

Education Excellence and Student Success!
Staff and Faculty Fall 2015 Welcoming Address
August 18 & 20, 2015

The Berg Bell Calling

We see it. We can touch it. We feel it. And we can hear it. The bell in our campus tower is ringing loudly and calling acutely to all of us at this moment ...

“Everyone Matters ... All Students Rising!”

Our vigorous focus and passion at Heidelberg University must be on *Education Excellence* and *Student Success* now more than ever before. We need everyone ... all Staff, all Faculty, all Administration, all Trustees, all Alumni, and all who care about this great institution and its ultimate core mission of serving our students to step up more energetically, to lean in more forcefully, to care more passionately, and to deliver more effectively.

During a discussion about the “Life Ready” co-curricular program at the Board of Trustees meeting in late June, Dr. John Owen (Associate Dean and Director of the School of Music & Theatre and Director of Bands) expressed his strong support for this emerging new program by declaring “We need everyone on campus *All In* in order to achieve success on this one.”

Thank you for your leadership, John!

Yes, we need everyone “All In” now to make Heidelberg much more excellent and much more successful. We cannot stand on the sidelines and be cavalier about it!

Welcome to All

Good morning. Hearty greetings to everyone. Thank you for attending this important meeting. It is an awesome day to be a Student Prince!

Welcome to our 166th year of educating young women and young men in the Liberal Arts and Sciences and in professional education here at Heidelberg University. I know that we are ready for this noble work and its challenges this fall

because we have 1,669 years of cumulative fulltime Staff service and 711 years of cumulative fulltime Faculty service at this institution! My six years feel stronger already.

Our shared collective energy and talents must fuel high expectations.

I hope that all of you had a very nice summer. It is wonderful to see our returning Staff and Faculty colleagues. It is nice to welcome our new Staff and Faculty members who will be introduced momentarily.

I have the initial pleasure of welcoming our new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Beth Schwartz to this gathering. I love the manner in which this woman listens to learn in preparation to lead. Beth will be speaking in a few minutes.

Student-Focused Goals

We must stay pinned on the two strategic goals of *Education Excellence* and *Student Success* to advance forward immediately and forever. We need to serve our current students more successfully and we need to serve more students successfully. While we have improved our school in important ways recently, unfortunately, we are not winning enough in the marketplace. All of us must understand this point. The answer to “*Why Heidelberg?*” must be about delivering excellence and enabling success for our students. It is not about us.

Why else do we exist?

Student Value Proposition

By understanding and achieving our student-focused goals more intentionally, we define our Student Value Proposition more sharply:

Integrated learning through distinctive opportunities and personal relationships focused on education excellence and passionate about student success at an affordable cost.

Integrated. Distinctive. Personal. Excellence. Success. Affordable.

What else do we stand for?

Strategic Objectives

In this context, these three multi-year strategic objectives will guide our work now more clearly and consistently going forward:

- I. Transform the student learning and living experience
- II. Improve Heidelberg's national reputation while building the brand
- III. Grow undergraduate student enrollment

Our 1-Year Key Strategic Priorities

I would like all of us together to seize the 2015-2016 academic year in front of us. It is the most important one in the life of this institution.

This year is the most important year in the life of our institution.

Therefore, I want to emphasize the Key Strategic Priorities for the next 12 months. We must all understand and grasp these big expectations as much as possible. We must all align as best as we can on the critical need to accomplish these priorities. We must all contribute as much as we each can to achieve them.

Our seven Key Strategic Priorities for 2015-2016 are:

- Enrollment Branding Marketing & Website Growth Plan
- PlusOneAdvantage Free MBA
- Owen Academic & Career Support Center
- BlackBelt Life Ready Program Development & Implementation
- Academic Programming Revitalization & Improvement
- Academic Comprehensive Campaign for Excellence
- Great College to Work For and Attend

1. Enrollment Branding Marketing & Website Growth Plan

We need to increase our total undergraduate student enrollment now. After three years of moderate gains in our traditional headcount, we will start this fall with 30-40 fewer students than a year ago due to recruiting a smaller freshman class than planned. There are many reasons for these disappointing results and we are all responsible. Our enrollment setback is a significant challenge. We must all fix it together.

