Founders Day Remarks
Dr. Joe McLaughlin, Chair, Faculty Senate
February 19, 2010

Esteemed colleagues and friends, it is my honor and pleasure on Founder’s Day to spend a few minutes talking with you about significant faculty achievement at Ohio University. It is a great trust to be asked to represent over a thousand extraordinary, hard working, intelligent, and creative individuals on our main campus and five regional campuses. From the dozens, indeed hundreds, of possibilities I could have chosen, I can only highlight a select few whose accomplishments have to stand in for the rich diversity of faculty endeavor of our faculty. It is this diversity that I wish to truly emphasize today.

As a scholar of the nineteenth century, I take very seriously the definition offered by John Henry Newman in the first sentence of his classic work, The Idea of a University, “That it is a place of teaching universal knowledge.” However demanding and seemingly impossible this aspiration may appear, especially in an age of diminishing resources, I am here to tell you that the faculty of Ohio University are doing their utmost collectively and individually to realize this dream.

Faculty like my colleague associate professor of English Andrew Escobedo, winner of the 2009 James Holly Hanford Prize from the Milton Society of America for the best essay published on Milton in 2008 by the Milton Society of America. Andrew’s article “Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels”, published in English Literary History will be a cornerstone of the book on personification and the will in Renaissance literature that he is completing this year at the National Humanities Center where he holds a prestigious year-long fellowship.

Today, I also celebrate faculty like Dr. Guofang Wan from the College of Education who, this weekend, is receiving the Lindsey Award for Distinguished Research in Teacher Education from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education at their annual meeting in Atlanta Georgia. For more than ten years, Dr. Wan has advocated for media literacy education, conducting research that explores effective strategies to improve the education of diverse student populations. Dr. Wan’s research has been translated into practice as curriculum, children’s literature, textbooks for teacher education programs, professional development workshops, and collaboration with local schools and international researchers.

On this Founder’s Day, international scholarship and education is something I especially want to foreground, echoing Newman’s insistence that the University is a “place of teaching universal knowledge.” We are a richer University because of faculty like Yusuf Kalyango, assistant professor of Journalism, who directs the Institute for International Journalism. In that capacity, Professor Kalyango has helped bring a wide variety of international journalists to campus, making students and faculty members aware of pressing issues and concerns in other parts of the world.

We are also a globally engaged university, as can be seen in the activities of Dr. Dave Drozek from our College of Osteopathic Medicine, who is organizing teams of physicians to go to Haiti.
Finally, our activities are no less important in our own backyard. We need to celebrate the achievements of faculty like Dr. Kenneth Breidenbaugh, an assistant professor of Comparative Arts, Art History, and Theater on the Chillicothe campus, who this past fall celebrated the offering of his 50th production while at OUC, an original play written and produced by himself. Dr. Breidenbaugh’s work, as recognized by colleagues who brought it to my attention, is crucial to the task of cultural development so central to our teaching and scholarly mission to the people of Southeast Ohio.

It would take more than a single Founder’s Day to properly recognize the outstanding research, creative activity, and teaching being performed by our Faculty. Along with honoring the exemplary faculty I have mentioned today, I know you will join me in recognizing the many on our campuses who are “all above average” and who labor passionately in and out of the spotlight.