I pledge my commitment and embrace the role of president at this critical juncture in the history of Norfolk State University. All I ask is that you too embrace your role to its fullest potential.

For the past 108 days since I retired from retirement, I have embraced the challenges and the responsibilities that accompany this presidency.

My fellow Spartans, the sea is not calm—but with focus, determination and a will to succeed, we can weather this storm.

Each one of you—whether you are a faculty member or a faculty senate officer, an administrator or vice president, an administrative assistant or maintenance or housekeeping professional—we are all responsible for the state of this great university. If we do not take on this responsibility—who will?

I ask you to claim responsibility with me. I challenge each of you to do your best—because I cannot do it alone. Let us work together toward righting this ship; let us do what is right and what is expected.

1. We must submit and defend NSU’s fifth-year interim report to SACS-COC in March 2014.

2. We must correct the eleven (11) items of concerns identified by the SACS-COC special review team. We must then submit and defend our response in December 2014.

3. We must complete and satisfy state audit requirements for fiscal years 2012 and 2013. While we have completed the financial statements for FY 2012 and prepared preliminary statements for 2013, the audits must still be completed by the auditor of public accounts for both years. There is still much work to be done to ensure the university’s financial stability.

4. We have to increase our fundraising efforts—not only for student financial support but also for key academic programs such as the National Institute for Mathematics and Applied Sciences program or DNIMAS, and the honors program. We must raise the funds necessary to support these programs.

5. Each Norfolk State University employee is encouraged to give towards the I-AM-NSU campaign—100% participation is our goal.

6. We must improve our student retention and graduation rates. We need to re-evaluate our current policies and practices—both inside and outside the classroom. We will conduct reviews and make the changes necessary to those things that may inadvertently or adversely affect our retention and graduation rates.

7. We will re-focus on what advances the strategic goals of the university—not what feels or sounds good, or what we’ve done for so many years. No longer will this suffice as a rationale. Everything we do has to be reasonably and financially justified.

I thank you in advance for your commitment to NSU. May God bless you in 2014, and God bless Norfolk State University.