

A Leader of Learners

HENRY B. EYRING

I am grateful to be with you as we celebrate the inauguration of President Kevin J Worthen as the new leader of this great university. He will help move it upward on a steady path of progress that his distinguished predecessors have marked and followed. He is particularly well prepared and suited to this task.

A precious preparation was to have President Cecil O. Samuelson as an inspired mentor. We honor President and Sister Samuelson today. President Samuelson was and is an example of the educational ideals fixed at the heart of this university when it was founded.

President Worthen, from his long experience as a student, a teacher, and an effective leader here at this university, knows and honors its roots. Its founder, President Brigham Young, set its course based on an inspired view of education. One line captures the vigor of his view. It is a message to all in this enterprise of learning, and it describes the effect that the leadership of President Worthen will have on those who study, teach, and serve here. This leadership will “put forth your ability to learn as fast as you can, and gather all the strength of mind and principle of faith you possibly

can, and then distribute your knowledge to the people” (*JD* 8:146).

For President Worthen that view has permeated his own life, and it will guide his leadership here. This is a vibrant and determined community of learners and lifters. Students, faculty, and staff here are driven by a desire and a strength of mind to learn as fast as they can.

Their confidence that they can and must improve springs from their faith that they are children of God—who knows all truth and will prosper their efforts to find it. And it comes from a faith that by the Spirit of Christ they can recognize what is good and true.

It goes beyond learning for ourselves. The vision at the founding was that all here will seek truth not for themselves alone but will also distribute what they have learned to bless others. There is a sign at the edge of this campus: “Enter to learn; go forth to serve.” That

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is more than a slogan; it is a main part of the founding vision.

As President Worthen knows, inspired leaders and teachers here have made it possible for students to begin to serve with what they have learned while they are still here. They don't wait to graduate to become colleagues in the role of teachers. Many of the faculty include students in their own efforts to learn by inviting them to participate as partners in their own studies.

In fairness, that is neither new nor unique to Brigham Young University. But here that view of students as colleagues is in its very nature. Everyone is a learner and everyone is a mentor. All can share in the faith that with God's help they can learn, and then they can help others learn, grow, and change for the better.

President Worthen and his predecessors have been masters at maintaining and nurturing a shared vision of learning, teaching, and serving that has shaped this university.

It has not been easy to do here. There is much to distract us. President Worthen will find his time almost consumed by administrative details; seeing visitors; even having lunch, as he will today with me; and attending to the crises that people may say demand his attention. But in the midst of what may at times seem a tumult, he will be carried back to the view that is the heart of this university by the joy he has always found in being a determined learner and a mentor of other children of God.

That view will guide him as he deals with administrative decisions. He will also be asking himself and others, as he considers alternative recommendations, "Is there a way to strengthen the determination of all who study and serve here to learn, to increase their faith, and to move them to serve others better?" And with such a view President Worthen will be calm and wise when faced with the challenges that will come.

He will move quickly and confidently to help individuals in need. But he will be at peace about the university itself because it and those who study here and teach here are on the course set and maintained by the long line of those who have served before him. He will then find himself saying quietly in the face of what appear to be crises, "Things will work out."

On behalf of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees and all who love and have loved this university, I say to President Worthen and to his wife, Peggy, "Welcome. We love you. And Godspeed."

I give you my solemn witness that I have seen the hand of the Lord guiding and prospering this great university. God the Father lives, as does His resurrected Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. They have been and always will be attentive to the needs of all who study and serve others here and who go on learning and serving others over their lifetimes and beyond. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.