

## State of the University highlights strategic plan

As well as some new initiatives like Explore Andrews

The State of the University Address focused on strategic planning for the University. Though the plan has been in place for several years, President Andreasen thought it prudent to remind the campus of its contents.

“Institutional planning is driven by an institutional mission,” he said. “It equips the institution to carry out its educational tasks in the current environment while keeping it faithful to its educational ideals.”

The number of graduates from public and private high schools reached a peak in 2008 and has been dropping since. The Midwest and East will continue to see a decline in numbers for another decade, and only the South and West will see growth beginning in the 2015–16 school year.

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Belief in the value of a college education dropped from 81 percent in 2008 to 57 percent in 2012. Andreasen compared that statistic to the total outstanding student loan debt, up from \$600 billion in 2008 to \$1 trillion in 2012.

“The higher the debt goes, the less students and their families believe it is worth it,” said Andreasen. Referencing Jeffery Selingo in his book, *College Unbound*, Andreasen explained that many students don’t just attend a college of choice after graduating from high school; they ‘swirl,’ taking college courses in high school, a few from the local community college and online, then they take a break, transfer a few times and travel. “This has complicated our lives here at Andrews,” he said, “and we need to respond to it.”

As a result of these realities, the strategic plan for Andrews University includes the following points.

First, global engagement.

“We are an international university with a global mission,” said Andreasen. “When this University first opened it offered classes in German, French, Latin, Greek, Swedish and Danish. Certainly they were not thinking about Denmark, but probably about Danish farmers living in Minnesota who needed to hear the Gospel. Global initiative is a two-way

street; we teach out in the world and the world comes in and informs our teaching and learning on campus.”

Andreasen continued by saying that “this is Andrews, and we should take advantage of it as we go forward. It will support enrollment, the quality of education and the building of community at Andrews.”

His second point was that academics matter. Andrews has a lot of postgraduate professional students in programs that lead to professional qualifications and a license. We also offer pure graduate education, PHD/MA education, and that is important as well as both of these

require research. Both undergraduate and graduate research are an important part of Andrews’ mission as we respond to

our external environment.

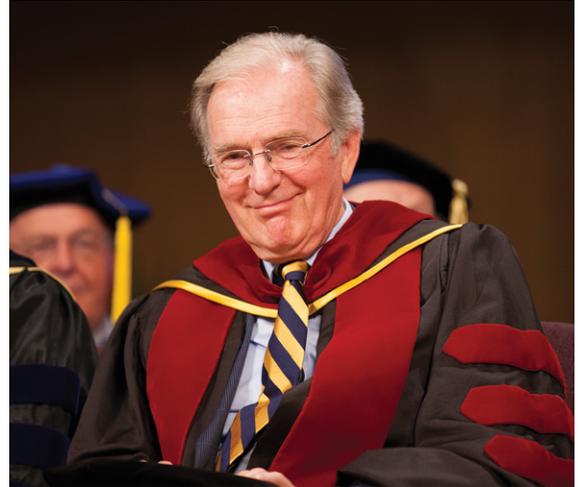
The third point was a brief description of Explore Andrews, a new initiative built to aid students who are undecided as to what area of study they wish to pursue.

“With purposeful engagement, these students will utilize mentors to help them bring various credits, values and interests into an educational plan that will lead them in a timely progression toward graduation in four years,” he explained.

Fourthly, Andreasen addressed the fact that Andrews is a residential campus in an environment where more and more universities—even Adventist universities—are becoming community based. Last year nearly 50 percent of Andrews’ students were community students, and this statistic holds true around the world.

“We are told that small rural religious colleges are at risk,” said Andreasen. “Some have closed, but those that survive have become important destinations for residential students. That’s what we have to do.”

Andreasen posits that what makes Andrews a destination are its distinctive religious character—even to some parents



Above top: At this year’s University Convocation, President Andreasen listens to a tribute from his son Michael Andreasen, vice president for Advancement, University of Oregon, congratulating him on 20 years of presidency at Andrews  
Above bottom: Desserts at the reception following Convocation were festooned with a tiny Danish flag in honor of the president

who are not members of the Adventist church—student life, diversity and relief from the bustle of a large city. And Andrews should build on these.

“I intend to make this University a destination for everyone who wants to learn how to live in a wholesome, safe and clean environment,” he said. “It would be a mistake to think of the proposed health and wellness initiative as an exchange of one educational objective with another. Rather, it is to provide our students, faculty, staff and community with the tools to secure life in every way: physical, mental, spiritual and social.”

Andreasen concluded, “I am confident that Andrews will have a very good and very promising future if we plan strategically and keep this plan in mind as we move forward.”