Thank you, Dean Laws for that introduction and for your strong and passionate leadership of NSU’s Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College. I am delighted to join each of you here today in this beautiful facility for the College’s Spring Fling and Retreat.

To the members of the Honors College Faculty, Senior Fellows, and Community Senior Fellows, I say a resounding thank you. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our students and to the advancement of academic excellence at NSU.

A university is only as strong as its faculty and each of you represent the very best of what NSU has to offer. This includes rising stars such as Faculty Senior Fellow Dr. April Manalang and tenured members of the faculty such as Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander. I hear that both of you are slated to take part in the upcoming trip to Austria and Germany this summer, which I hope you find to be profoundly enlightening – just remember that we need your energy and expertise here at NSU, so please be sure to book a return flight!

Behind every strong academic enterprise is a dedicated leader. Under Dean Laws’ leadership NSU’s Honors program has seen consistent growth. Our honors faculty and students have also brought great visibility to NSU through active participation and leadership roles in organizations such as the:

- The Virginias Collegiate Honors Council
- The Southern Regional Honors Council
- The National Collegiate Honors Council
- The National Association of African American Honors Programs
- The Association for Core Texts and Courses

Special recognition and thanks is also in order to the many financial benefactors that invest in the College such as Robert C. Nusbaum and many others. We simply could not do this important work without the generous support of our donors. It is up to us to ensure that our contributors continue to see a high return on their investments.

As I outlined during my remarks at Spring Opening Conference, my administration will focus on the advancement of four key priority areas which include:

- The adoption of a student’s first approach to organizational decision making;
- The cultivation of an organizational environment of mutual respect that fully engages faculty in the shared governance of the university;
• The elevation of NSU as a viable player in the economic development of the Hampton Roads Region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Nation, and global community; and
• A renewed focus on philanthropy to jump start the process of better securing NSU’s financial future.

The work of the Honors College and the resulting accomplishments of our students will play a critical role in advancing all of these priorities.

Under my leadership students will always be first. This means that every decision that we make and every dollar that we spend will be directed toward ensuring that our students are fully prepared to compete in the 21st Century global economy.

Through academic rigor and enrichment activities the Honors College is redefining what it means to be an Ideal Spartan, and producing NSU graduates that are exceptionally well prepared. **For this reason, the Honors College has my full support and a commitment to invest in its faculty and core programs.** In return, the university needs your help in confronting the challenge of reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC.

This is a mission critical test that NSU cannot fail. Every division, department, and unit throughout the university must be fully committed and involved in this very important work. I am confident that I can count on each and you to roll up your sleeves and do the hard work that will be required to keep NSU moving forward.

Thank you again for the opportunity to take part in this event and for all that you have done and will continue to do for our students. I am happy to answer a few questions while you enjoy lunch.

BEHOLD, THE GREEN AND GOLD!