Mr. Doug Kellar, our Vice President for Enrollment Management, will provide an explanation and summary of our growth plan shortly. Our objective is to increase total enrollment by 50-75 students next fall through stronger recruitment and better retention ... and then by another 50-75 students the year after that.

I believe that the three most important factors in building enrollment are the overall reputation and value of the institution, the appeal and quality of the academic and co-curricular programs, and the integrated branding and marketing of the school and its programs. These factors must work together. For strong examples in the marketplace that provide good learning for us, please look at how Adrian College, Baldwin Wallace University, Colgate University, the University of Findlay, Gettysburg College, Southern New Hampshire University, and Tiffin University are each building their brand, programs, and enrollment successfully.

Under the leadership of our Director of Marketing & Communication Services Ms. Audrey Burkholder and her team, we will be launching new institutional branding and new program marketing in support of several student-focused value enhancing initiatives. Our new creative platform “*Change **your** view of what’s possible at Heidelberg!*” is the perfect staging for these efforts. We will also overhaul our internet and intranet websites and strengthen our social media marketing over the next 6-9 months. Doug will share more details.

2. PlusOneAdvantage Free MBA

Aim and timing matter. On the doorstep of gaining final ACBSP accreditation for our Heidelberg School of Business, I am thrilled that we have named the *Kaplanis MBA Program* in recognition of the advisory and financial support from Mr. Aris Kaplanis '74. Many of you will recall the engaging impact that Mr. Kaplanis had on our students and Faculty/Staff while serving so enthusiastically as the HSB Executive-in-Residence last October.

Aris, Dean Haseeb Ahmed, and I are convinced that our “free MBA” offer to all Heidelberg undergraduates who finish their degree in four years with any major and at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA is a strong idea. We believe that our *PlusOneAdvantage Free MBA* is a differentiating game changer in the higher education market. It is the first of our three critical student-focused value enhancing initiatives this year.

Our students are responding positively already. We have 24 fulltime MBA students enrolled this fall on campus, the largest starting count in recent years. This new cohort includes 7 graduates from last May and several other alumni who are taking advantage of our Alumni 25% MBA Scholarship offer too. Through ongoing conversations, nearly 30 current upper classmen are expressing their rising interest in this offer as well. Moreover, the Athletic Coaches are reporting high interest among prospective student athletes.

We are going to market the *PlusOneAdvantage Free MBA* aggressively and boldly going forward. We believe that this value offer will attract more freshmen, retain more sophomores, graduate more seniors on time, and build enrollment in the *Kaplanis MBA Program*. As Dr. Owen declared, we need everyone “All In!”

3. Owen Academic & Career Support Center

The second critical student-focused value enhancing initiative that everyone must be “All In” to support will be the new leadership and programming in the Owen Academic & Career Support Center. Under the consolidated direction of Interim Associate Dean of the Owen Center and Director of Graduation Support Services & Assessment Dr. Ellen Nagy, who reports directly to Provost Beth Schwartz in Academic Affairs, this team now has a much higher charge.

We are allocating more funding to add professional staffing with new tools and stronger instruments to provide greater focus on “intrusive” academic advising in order to address the urgent educational needs of our students more directly and forcefully.

With improving *Education Excellence* and *Student Success* as our overarching goals always in mind, it is imperative for Heidelberg to increase its student retention rates and student graduation rates in order to recruit larger incoming classes. Rising levels of student engagement and success, as measured by higher retention and graduation rates, are fundamentally most important to our purpose. When we accomplish these measurable outcomes more successfully, then our market demand will get stronger, our freshmen recruitment will rise, the quality of our student body mix will improve, and our total enrollment will grow.

Ellen will share an overview of the Owen ACSC Plan momentarily.

