

**Remarks by Al M. Panu, Ph.D.
at his Investiture as the second
Chancellor of the University of South Carolina Beaufort
March 18, 2016**

Thank you, Dr. Pastides. Members of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees...delegates from colleges and universities...distinguished guests...academic colleagues...members of the USCB faculty and staff...community leaders...benefactors of the university...alumni...OLLI members...students...family and friends. Welcome.

One of my favorite passages from scripture is found in I Thess. 5:17...“In all things **give thanks** for this is the **will of God for you in Jesus Christ.**” There have been a few

times in my life...when living out this admonition was **burdensome**. But today...I am **only too happy** to take the time to **thank so many people** who have made it possible for me...to assume the role of **Chancellor of the University of South Carolina Beaufort**. The only remaining burden is **the debt of gratitude I owe**...to countless individuals whom I will not be able to acknowledge publicly...because time simply will not permit me to do so.

For support, encouragement and unwavering love...I want to thank my **wife, Judith**...who has taught me about **courage...leadership...grit...and a zest for life**. We have been blessed with the best children any parent could

hope for...Sylvain, Marc and Anna. They have filled our days with joy and we are so proud of them. I am also grateful for **the love and support** I have received from my wife's family. They have been a **blessing** to me and my family.

For her unconditional love and the many sacrifices she has made for me...**I want to thank my mother**, who is able to be with us today. When I first left my native Congo...at age 18 to pursue higher education here in America...**I did not see my mother again for six years!** Her full measure of sacrificial love...**has sustained me** through the years.

Several of my brothers and sisters are here today. **I want to thank each of them...**and their families...for having been a true loving family to me.

Over the years...I have benefitted from a number of kind and supportive mentors. **Dr. Martha Nesbitt** could not be here today...but I'm glad **her husband, Pete**, is here. I want to recognize **my former boss, Dr. Bonita Jacobs**, who is here today. And then there are my colleagues from the **University System of Georgia...the University of North Georgia...USCB...and our sister universities...**who have helped me **to learn how to lead.** I have received valuable and wise guidance from **my current boss...President Harris Pastides...**to whom I shall

forever be grateful **for the opportunity to serve as chancellor.**

And, of course...I thank God not only for blessing me with abundant riches in the form of family, friends and colleagues...but also for His faithfulness throughout my life's journey.

So many people at USCB have labored diligently to make this event possible. **I especially want to thank the investiture planning committee**, which includes individuals from across the university.

This is a day of **great significance** for the university and for me. Investiture ceremonies...like the one we're enacting today...**date back to the Middle Ages**. They confer **authority and the symbols of high office** on a new leader. Academic communities have recognized leadership transitions in this way for centuries.

(Turn to Dr. Pastides.) Since my probation period is over.

I really DO have the job, **right?**)

I stand before you today...as only **the second chancellor in the history of an institution of higher education** that dates back to 1795. Beaufort College was founded that year to provide a formal education...to the privileged

sons of the planter class in the Lowcountry and the Caribbean. Later...during the Civil War...the college would undergo **a social revolution**. It would serve as headquarters for the Freedmen's Bureau...**which helped the newly freed slaves obtain food, clothing, medical care and more**. But one of its **most significant accomplishments**...was to serve as **the venue for the first public education program for former slaves**.

Like Beaufort College...**I... too...have been on a long journey**. I was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo...a country in central Africa. I was very fortunate. **My parents instilled in me a passion for higher education**. Growing up in a third-world country...we

understood that education was the pathway out of third-world status. **The quest for a higher education led me to the United States...the land of civic engagement... democracy and opportunity...**where I was able to pursue my studies.

My appreciation of higher education led me to the **teaching profession** first...and then to **administrative responsibilities** with institutions of higher learning. Now, as a new chancellor...I'd like to share with you some of the themes and ideas for the future...that have emerged as I've learned more about our university. **But first...**I want to tell you a story.

Michelangelo...**the greatest artist of the Italian Renaissance**...took over a project after two previous sculptors had failed to achieve the desired result. As he labored to turn a **17-foot block of stone into the dominating figure of David**...he was asked how he could transform a block of marble into an impressive work of art. He replied quite simply...**“Every block of stone has a statue inside it...and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”** Michelangelo could **envision** the statue of David in the block of marble. He felt it was **his responsibility** to reveal it to the world. Two centuries later...**Joseph Addison**... the English essayist, poet and playwright...offered the same analogy when he said:

“What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the human soul.”

The same vision that propelled Michelangelo to create one of the world’s finest masterpieces...**exists here at USCB...**only under a different name. I call it the **Centrality of Learning**. The Centrality of Learning encompasses a **combination of classroom lectures...academic research with our faculty...and on-the-job experience...gained through internships in school classrooms...in health care facilities...and in the world-class resort environment on Hilton Head Island. By embracing deep and experiential**

learning...we are enveloping our students in a comprehensive learning environment.

The Centrality of Learning ensures that **no matter what pedagogy...what manner of teaching...what mode of delivery we use to convey educational instruction to our students...the outcome of that effort...will be measured by the learning that has taken place on the student's part.** Learning is the glue that binds the teacher to the student. By taking a **comprehensive look** at each student...we are able to focus **not merely on the instruction...but on the delta...the value-added difference that has been effected in each student.**

Success in today's world...is measured **not by achievement alone...but by the challenges met and conquered.** In his autobiography, *Up from Slavery...*

Booker T. Washington offered...perhaps the best definition of what we mean by the delta when he said...

“I have learned that success is to be measured...not so much by the position that one has reached in life...as by the obstacles which he has overcome...while trying to succeed.”

