CONFERENCE SPEECH

FOR

ANITA INGRAM

Hello everyone and welcome to the 2014 Annual conference for URMIA!! (**If there is anyone in particular you want to acknowledge/thank, do that here**). (**If you want to break the ice a little, you can say**) I guess you’ve heard that if you see me standing before you at a podium today, it’s probably time for me to give my formal “farewell” speech. As President of URMIA for the past year, I’ve been blessed with support and encouragement from everyone and in particular \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who was so helpful with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who always made sure \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and of course \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It’s been said that a risk manager is only as good as those that manage **her,** and I have to say if that’s the case, I’ve grateful for my dream team!! I thank all of you for your enthusiasm, devotion, and wisdom.

It’s thrilling to see so many of you here with us today… Imagine…the seeds of this organization came together forty-eight years ago with just a handful of people (comparably speaking) dedicated to strengthening the backbones of our nation’s colleges and universities. This group was founded as an offset to the cultural revolution that was about to open everyone’s eyes as a new way of life was being formed, and in a time span of two generations, our community and outreach have grown geometrically!! Forty years ago, the pioneers of risk management amounted to a handful. By 1970, the organization’s roster had more than doubled to include over one hundred fifty members dedicated to investing in and protecting the foundations of higher education. I’m proud to report that our current membership exceeds \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and our trajectory is growing!! Ten years ago in 2004, we were thrilled to have over 200 in attendance at the annual conference, and this year, we are honored and encouraged to welcome over **700** colleagues, vendors, and supporters of this vital organization. What is particularly encouraging is that as we explore the **depth** of our outreach and programs, we are also expanding the **breadth** of our scope. It is a particular thrill to welcome our international partners to this conference, and we are so pleased to extend our hospitality as we exchange ideas with those of you that have traveled from places like Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada, as well as from all over the United States. If there is anything we’ve all learned in this era of ramped up communication, it’s that while the world seems to have gotten smaller and smaller through connectivity, the opportunity and demand for innovation in university risk management has grown exponentially. Every day we learn of situations and potential threats to our daily existence. The world seems to be spinning faster and faster, volumes of information rush past us with unprecedented speed, and battles are won and lost in moments-but what that means is we have to strengthen our community, share ideas and innovations, and work together to invest in those that will inherit the future. It no longer works to maintain a passive roll in university risk management. The stakes are growing and each one of us has been mandated to stay on top of the trends and information that will support our mutual goals well into the future.

In the past year we have acknowledged our strengths and identified the areas primed for growth. The Board of Directors met several times with the intention of looking at the ways in which we can build up our resources and modernize our mission to inspire the work that needs to be done in this new era. As we worked on rewriting our values statement, we really studied our “climate” in order to prepare for the “what if’s of life with regard to risk management. I am pleased to present our new values statement:

**URMIA is pledged to the advancement of higher education risk management and the professional growth of our members. Our conduct is guided by the highest ethical standards. All interactions are characterized by trust, accessibility, diversity, innovation and camaraderie**

We’ve also worked to review and reduce redundancy, offer more programs and workshops to support our members in keeping up to date with the most relevant information, and of course we continued to develop additional resources to make the URMIA network more user friendly and informative. I hope each one of you has taken advantage of the webinars and tip sheets that are offered!

We also have been working on the two-year strategic plan for 2014-2016. We realize it’s vital to respect and continue to strive to meet the present needs of the membership without compromising the ability to identify and meet the needs of the future. Some of the strategic directions we have forecasted are organizational sustainability, URMIA brand awareness and outreach, and monitoring public policy involving higher education risk management. Let’s face it; it is our duty to know the best means to design sound financial planning for the institutions in which we work. Who knows better than we do about how to support this organization?! I truly believe that building a diverse and user friendly URMIA through implementing and prioritizing innovative and effective programs and services works to inform our professional responsibilities as well. I think you would all agree-from each of your own unique perspectives, that supporting a stronger URMIA is a WIN-WIN from all points of view!

It’s been said “Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.” All of us are here to improve and support the risk management systems of higher education so that in turn, in spite of the odds that seem insurmountable, our children and theirs will have greater opportunities to make a positive difference in this world. Although the past year may have been perceived as a period of “retrenchment,” I prefer to think of it as our chance to identify, address and implement the strategies that will have a more effective impact on future success and member involvement. Because of the omnipresence of technology and information overload, the good news is, as we all know, there’s TONS of content floating in front of our faces at any given moment of the day. It is our job to dig further, refine the data, and use it to achieve our individual and mutual goals.

And speaking of identifying and honing the process, in the never ending quest for the refinement-in every sense of the word, understanding and increased impact on the university risk management community, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our incoming president. Our next president is someone with a very impressive CV, one that informs us that she has extensive experience in the corporate world in both the business and underwriting sectors as well possessing enviable skills and insights in her duties in risk management at Yale, I am sure that Marjorie Lemmon will be an active, intuitive, and inspiring president. She is a member of the Joint Health and Safety Committee, the University Safety Committee, the Background Check Committee, the Traffic Safety Committee, and the Workers' Compensation Credentialing Committee. She is also a member of the State of Connecticut Insurance and Risk Management Board and a member of the Board of Directors of the University Risk Management and Insurance Association, and it is a privilege to pass the gavel to this accomplished, intelligent, and dedicated person.

Before I step down, I want all of you too know that it has been my privilege to serve you and this organization. I have learned valuable lessons with every task and challenge that has been presented and I am very thankful for all of the support and encouragement I received along the way. Marjorie, before I hand you this (**if it’s not there say**) “virtual gavel,” I want to congratulate you and let you know that I look forward to great success and growth for URMIA and all of our members and partners in the coming year. Thank you all!