

President's Remarks
Fellows Day, Sept. 23, 2006

Welcome home!

I used those same words to welcome the class of 2010 just a few weeks ago. For those of us who still think the turn of the century was 1900, doesn't that sound impossible -- Class of 2010. 2010 may seem to be a long way off, but its graduating seniors are already here, our newest students, now only about 1,000 class days from commencement.

Move-in Day is our "New Year's Eve" as students and families fill the streets. Their cars are loaded -- over-loaded -- with today's "essentials" of campus life: TV, DVD player, personal computer or laptop, i-Pod and speakers. I even saw a few lava lamps!

As Lisette and I helped to carry boxes to the rooms, I could see the anxiety, the nerves, the emotion in their eyes -- and I'm talking about the parents. But upperclass orientation leaders and residence hall advisors quickly swept new students into the current of campus life. A new year has begun.

Today's students are often referred to as the "connected generation." They have many ways to connect with the world. Each has created his or her own personal soundtrack for their college days by downloading favorite songs from the Internet to their i-Pods. No more record players with a stack of 45s!

The students all have a cell phone -- for taking photos whenever they want, for text messaging their friends, and some of them even use them to call home! They log on to Berg Mail and email their families. They are so accustomed to connecting with technology that at Convocation, I urged the members of the freshman class to have some meaningful conversations that *don't* involve typing.

I remember when -- at the turn of this century -- they used to be called the "wired generation". Well, now, there are no wires needed to stay connected. Our challenge is to connect students in a real way to the faculty, the community and to each other.

Our Student Affairs Office developed a full agenda of lively programs and social events that are designed to help connect students to each other. Just next week they will have an opportunity to hear a world-renown author on Middle East and U.S. relations who has a book on the *New York Times* best seller list; they will have the chance to see the nation's premiere modern dance company that integrates professional standing and wheelchair dancers; and they will be able to participate in the Heidelberg Helping Hands Community Service Day.

Because of an extraordinary faculty committed to teaching, learning is happening in the classroom, laboratory and studio; in the workplace at an internship, in Tiffin or at a location across the ocean while studying abroad. This year we were able to again attract a talented group of freshman, helped by Heidelberg's reputation as a "great school at a great

price." That isn't just something I am saying. It is what *U.S. News & World Report* has said. Their list of affordable quality institutions singled out Heidelberg. For the 19th consecutive year, *U.S. News* ranked Heidelberg in the top tier of the Midwest's Best Universities.

To continue that trajectory of quality, we are addressing the needs of our physical campus. A master plan has been developed and prioritized in terms of cost and impact. It will go to the Board for action next month. I can tell you today that the highest priority is the recreation and wellness complex. Also at the top of the Master Planning list is the renovation of Laird Hall, a new facility for the Department of Business and improvements to Brenneman Music Hall and our residence halls.

Beyond the infrastructure of the campus, the faculty is taking a hard look at the curriculum to be sure it is relevant to this "connected generation." Faculty and staff have implemented a new approach to freshman orientation and have revised our first-year experience program. There is also a comprehensive and intensive Student Success Initiative aimed at enhancing what our students learn, engaging them more fully in the life of the campus and ultimately improving their graduation rates.

Excellence at Heidelberg is supported by the quality and commitment of our distinguished faculty, the dedication of our staff, the spirit of our remarkable students and the loyalty of you, our alumni and friends. You have stayed connected by visiting campus, by investing in programs that support our students and by giving to the Heidelberg Fund.

I encourage you to keep in touch by reading the Alumni Bulletin, reviewing the news on our website or returning often to campus. You can also stay connected to Heidelberg by contacting your college friends. What is it they say of new and old friends? These are silver, those are gold. Well, actually they are red, orange and black

In the next 18 months, the Alumni Office has two wonderful opportunities for you to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. In April the office will host a cruise to the Western Caribbean for alumni and friends of Heidelberg. There will stops in places like Belize, Cozumel and Costa Maya. And in June 2008, Jim and Nancy Getz will be helping the Alumni Office to host an alumni and friend trip to Germany. They will be using Heidelberg, Germany, as the base of operation to visit Bavaria, the Black Forest and the Rhine River Valley. The highlight of the trip and the primary reason for being there will be a celebration of the 50th anniversary of our American Junior Year program at Heidelberg University -- the oldest and one of the most highly regarded college exchange programs of its kind in the nation. I invite you to share our pride in this outstanding program by attending the celebration in June 2008. We hope a number of you will come along as we make memories and friends on these wonderful trips.

We have asked many of you to share your memories of Heidelberg through the project we call *Sweet Alma Home: Generations of Stories, Generations of Memories*. You will hear more about that shortly from, a Heidelberg alumna and Professor Emeritus of

Communication and Theatre Arts, Dr. Leanne Wolff. I thank those of you who have already or will be participating and encourage others to do so. Your reminiscences together add up to a vivid picture of Heidelberg's past and a glimpse of its future. You inspire us with your testimonials and remind us of the difference Heidelberg made in your careers and life. Through your memories, you focus us on the core values and value of the Heidelberg experience.

The stories project is much more than a trip down memory lane. It is a way for us to identify the threads of Heidelberg that you have woven into your lives. We want to connect the past to the future, to guide the College and ground our efforts. I am grateful to all of you for helping us to remember our past as we work toward a brighter future.

We will work hard so that today's students enjoy the same strong Heidelberg experience. Thanks to each and every one of you for remaining connected to your Sweet Alma Home.