

**Presentation of Dr. Gary M. Grossman, Chair, Arizona Faculties Council  
To the Arizona Board of Regents, February 18, 2011**

This meeting has entertained many issues that we have spoken about and some issues that we have spoken around and, given the magnitude of those issues before us, I would like to take my time today to speak candidly about some things. Part of it is, I suppose, is age, in that, as I get older, I see less reason not to speak candidly. But, perhaps more importantly, the kinds of challenges that we are dealing with are of such consequence, of such magnitude, the clarity with which we approach them is of greatest importance. I believe it is time for such clarity.

I thought it was interesting that Chair Mariucci began our meeting with a reference to a point that was most transformative for me and I wanted to share that with the Board. It refers to the events of January 8, 2011. On that day, I was in Ankara, Turkey on some business and, late that night Ankara time, I was reading the news and I saw the headline that said "Arizona Congresswoman Clinging to Life". I knew that could only be Gabby Giffords. I opened the story and read of the attempted assassination of our very promising member of Congress and the death of six people whose only "crime" was their desire to see their member of Congress or aides whose job it is to support her in speaking to her constituency. This was personal to me in a lot of ways in that I have been on both sides of that divide at different points in my career. In the Ankara night, I let out an audible expression of shock. I hope I didn't wake any of my neighbors in the hotel. But I had a hard time sleeping that night and stayed up reading everything that I could on the internet. I was utterly aghast.

The next morning, a Turkish friend of mine of many years who has been to the United States quite a lot and has been to Arizona, said "Gary, I read the news about Arizona. What is wrong with you people in Arizona?". One of the things that I love about working with people whose second language is English is that they often do not have the language skills for nuance or tact. They say what they think. "What's wrong with you people in Arizona?" is what he wanted to know. I responded "This is just a crazy guy." "But, wait a minute," he said, "you also don't like Mexican people in Arizona! Why?" "Well, the immigration issue is very complex ", I try to explain and he cuts me off. "No! There is something wrong with you people in Arizona!" So, I began to wonder what is, indeed, wrong with us. I don't know. Why, in the midst of one of the most significant budget crises that the state of Arizona has ever faced, at least in my memory and I go back some, do we have to focus on ridiculous and dangerous issues of the proliferation of guns on campus? We are not talking about just one bill. There are four or five bills like this in the ABOR legislative packet. Certainly, there is enough political skill around this table to understand how wedge issues work and it may well be that this is an effort is to distract us from the crucial point that, soon, many of the services that we have in this state will no longer work very well. Perhaps somebody wants to have us worry about people trying to take our Second Amendment rights away instead of what really matters. What really matters is that the state is preparing to renege on many of its commitments to its citizens. The point is, we have to focus on guns, when what I consider to be the best thing the state of Arizona does, higher education and its great

universities, is at grave risk. In a context in which we view as a FAVORABLE scenario, such as the Governor's budget proposal, the result is that we are put us at 1963 per student funding levels, we have to defend ourselves against a threat to everything we hold dear. We are dealing here with matters of survival. We are dealing with matters of survival regarding everything we are trying to accomplish for Arizona's citizens, and even, apparently, our very lives.

Now, in looking at "what is wrong with us in Arizona", we have to understand that there is a narrative going on worldwide about us. We would all agree, there are many great things about Arizona. But I think we have to take account of what others our saying. Some of us, I think, are old enough to remember the narrative that Mississippi had to endure in the early 60's. I am sure that there were many wonderful people in Mississippi, there were many wonderful things about Mississippi back then, but what we knew and remember to this day is the Mississippi of the Klan, of racism, of persecution, of ignorance and of poverty. This is the narrative carried the day then and is what we remember of that period now. I am concerned how people around the nation and the world see us and how that will affect us. And what may be an interesting sidelight given some of our more recent K-12 educational outcomes, is that we are approaching Mississippi levels in terms of our educational product. So, "Expect More Arizona", as the organization of that name asks for? Really? Maybe the more accurate phrase for us now is, "Welcome to Mississippi".

In going back many years in Arizona, when I was a kid and very interested in things political, when Mississippi was struggling in the 1960s, there were giants here in Arizona. Hayden, Goldwater, John Rhodes, the Udall brothers. More recently, Bruce Babbitt, Burton Barr, Bill Hart, Dennis DeConcini. I wondered, if Barry were here today, what would he say? "What what would Barry do?", if you will. Well, we might have to clean it up, edit it just a bit, for PG listening, but I don't sense that he would be very pleased; I don't think he would be very complimentary.

So, what do we need here? One thing we need from the Arizona Board of Regents is we need **protection**. We have a jewel here in the Arizona higher education system. Do we want to see it trashed, really? Our lives are at risk with regarding to guns but it is essentially the same issue on the budget front. We need the giants to step up. We need support for those things that we know to be of value, and that includes both our lives and our university system. We need **leadership**. The giants of Arizona need not be, in fact, cannot be, a thing of the past. We need them today. One of the things that Martin Luther King said is that leadership is not about simply identifying a consensus; it is about creating consensus. I think we have this chance, this one possibly final opportunity. The people of Egypt just brought down one of the most repressive regimes on the planet that held absolute power over decades. They brought it down, just with their ideas. It seems to me that if they can stare down Hosni Mubarak, we can respond effectively to the people who threaten us about the things of critical, and I do mean critical, importance. It is only through that level of moral courage that the kinds of things that we imagine Arizona to be and our citizens very much need, will become a reality.

We need **protection**; we need **advocacy**; we need **leadership**, like never before. We need the giants to show up. Thank you.