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Stephen L. and Connie J. Ferguson International Center Groundbreaking
Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie
President, Indiana University
Shreve Auditorium, Global and International Studies Building
Wednesday, March 4, 2020
10:00 a.m.

1. BUILDING BRIDGES OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

In his final State of the Union Address in 1960, President Dwight Eisenhower said, “A ...nation can for a time, without noticeable damage to itself, pursue a course of self-indulgence, making its single goal the material ease and comfort of its own citizens—thus repudiating its own spiritual and material stake in a peaceful and prosperous society of nations. But,” Eisenhower continued, “the enmities it will incur, the isolation into which it will descend, and the internal moral and physical softness that will be engendered, will, in the long term, bring it to disaster.”¹

Indiana University has been deeply committed for well over a century to building bridges of international understanding and cooperation that have helped, and which will continue to help to prevent the kind of disaster President Eisenhower warned about.

This very commitment, in fact, led to the establishment of this school, the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies. This commitment also brings us here today, as IU continues to celebrate its Bicentennial Year, during which the university has honored its longstanding traditions of international engagement, as we break ground for a new center that will superbly complement the Hamilton Lugar School’s mission and contribute further to the fostering of international understanding and

¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, delivered January 7, 1960, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Web, Accessed February 27, 2020, URL: https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/file/1960_state_of_the_union.pdf,

cooperation. And this will be the Indiana University Stephen L. and Connie J. Ferguson International Center.

2. CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Of all that comprises an IU education, international understanding and engagement rank at the very top. The world in which our students will live will require more, not less, knowledge about the world. Two of the primary ways we seek to impart these vital skills are, of course, by increasing the number of IU undergraduate students who study abroad and by welcoming a large and diverse international student body.

For many undergraduates, their time studying abroad is also their first time travelling abroad, so not only are they acquiring global understanding and literacy, they are also learning the skills of, and gaining confidence in, living, working, and travelling internationally. This experience can also play a vital role in their future careers, as business, industry, and organizations around the world put a premium on employees who have experience working internationally and in a team environment with people from different countries and cultures.

IU's long tradition of study abroad dates back to the historic European "summer tramps" of the 1880s and early 1890s, which were among the first—if not the very first—overseas studies programs in the United States. IU is also home to some of the oldest continually operating study abroad programs in the nation, including our partnerships in Bologna, Italy, and Madrid, Spain, both of which recently celebrated their 50th anniversaries, which I had the great pleasure of attending.

Today, more than a third of IU Bloomington students study abroad before graduation. IU Bloomington ranks sixth in the nation, out of around 1,000 colleges and universities, in terms of the number of students who study abroad. The campus is also ranked third in the nation in the number of students who participate in semester-length study abroad

programs, which offer greater opportunity for students to become immersed in the languages and cultures of their host countries. And study abroad is an increasingly popular choice by students on other IU campuses.

During the university's earliest years, an IU education was accessible only to those who could journey by foot or on horseback to Bloomington. But, within a few years, the growing university attracted its first international students, who came from Canada and England in the mid-1800s, and from Japan and China in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Today, Indiana University is home to one of the nation's largest and most diverse international student bodies of more than 7,600 students across all campuses, who come from 147 countries. We warmly welcome all our international students and value them for the diversity in thought and culture they bring to our campuses, and for the window they provide into their own countries and cultures. They enrich our campuses and the communities we serve. In a very real sense, they bring the world to IU.

3. THE FERGUSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER

The Ferguson International Center will enable us to more effectively serve the thousands of IU Bloomington students who study abroad each year as well as the thousands of international students here on IU's flagship campus. And, for the first time, it will bring together the IU staff members from various locations across campus who do an outstanding job of supporting these communities, as well as other staff members who support additional aspects of IU's international engagement mission.

It will also provide space for meetings and other functions by the roughly 100 formal and informal internationally-focused student organizations on the Bloomington campus. And it will serve as a venue for welcoming the many international visitors and delegations who regularly visit IU.