Our role as **teachers...researchers and mentors** is to provide our students...**with the tools they will need...to engage in deep experiential learning.** We at USCB are fortunate to have an **excellent faculty. A faculty**

dedicated to their disciplines...and passionate about their teaching. One of the means they use to involve students in the learning process...is to create **a nurturing environment...where students can form bonds of friendship and respect with each other...and faculty and students...can engage in meaningful educational discourse.**

Our success with this approach is **already paying dividends.** Let me share with you...a letter I received in January from **Rebecca Persons...a former biology student** at USCB who graduated and has been admitted to a veterinary school. Ms. Persons already **had**

significant experience...with two- and four-year colleges

when she enrolled at USCB in 2012.

Let me quote from her letter: "...your science

department staff and professors...are the most **talented**

and knowledgeable group of professionals that I've

encountered throughout my collegiate experience." She

singles out **Dr. Gordon Sproul**...chair of the Department

of Natural Sciences...whom she calls "**an excellent**

leader." And **Dr. Eric Montie**...assistant professor of

biology...who "provided an opportunity for me to

participate **in an internship with the Coastal Discovery**

Museum and DNR that was invaluable to my veterinary

school application." She compliments **Dr. Edward**

D'Antonio...for his “incredible scientific outlook” ... and Dr. Jennifer D'Antonio...for her “incredible passion for chemistry, and more importantly...dedication to her students.” Dr. Stephen Borgianini...” she continues...“is another invaluable member of your staff. He has mentored me through my entire academic career at USCB...and continues to support me...as I further my education. His teaching methods are highly effective... and embolden his students to continue pursuing their scientific passions. Dr. Borgianini teaches his students how to think like scientists...while providing an enjoyable learning environment.”

Ms. Persons concludes by saying...“I truly believe that my accomplishments thus far...**are a direct result of my time and experiences...at the University of South Carolina Beaufort.** Your science department...**will always be the basis for comparison...as I continue my education.”**

That’s a lovely, unsolicited compliment.

Like **Michelangelo**...our faculty views incoming students... **through the lens of their potential as future teachers... who will shape young minds** to meet the challenges of the 21st century...**or as future doctors and nurses...who will cure the maladies** found here in the Lowcountry. They see our **Business Administration graduates...as catalysts for creating jobs...and raising**

the standard of living for their employees. They envision our **Computational Science graduates...embarking on careers that haven't even been created yet...because** the technology is still advancing. Our dedicated faculty will develop **the next generation of economists and social scientists** who will implement effective roadmaps for reducing poverty. They will produce **the next generation of environmental scientists and engineers** who will invent **abundant sources of clean energy** to preserve our fragile environment. They will even watch with pride as our **English and History majors** go on to complete law school and become...**Lord help us— lawyers!**

I believe affecting deep experiential learning in our students...is the same process Michelangelo used to transform that 17-foot block of marble...into a priceless work of art. **We are focused on ensuring the outcome of our students' success...**through the proven and enduring process of learning. **We take our greatest pride in the delta...**the value added.

Yet another **major responsibility** of our university is to **enhance the economic development...and the health and well-being of our community.** Let me give you an example of how we go about this. **Dr. Alan Warren...**an environmental researcher... specializes in water-quality

sustainability and environmental protection. **His public-service initiatives...deepen our understanding of the fragile environment we seek to protect.**

Yet another role we play involves **enriching the community** by providing cultural and intellectual stimulation. We present **a full program of concerts... plays...and presentations** at the USCB Center for the Arts on the Historic Beaufort campus. In October, the CFA played host to ***Pat Conroy at 70...***a three-day literary festival of **book signings...literary discussions...lunches... and more...**co-chaired by **Dr. Ellen Malphrus**, an associate professor of English at USCB and a personal friend of the author's. Pat Conroy had **strong ties** to

USCB. We are **still mourning the loss** of our favorite son of the Lowcountry. Walk anywhere in Beaufort and you'll encounter student artists **standing at easels...capturing the beauty** of the city's architecture. Our sports teams are growing in number...and gaining new respect on the **golf course... the soccer field...and the baseball diamond**. All of this and more...goes toward affecting the cultural life of the community.

It is only fitting to pause here and recognize **the unwavering support the community has extended to our university over the years**. We acknowledge and applaud the efforts of our **state legislators and the Beaufort County Council**. We especially want to

commend Wes Jones, a member of the USC Board of Trustees...who has been affiliated with USC and USCB for most of his life. They join so many others who believed in us and took up our cause to become a baccalaureate university more than 10 years ago. We recognize the vision and determination of our first chancellor...Dr. Jane Upshaw...who served the university with distinction for more than 30 years. To everyone who played a role large or small...I say thank you.

Two hundred years after Beaufort College was founded...today's USCB is a **fully accredited... baccalaureate institution within the USC system. We embrace diversity. As a growing regional comprehensive**

university...we offer degrees in the liberal arts and sciences...not just to some, but to all who thirst for knowledge.

Our goal now is to become a **university of distinction** for our region and beyond. It was President Abraham Lincoln who said...**“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”** Please **join us as we set forth on our journey...to transform the University of South Carolina Beaufort...into an exceptional regional comprehensive university** with unique ties to the Lowcountry. **That is our quest.**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as **the Chancellor of USCB**. I pledge to bring to the office of chancellor...**the same dedication...perseverance...and hard work** that have sustained me over the years. With the **talent and commitment** of the USCB faculty and staff...and with the **unwavering financial support of our legislators and benefactors**...we will continue to make a positive impact on our community and our world.

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