Her group will be working with all Faculty, the Academic Leadership Team, the Athletic Coaches, and other key Staff more closely than ever before. They will be very focused on coordinating with the AIM Hei First-Year Mentoring Program Faculty to orient and prepare our freshmen to succeed academically during their first semester. And as our new co-curricular program unfolds, the Owen ACSC Team will work collaboratively with that leadership team to support student career development and placement more effectively.

The Owen ACSC has my full support. I am asking everyone on campus to contribute to their efforts as much as possible.

4. BlackBelt Life Ready Program Development & Implementation

Remember when I stood alone in front of all Faculty and Staff who attended our All Employees Meeting in mid-February to explain the early version “Full Circle Value Experience” program? I do. While standing there in front, I was not alone because the Senior Leadership Team and several Faculty members were already climbing aboard and grasping a huge (albeit still vague and undefined) winning idea.

In the depth of that winter of work as we approached the February Board Meeting, I recall with admiration and appreciation the inspirational words of Dr. Bryan Smith (Associate Professor of Chemistry and Chair of the Chemistry Department) as he summarized our situation. After recounting the nominal and thus unsatisfactory effect of every other student support and enrollment building program that we had tried to implement over the past decade, Bryan said we need a “Cannonball!” He called for a “big splash of change and impact on our campus ... something with measurable value for our students.”

Thank you for your leadership, Bryan!

We have made tremendous progress on the “Cannonball.” Dean of Student Affairs Dustin Brentlinger and the 13-member “Life Ready” Program Development Team will provide their update later in this meeting. I express my deep gratitude to the 7 Faculty and 6 Staff members of this group who have been working hard for several months with Dustin and Trustee Rich Odell. Please pay close attention because this co-curricular program is our third critical student-focused value enhancing initiative this year. I think that you will be excited about it!

As that team prepares to test pilot key program elements and features with students this fall in advance of a full rollout with all freshmen next fall, we are ready to market Heidelberg's *BlackBelt Life Ready Program* ... our new co-curricular life skills program to help students develop their abilities, discover their potential, define their purpose, and distinguish themselves ... in addition to and integrated with their academic learning ... leading to their lives of purpose with distinction.

I believe that the *BlackBelt Life Ready Program* will be highly differentiating for Heidelberg. Everyone must be "All In!"

5. Academic Programming Revitalization & Improvement

I want to applaud yet again the oftentimes formidable work of the Academic Leadership Team, several Faculty department chairs, and many individual Faculty members who have prioritized, trimmed, revitalized and developed academic programs to make us better. In particular at this juncture, I would like to say how pleased I am that the School of Business is now only 100 days away from gaining ACBSP accreditation after five years of substantive change and hurdle jumping improvement under Dean Haseeb Ahmed. Cross that line!

In a few minutes, Provost Schwartz will share some of her initial thoughts since arriving on our campus at the end of June. I am extremely confident in her academic leadership. My thoughts that follow are meant to encourage Beth and all Faculty to lead us upward.

The reason why I am including the need for Academic Programming Revitalization & Improvement as a Key Strategic Priority again this year is twofold. First, this is not something to do occasionally. We must do this every year. Forever. Second, despite our academic improvement efforts, we are not doing enough right now. Although many of our academic programs are clear winners based on student demand and student outcomes, our aggregate academic products and services are not strong enough in the marketplace. Heidelberg's enrollment numbers and graduation results are the proof. We have not distinguished ourselves academically enough. I believe that we can do better.

We need to innovate, integrate and connect our curriculum much more directly to student-centered learning outcomes and to student-centered post-graduate outcomes. It seems that some of our course offerings and requirements are perhaps too stale, too fragmented, or too disconnected. I certainly hope that our academic leadership and the Faculty see much greater possibilities for our students. We

cannot be satisfied. It might be motivating and helpful to take a good hard look at that group of schools I mentioned previously to really think about opportunities.

We can strengthen our academic house and advance our academic core mission. We need to do it now.