The new center, located strategically just across Jordan Avenue from the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, where we are gathered today, will, together with this building, as I noted before, compose the very heart of IU's international programs, activities, and services. It will result in new synergies and efficiencies and provide important new opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between programs and services in both buildings.

This model will be unique in the Big Ten and one of the few of its kind in the United States.

International engagement presently faces some difficult challenges, not the least being the coronavirus.

But, as with how we responded to the recession in 2008, this is precisely the time to show our confidence in, and optimism about, the continued growth and success of IU's international engagement as the present challenges are surmounted.

4. SPECIAL THANKS

There are many people to whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude for helping us reach this day, and in thanking them, we must begin with the namesakes of the international center, Steve and Connie Ferguson.

Their generous gift of \$5 million will help fund the construction of the center, and, in recognition of their many years of dedicated service to Indiana University, the center is being named in their honor by approval of the IU Board of Trustees.

Connie, who, unfortunately, could not be with us today, is an active member of the Women's Philanthropy Leadership Council of the IU Foundation.

Locally, many of us know Steve for his high-profile leadership at Cook, Incorporated, and for his successes in the revitalization and restoration of the region's landmark structures. But his efforts and his influence extend much further. He has, for example, served as a member of the Indiana General Assembly, as chair of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, and as a member of the Governor's Task Force on College Affordability.

Steve is an alumnus of IU's Maurer School of Law, a member of the school's Academy of Law Alumni Fellows, and the recipient of an honorary IU doctoral degree, which I had the great honor of conferring on him at IU's 2018 Commencement.

He also, of course, served for a dozen years on the IU Board of Trustees, including two consecutive terms as chair of the Board. In fact, I cannot help but note that he was chair of the board when I was appointed IU president. He also helped lead the effort, in late 2005, to restructure IU's central administration, including the creation of the position of provost. And he was an early and enthusiastic supporter of the establishment of the Hamilton Lugar School.

Steve also played an important role in the founding of IU's Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering, and was one of the inaugural members of the school's Board of Advisors. He also chaired the IU Bloomington Engineering Advocacy and Advisory Board, and his work in that role was vital to the successful establishment of the degree program in intelligent systems engineering in the school to finally bring engineering to IU Bloomington after nearly 200 years.

Connie and Steve have also been generous philanthropic supporters of dozens of programs and initiatives across the university for more than 40 years.

So, on behalf of Indiana University, I want to offer our most sincere thanks once again to Connie and Steve Ferguson for their dedicated service to the university, and their

willingness to support this much-needed center through their extraordinarily generous gift.

Steve and Connie's generosity has inspired many other alumni and friends to lend their support to the international center, including Jane and Jay Jorgensen, Jim and Joyce Grandorf, Kathryn Shih and Susan Co, and the senior staff of IU's Office of the Vice President for International Affairs. I believe the Grandorfs and Jane Jorgensen are with us today. Could I ask them to stand, and would you join me in expressing our thanks to them with a round of applause?

The splendid design for the new center has been created by the renowned architect Thomas Phifer, of Thomas Phifer and Partners. Neither he nor his colleagues could be with us today, but we express our thanks to him for this magnificent design, and to all of the design and construction professionals, both internal and external, who are helping make the center a reality.

I also want to commend and congratulate Vice President for International Affairs Hannah Buxbaum, and her staff, including all those who will occupy the new center, and who are contributing to its establishment.

5. CONCLUSION

In his farewell speech to the nation in 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower, whom I quoted earlier, said: "Down the long lane of the history yet to be written, America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect."²

² Dwight D. Eisenhower, Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People, delivered January 17, 1961, Web, Accessed February 29, 2020, URL: https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/file/farewell_address.pdf.

America's great public universities, like Indiana University, play a vital and central role in helping to foster this spirit of international trust and respect. The Ferguson International Center will be at the forefront of Indiana University's effort to expand and strengthen this spirit in the university's third century.