

**Heidelberg Fall 2018 Opening Convocation**  
**President's Remarks**  
**23 August 2018**

Good morning to the Class of 2022 and all transfer students! Thank you very much for making Heidelberg University your college of choice.

I extend special appreciation to our upper class students for choosing us again and returning! Thank you for your key role in our always crazy and fun *H Pinning Ceremony* this morning.

Our returning and new Faculty and Staff are the great individuals who bring their dedicated talent and passionate commitment to Heidelberg students every day. Thank you for everything that you do!

Our guest speaker this morning is distinguished Heidelberg alumna and Toledo attorney, Ms. Rebecca Erin Shope (class of 2004). I have known Ms. Shope since arriving here nine years ago. She is a smart, successful, highly engaged, helpful, and wonderful person. In a moment, she will be formally introduced. I am delighted that you are with us to share your thoughts with our students, Rebecca. Always welcome back!

To all of our students, faculty, staff and guests, I hope that everyone's summer has brought you back to campus rejuvenated and ready to go.

To our freshmen, it was great to say and wave goodbye as you departed for your *HYPE Career Ready* First Year Common Experience in Hocking Hills on Sunday afternoon. Since I was helping our daughter move back into college in New York for the next two days, I could not welcome you back on Monday evening. I was thrilled to hear that the same seven buses and vans returned safely and full. Congratulations to you and to the sophomores on a fabulous HYPE Etiquette Dinner that I attended on Sunday night and to the juniors on their successful HYPE Blitz Build for two Habitat for Humanity projects on Monday!!!

As Provost Beth Schwartz said, we are beginning our 169<sup>th</sup> year of educating young women and men in the great tradition and advancement of the Liberal Arts and Sciences and in professional education. That is what we do. Our focus is on three things. Your *Education Excellence*. Your *Student Success*. Your *Four-Year Graduation*. That is what we care about. We want you to succeed academically

and in all other ways here. We want you to be ready for your internships, service roles, jobs, graduate schools, careers, and altogether purpose-filled paths of distinctive lives. So let us go forward together and do it!

I know that our **363** new students will succeed because you all bring lots of talents, energy, diversity and accomplishments to our campus. Let me say a few words about our incoming class of **333** first-year students.

**One** new student is from Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Nebraska, and my home state Oregon (Now two!); 5% of our students are from Tiffin and Seneca County; 7% are from Heidelberg legacy families; 13% are in our Honors Program; 20% are from out-of-state; 20% competed on Scholars Days; 22% are underrepresented students; 47% are females; 53% are males; 57% are first generation college students in their families; 70% want to participate in Division III athletics; and **100%** of our incoming students are ready to succeed at Heidelberg.

Based on their high school records, prior college work and other achievements, our entering class and transfers are smart people with wide-ranging interests. The first year class high school average GPA is 3.4 and 30 students had 4.0 or higher GPAs. One student grows food in a community garden for the town homeless shelter. One freshman is a 5-sport student-athlete. Another person competed at the 4H National Skillathon Championships. We have a first year Junior Volunteer Fireman, another student founded their high school science club, and one who biked across Florida. We also have a freshman who came a long ways with great curiosity to see maple and oak trees along with corn and soybean fields for the first time. We got plenty of that for you!

We have new students from 17 states and 9 countries. Beyond the Buckeye State, Florida and Michigan combine to bring us 11% of our first year class. Including graduate and exchange programs, we are welcoming new students from Argentina, China, Columbia, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway and Spain. Wonderful!

We are delighted that all of you are here.

Following my annual habit of making a pair of additional reading suggestions on this occasion, I strongly recommend two outstanding biographies about important people whose lives and work still matter today. Both books are written by the same Pulitzer Prize winning author.

The first book is *Alexander Hamilton* (2004) by Ron Chernow. I read it a dozen years ago and then went back to it recently because this work inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway smash hit musical. In 731 brilliant pages, Chernow reintroduced the genius and passion of this orphaned immigrant to American history. He also covers Hamilton's big ego, quick temper, rash judgment, womanizing, and adulterous behavior in sharp detail. After serving and fighting under General George Washington in our Revolutionary War, Hamilton created the U.S. Treasury, the National Bank, and our country's financial system while serving in President Washington's cabinet. He wrote treaties for international trade and laws for interstate commerce. He founded the U.S. Coast Guard to defend our shores and the *New York Post* newspaper to ensure free press. Hamilton also wrote most of the essays arguing for ratification of the U.S. Constitution in *The Federalist Papers* and tried to limit slavery through the new American government structure before being shot at age 49 in a duel with Aaron Burr in 1804. Hamilton ended up on our ten dollar bill. For his efforts, Chernow won the coveted American History Book Prize. No book, no musical.

The second book is *Grant* (2017) by Ron Chernow. I read it this spring. In 959 incredible pages, this author has now produced the definitive biography on Ulysses S. Grant, the Union general who won The Civil War and then served as our 18<sup>th</sup> president for two terms (1869-1877). And again, the author does not fail in covering the warts thoroughly. Grant was below average at West Point and an alcoholic who fought to control drinking most of his life. He had to resign from the Army early in his career, failed at all other job attempts, and naively allowed and suffered tremendous corruption during his presidency. But after leading the North to victory while serving President Abraham Lincoln, Grant did more to uphold, defend and implement the 13<sup>th</sup> (to abolish slavery), the 14<sup>th</sup> (equal rights and protection of citizenship), and the 15<sup>th</sup> (right to vote) Amendments to the U.S. Constitution than any other American president from Lincoln in the 1860s to Johnson in the 1960s. He ended up on our fifty dollar bill. If you feel badly about not reading the Hamilton biography before all of the attention and craze, then check out Chernow's new one on Grant. I bet we see more about him too.

These two life stories show us again that highly imperfect individuals can accomplish great things for humanity. We are reminded to cherish and deliver the ideals of our country for all people in all settings all of the time. The fight against what is ugly and threatening matters.

To all new and returning students, get engaged and be intentional. Hang out with people different than you. Grab the *Big Opportunities* here to gain your *Life*

*Advantages.* We are a friendly place where students and their professors, advisors, and coaches can learn and grow together.

It is our privilege to have each one of you here to teach, mentor and serve in support of your academic and career aspirations. We are a better school with you here. Our shared goal is that each of you graduates successfully from Heidelberg on May 8, 2022 or sooner to continue your journey and pursue your *Life of Purpose with Distinction*.

Good luck to all of you and especially to the Class of 2022!

Thank you.