Good Morning, Happy New Year and Welcome Back.

Let me thank Dr. Garnes for accepting our challenge to address you during our winter convocation. I await his message.

Elizabeth City State University is the diamond in the rough for northeastern North Carolina and the Hampton Roads area. You the faculty and staff have polished this gem over the last decade. We are determined, with your assistance, to take this nugget to the finest pearl one would desire. We are very aware of the mission of this great university and I quote, “Elizabeth City State University, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, offers baccalaureate, graduate and professional programs for a diverse student body. The institution’s rich heritage provides a firm foundation for its educational endeavors, as well as its role in serving the needs and aspirations of individuals and society.

Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Elizabeth City State University provides a student-centered environment, delivered in a manner that enhances student learning, while preparing its graduates for leadership roles and lifelong learning. The university is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region.”

I am convinced that together we can accomplish our goals. This university has always provided a quality service in all domains.
We are embarking upon a new era in the UNC system with President Tom Ross at the helm. As we collaborated on December 17, 2010, he asked me to convey to you his eagerness to meet each of you and his appreciation for the work you do for the citizens of North Carolina. I assured him of your dedication and hard work in making a difference in northeastern North Carolina.

As we launch into a new calendar year, I encourage each of us to brace for a rough, turbulent journey as we navigate through these economic times. It is no secret that North Carolina and the United States of America are facing some challenging times; however, we will maintain the integrity of the duties and responsibilities that we have been assigned.

It is and always will be our goal to provide quality and superior service to our public. The employees of this great university have made a positive impact in the past and will continue to be a part of the solution of the great “come back.” Former Chancellor Marion Thorpe wrote in 1978, “We must be determined to continue to find the correct way in a world of conflicting ideologies, economic strife and social controversy. This is the vision that flows from Hugh Cale, bringing with it past thoughts and deeds of other great people on whose shoulders we stand, gaining the fortitude to weather these times and to enter a new era.” I am grateful to be able to reflect on those wise persons who were able to navigate through the difficult times of the past. We can and will continue on our path of success.

Let me focus for a few minutes on some of our accomplishments during the first semester:

- Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement (official on January 5, 2011)
- Accreditation of ATMAE (Dept. of Engineering and Technology, October 2010)
- Accreditation of AACSB (official January 5, 2011)
Pharmacy Complex Move-In (August 2010)

Viking Patrol (November 2010)

Air Viking One arrival (October 2010)

SACS Accreditation Focus Report and QEP submitted (November 2010)

Renewing of our MODEL Scholars Program

Breaking ground for the new School of Education and Psychology facility

Successful Winter Commencement; and,

Successful State Employees Combined Campaign.

I encourage each of you to continue on a path that will cause students to have a desire to be at ECSU.

Enrollment growth is great; however, not as great as student retention. There has been a shift in the UNC System. Our funding is based on retention. Each person must take on the challenge of creating an atmosphere that is conducive to student satisfaction. At times, we must be willing to spend additional time knowing that our destiny is in our hands.

I am of the opinion of Dr. Walter Ridley as he wrote in 1962, and I quote, “I trust you will find our way toward your goals as a contributing member of our society with skills in your work, happiness in your living, love shared with others, faith in God and your fellow man and character built on integrity.” Dr. Ridley made it clear, we must continue our focus on student achievement. I encourage you to use data gathered from our Institutional Assessment and Planning department to chart your path of success. In other words, use data in planning for success.

We are determined together that we will elevate higher and emerge stronger.
As we give our undivided attention to the second semester, I ask that each of you take upon yourself to individually focus on taking your situation to another level collectively. The university will continue to prosper. Remember, each of us represents a domino with only a fraction of an inch apart. If one should tumble, the entire pyramid may be destroyed. In other words, the sum is no greater than the value of each individual part. Therefore, accountability must be valued by all.

The payroll project and its guidelines must be adhered to without blemish. If we fail to follow outlined procedures, persons will not receive compensation until the following pay period. It is strongly advised that each manager develop an additional process as a reminder of deadlines.

SACS reaffirmation is upon us. We are almost ready for our visiting team. Dr. Flora Brown and the sub-chairs may need some additional information and assistance, and your cooperation is expected. All of you have done extensive work in providing needed information. Again, I thank you for accepting and carrying out the challenge of meeting this task.

Student retention is vital as we think about budgets and funding for higher education in North Carolina. If we are to continue on a growth pattern, we must meet our retention goals. It will take a collective effort to graduate our students in a 4 – 6 year manner based on selected curriculum. Office hours and strong recommendations toward assistance will warrant your involvement. Attendance checks and following through with enrollment management are important. Remember, without students or a decrease in enrollment, which may impact retention, will be detrimental in our funding source.

As you may recall, quality customer service was a main goal for the year. We have made progress; however, much is desired. Let us continue to respect each other, the students and the
public. This may not in some cases be the easiest task; however, it is our responsibility to maintain our professionalism at all times.

Please focus now on a few visuals created:

No. 1 – Always approach each day with our Mission Statement as your guide:

Mission Statement

• Elizabeth City State University, a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, offers baccalaureate, graduate, and professional programs for a diverse student body. The institution's rich heritage provides a firm foundation for its educational endeavors, as well as its role in serving the needs and aspirations of individuals and society.

• Through teaching, research, and community engagement, Elizabeth City State University provides a student-centered environment, delivered in a manner that enhances student learning, while preparing its graduates for leadership roles and lifelong learning. The university is also a leader in facilitating sustainable economic growth, while safeguarding the unique culture and natural resources of the region.

No. 2 – Remember that Retention is extremely important to the continued success of our university. The second slide lists our University Peers and the most recent data regarding retention.
No. 3 – Without a successful retention rate, we could become the ghost town:
No. 4 – Keeping the mission, vision and goals before us will help us to become “the place where everyone wants to attend.”

No. 5 – As we move forward to a successful SACS reaffirmation; let us keep in mind our Quality Enhancement Plan – Think! Write! Revolutionize!
Finally, as it is written, our school song:

To thee Dear Alma Mater,
A tribute song we sing,
Of thy true worth to all of us
O may we honor bring.

Hail to thy lovely halls, ECSU
We'll hear when duty calls, ECSU
Faithful and ever true, we'll be to you.
For in our hearts, we'll still love thee ECSU.

So now we'll join together
For thee O State to work
Let none of us be faint at heart
Nor any duty shirk.

Hail to thy lovely halls, ECSU
We'll hear when duty calls, ECSU
Faithful and ever true, we'll be to you.
For in our hearts, we'll still love thee ECSU.