



NAROPA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

President Stuart C. Lord's State of the University Address

January 27, 2010

I want to thank you as members of the Naropa community for coming today for this important event—our state of the university meeting. This meeting is designed to be informative, but also to help position this community to consider the challenges and opportunities before us, and respond with a great sense of compassion, support and integrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to share just a few thoughts with you as we discuss two issues that are key to the immediate future of Naropa University. The two main areas on which have been focusing our attention are the budget and the self-study piece of accreditation: two areas which are related in at least one significant way.

Each of these areas involves both a measure of self-assessment as well as the potential for change. But let's face it: change is not always easy. Poet laureate Anatole France stated that "All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another."

Thus, as we look forward to better ourselves, both through a hard look at some of our budgetary issues and as well through our self-study, we see the potential to make Naropa University an even better place. We must move beyond the old life to enter another, as daunting as the acceptance of that change may be.

This does not, however, somehow ease the concerns we face as we move forward into some uncharted territory. Let me share with you two of the commitments I want us to hold as we approach both of these issues:

1. I desire that we commit to addressing these concerns as a **community**. There may be some hard choices made. I would ask that we all treat the people affected by those choices as part of our community and with a spirit of encouragement. I would also ask that we treat those who make those choices (members of the University Budget Committee, for example) with an equal measure of unity and support. These are difficult times, and we need to depend on one another to support these efforts.

2. I would ask that we commit to addressing these concerns with compassion. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines compassion as “sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it.” This means that we must be present and thoughtful of the place where we each rest and then do what we can to alleviate the distress that others may be facing.

So often, it seems to me, in this economy, people, business, even governments—are making difficult choices. These are some of the hard realities of our time. Yet, I see few places that continue to build a spirit of community and exhibit a heart of compassion in the way that people communicate, treat each other and address the concerns of the day.

We have the opportunity to deliver distinction with excellence even in these challenging moments. As we look ahead, I want to challenge you to find ways to build community in the days ahead. I want to challenge you to be compassionate and caring to every member of our community in your speech and actions. As we move forward to discussion and deliberation, I challenge you to let it be said that Naropa University set an example for the world to follow.

May our very consideration of the budget initiative and the self-study cause us to be contemplative in our considerations and transformative in our outreach to those around us. Thank you.