, and staff in this community possess a remarkable diversity of gifts, but they all think of themselves as brothers and sisters seeking together to master the academic disciplines while remaining mastered by the higher claims of discipleship to the Savior.*⁴⁵

As the Aims document suggests, diversity is inherent in the project of a multifaceted uni-

versity and is consistent with the idea of the pursuit of light and truth. But in the end we must also be “mastered by the higher claims of discipleship to the Savior.” I know we are not perfect in that regard. I surely am not. I suppose we all have plenty of growing to do, both individually and collectively, before we are fully mastered in our discipleship. But if that is true, it is also true that we sometimes forget that what we have is extraordinary.

A couple of years ago I attended this faculty session of university conference with my friend and law school colleague Paul Stancil. Paul is an Evangelical Christian who joined us from the college of law at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At the end of the session, the faculty members sang together a traditional hymn of Zion. I can't remember which one.

At the end of the singing, I looked over to Paul, and he had tears in his eyes. He said something like, “Do you realize what an extraordinary place this is—how amazing it is to be a part of a university where the whole faculty will joyfully stand and sing together in faith?”

The truth is that I probably didn't get it. Paul's reaction, which I share with his permission, was a powerful reminder of what a unique university we are building together.

One of the great blessings of serving as the academic vice president is that I am exposed to the remarkable and diverse work of colleagues across campus. It makes me feel humbled and proud to be part of this university. Of course, the truth is that the blessings of being part of this faculty community are not limited to someone in the academic vice president position. It can be tempting to stay in our own academic silo, particularly when disciplinary imperatives seem to push us toward narrower specialization, but let me encourage all of us to venture out and partake of the remarkable feast of opportunities that surrounds us.

Attend a colleague's presentation and revel in his or her mastery of a complex area of knowledge. Even if you don't see an

interdisciplinary angle to support your own work, take joy in gaining a bit more knowledge and in understanding the collective project in which we are engaged. Come to a recital, performance, or production and see what our gifted fine arts faculty and students are accomplishing. Browse or read a few of the impressive books produced every year by our colleagues in book disciplines. And please, when you can, take the time to come to your colleagues' devotionals. You may not know them; you may never meet them in person (although I hope you will). But learning from them will make you feel that you are a greater part of this community.

I express my gratitude to you for all you do to build our students and to build a great and faithful university. As I said when I began by talking about my childhood summer treks to BYU with my mother, the profoundly important project in which we are engaged is multi-generational in its influence. There is more to do and many higher mountains ahead, but I feel blessed to work alongside you in this effort.

As I end, I share one of my favorite passages in the Old Testament, from the book of Numbers, as my prayer for all of us as we navigate the dual aspirations that define our hope for this university:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

*The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*⁴⁶

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See John S. Tanner, *Notes from an Amateur: A Disciple's Life in the Academy* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2011).

2. For a list of and online access to John S. Tanner's BYU annual university conference

addresses, see speeches.byu.edu/speakers/john-s-tanner.

3. See Spencer W. Kimball, "Education for Eternity," pre-school address to BYU faculty and staff, 12 September 1967.

4. See Kevin J Worthen, "BYU: A Unique Kind of Education," BYU university conference address, 28 August 2017.

5. See *The Mission of Brigham Young University and The Aims of a BYU Education* (Provo: BYU, 2014).

6. President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "It is a continuing experiment on a great premise that a large and complex university can be first class academically while nurturing an environment of faith in God and the practice of Christian principles" (Hinckley, "Trust and Accountability," BYU devotional address, 13 October 1992).

7. Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign*, November 2007.

8. See, for example, James 2:17–18.

9. See, for example, D&C 88:15.

10. See, for example, Dallin H. Oaks, "Two Lines of Communication," *Ensign*, November 2010.

11. *Mission and Aims*, 1; emphasis added.

12. *Mission and Aims*, 1–2.

13. John Taylor, *JD* 21:100.

14. Karl G. Maeser, "History of the Academy," first Founders Day exercises, 16 October 1891; in Reinhard Maeser, *Karl G. Maeser: A Biography by His Son* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1928), 131.

15. Kimball, "Education for Eternity," 1–2.

16. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Second Century of Brigham Young University," BYU devotional address, 10 October 1975.

17. Kimball, "Second Century."

18. Kimball, "Second Century."

19. Harold B. Lee, "Installation of and Charge to the President," in *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of Dallin Harris Oaks*, 12 November 1971 (Provo: BYU Press, 1971), 14.

20. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Remarks at the Inauguration of President Cecil O. Samuelson,"

BYU devotional address at the inauguration of President Samuelson, 9 September 2003.

21. Henry B. Eyring, "A Leader of Learners," BYU devotional address at the inauguration of President Kevin J Worthen, 9 September 2014.

22. See Worthen, "Unique Kind of Education."

23. Kimball, "Education for Eternity," 2.

24. See D&C 130:20–21.

25. See D&C 130:20–21.

26. See Kevin J Worthen, "The Why of the Y," BYU annual university conference address, 26 August 2014; also Worthen, "Unique Kind of Education."

27. Worthen, "The Why of the Y."

28. Kevin J Worthen, "Enlightened, Uplifted, and Changed," BYU devotional address at his inauguration, 9 September 2014.

29. See Hinckley, "Trust and Accountability."

30. See Worthen, "Unique Kind of Education."

31. Joseph Smith, *HC* 5:499.

32. D&C 29:34.

33. D&C 93:36.

34. John Paul II, Blessing, in Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason)*, 14 September 1998, w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998

[_fides-et-ratio.html](#); quoted in Robert P. George, "Faith and Reason: The Appropriation of Knowledge and Truth," BYU commencement address, 23 April 2015.

35. D&C 88:118.

36. Henry B. Eyring, "A Charted Course," BYU annual university conference address, 27 August 1996.

37. Kimball, "The Second Century."

38. Hinckley, "Remarks at the Inauguration."

39. David O. McKay, "The Church University," *Messenger* 11, no. 10 (October 1937): 3; quoting John Ruskin, *Lectures on Architecture and Painting* (1853), lecture IV; emphasis in original.

40. Kimball, "Second Century."

41. Kevin J Worthen, "Successfully Failing: Pursuing Our Quest for Perfection," BYU devotional address, 6 January 2015.

42. Worthen, "Successfully Failing."

43. *Mission and Aims*, 8.

44. See *Mission and Aims*, 8–9.

45. *Mission and Aims*, 7.

46. Numbers 6:24–26.