

## **University Transition, afternoon reception**

Thursday, January 29, 2009

Let me begin by first welcoming all of our guests this afternoon and say “Thank You” for taking time out of *this* day to be a part of this unique celebration. Heidelberg simply doesn’t exist without the wide network of support we receive from so many of our friends and colleagues.

Our success and longevity as an educational community rests on the spirit and ideals of collegiality, cooperation, and friendship. These are indeed the distinctive attributes, which make our work at Heidelberg and within the wider Tiffin community, so meaningful for all of us.

It is truly an honor to be with you this afternoon and to officially represent all of the current and former Heidelberg faculty, staff, students, trustees, and alumni on this historic day, January 29, 2009. It is today that we officially transition from Heidelberg College to Heidelberg University.

It’s been roughly 4 ½ years since the concept of college to university was first introduced to this community by Heidelberg’s 13<sup>th</sup> President, Dr. F. Dominic Dottavio. After numerous survey’s, consultants, campus forums, campus summit’s, board retreats, hundreds of meetings, votes taken, votes tabled, and eventually, on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, a unanimous vote by our Board of Trustees was passed to change our name...

So here we are, collectively wondering, what now??? That’s been asked a lot. Ok, we’re changing the name. What next? This prompted me to ruminate about an old Japanese proverb that I keep around my desk, which states, “Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.”

It is important to share and reflect upon that transitioning from college to university is just ONE element of our collective institutional vision, a vision that was developed within and among our community, and approved almost two years ago. With that vision comes expected action, such as what we are experiencing today. To remind you, that vision reads: “

*Heidelberg will be a welcoming, student-centered university where in-class and out-of-class learning is seamless and continuous. Both the undergraduate and graduate curriculums will effectively integrate liberal arts and professional preparation across disciplines to prepare our students to be global citizens who communicate effectively, think critically and serve thoughtfully.”*

There is a lot of action within that statement and it is indeed visionary in that we are actively striving to achieve, to the best of our ability, the compelling features of this vision.

The name change we are embracing today may better define our growing complexity as an institution. It may be more advantageous to us as we reach further beyond our borders. It may be more appealing to this generation of student. And in some circles be more prestigious.

But let me be very clear on one important issue: We will not stray from what we’ve always embraced at Heidelberg as important and distinctive. And that is an ethos of family; the importance of care and support of our students and dedicated staff; a culture of academic rigor and excellence. These are important and meaningful characteristics that have defined us for 159 years and while change is

inevitable, such as our name, our commitment to who we are and what we hope to become, remains as compelling and passionate as any moment in our long and distinguished history.

So as we advance together, as one community, toward a new era of Heidelberg, I look forward to working with each of you in embracing the extraordinary opportunities that lie ahead for this institution and the students we serve. The future is indeed bright; our vision clearly achievable. Let us together march onward and upward as we fulfill the promises of tomorrow. Thank you.