Welcome to the Inauguration of President Beth Paul

On behalf of the faculty of Capital University, I am honored to welcome you to the inauguration of our 16th president. 164 years ago this university had its opening dedication ceremony, one might say its initial inauguration. The speaker was William Henry Seward, U.S. Senator from New York and later Secretary of State under President Lincoln.

It was an auspicious beginning for this new university. Seward’s topic was “The Destiny of America,” and he claimed that Capital had an important role to play. Universities, Seward stated, hold a chief place among the institutions of the American Republic. They train its leaders and thus shape its people. . . . Universities must be conservative in holding fast to moral principles but bold in confronting failures in practice. For him this bold conservatism included challenging slavery as well as the mistreatment of immigrants and religious minorities, issues still relevant.

As for this fledging university he was helping inaugurate, Seward presented quite a vision, one that I believe our new president embraces. Let Capital University be dedicated, he stated, not just to our city, state or country, but to the cause of Human Nature. He envisioned us having more than an individual or even national perspective but a global one.

Capital University’s mission is to transform lives through higher education. And in doing this we, like Seward suggested, also aspire to help transform our society and our world. We look with hope to our new president, Dr. Beth Paul, for leadership in this cause. And so we welcome you to the inauguration of a president and a vision.