6. Academic Comprehensive Campaign for Excellence

ACCE has always been about transforming Heidelberg academically to become a greater and more desirable institution. Since the campaign started five years ago, we have raised \$20 million in cash against that \$25 million goal. We have raised over \$30 million in planned estate gifts against that \$50 million goal. Therefore, with two years to go in this campaign, our priority this year is to raise as much of the remaining \$24.3 million toward the total \$75 million goal.

Please pause and celebrate two facts. First, we began with an ACCE goal of \$50 million in six years, which we just reached in five years. We set our sights higher three years ago. Second, we have already endowed, invested or spent over \$16.3 million of ACCE cash to fund the most important academic elements of our people, infrastructure, programs and facilities in support of our students. It will now be very exciting for Provost Schwartz to recruit a new Faculty member to fill the Dr. Susan C. Wolf Endowed Faculty Chair for the Dean of Natural Sciences.

There is more to come! I see our ACCE priorities in getting additional funds for Faculty Support & New Faculty, another Endowed Faculty Chair, Faculty/Student Research, Campus Technology, more Student Scholarships, more International Study for students, more Student Internships, and Performance Center Upgrades.

7. Great College to Work For and Attend

We have received the results of our Chronicle 2015 Great Colleges to Work For Survey. This is our sixth year of participation. Based on a tremendous comparable campus fulltime employee response rate of 70% (the rate that Chronicle uses), and based on a 54% response rate from all our fulltime and part-time employees (the rate we also look at), our aggregate survey average is 61/60% in 2015 compared to 62/61% in 2014. We are statistically unchanged.

We remain in the middle of the “Fair to Mediocre” middle category among all 281 participating schools. All employees scored our school “very good to excellent” on the Pride rating again this year. But we did not make the 2015 Honor Roll in any of the 12 great-colleges categories that recognized 86 institutions.

The good news is that the aggregate fulltime Faculty scores improved significantly for the third year in a row and the newly surveyed adjunct Faculty scores were the highest scoring employee group overall. We are definitely keeping that group in this survey going forward!

The bad news on our results is that the aggregate Administration and Professional Staff scores declined while the average ratings for both Senior Leadership and Communication declined the most compared to 2014. Ouch!

After two years of rising improvement, yes, it is disappointing to remain entrenched in the “Fair to Mediocre” category overall and to understand the most negative scoring. I must hold myself most accountable for the “Warrants Attention” results on Senior Leadership and Communication.

Now more than ever, I believe that it is very difficult to likely impossible to become a great college to attend without being a great college to work for up front. The stakes are high for all of us.

We will be sending out all of our Chronicle 2015 Survey results to the entire campus and to the Board of Trustees on Friday. I look forward to lots of constructive dialogue and to shared efforts for improving our place of work and attend in the coming months and year ahead.

My Gratitude, Pledge and Commitment

I am grateful that so many new Staff, Faculty and Trustees have joined Heidelberg in the last six years. It is exciting and encouraging to know that 43% of all Staff, 42% of all Faculty, and 41% of all Trustees are new since 2009. A lot of great people are choosing to make Heidelberg a key part of their future. That inspires me.

Please know this too. I am also grateful to the Staff, Faculty and Trustees who were already here before 2009 and who have remained here devoted to Heidelberg. A lot of great people are choosing to keep this school in their future. That is also uplifting to me.

When I suggested to all of us a year ago that our actions today will be judged 100 years from now, I meant it. But in the immediate days and months ahead, we must really concentrate on the year in front of us. It is the most important one for our students now. It is the most important one in the life and well-being of our University now.

We must remain determined to lift this glorious institution to a level of greatness that it deserves in order to improve the *Education Excellence* for our students and to deliver more *Student Success*.

Our goals are noble. They are worth fighting for to achieve. I am just one person among many at Heidelberg University. My pledge is my commitment to help us accomplish them as one team.

We must climb upward together. There is no other way to the summit.

I wish all of you an outstanding 2015-2016 academic year!

Thank you very much.

“Everyone Matters ... All Students Rising!”