

Heidelberg Fall 2016 Opening Convocation

President's Remarks

25 August 2016

Good morning. All of you looked *HYPED and Happy* getting off those eight buses from Hocking Hills on Monday night. Congratulations!

Welcome to all of our new first-year students and transfer students. I hope that you had a fabulous summer of relaxing, traveling, working, reading, packing and fun. Thank you very much for choosing Heidelberg University for your college education.

We are beginning our 167th 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 your *Education Excellence* and your *Student Success*. That is what we care about. We want you to succeed academically and in all other ways here. We want you to be ready to succeed in your internships, service roles, jobs, graduate schools, careers, and rich paths of distinctive lives.

To all of our upper class students, we are sincerely grateful for your continuing choice to attend this historic institution. We do not take your decisions for granted. It is very exciting that 77% of our freshmen from last year returned as sophomores this fall. I appreciate the leadership of our upper class students in this Opening Convocation today. Thank you!

To all of our great returning and new Faculty and Staff who bring their dedicated talent and passionate commitment to Heidelberg every day, we are grateful. Our shared purpose together is to strengthen the educational value of Heidelberg for all students. Thank you!

Our guest speaker this morning is the Honorable Mayor of Tiffin, Ohio Mr. Aaron D. Montz, who will be introduced momentarily. Mayor Montz is a 2008 graduate of Heidelberg and was featured in the A-T's *People with Passion* magazine a week ago. Given his great success as our second-term mayor, it appears that he has used his History and Political Science double major prudently.

Speaking as a voting citizen of Tiffin, Aaron, I admire and respect your strong leadership and passionate commitment to making our entire community a better place for everyone. I have appreciated working closely with you for the past seven years and I feel lucky to call you a friend. Thank you for joining us this morning. We are proud to call you a Student Prince!

Our 375 first-year students and 44 transfer students comprise a strong group of men and women with many talents and accomplishments. This total of **419** new students is also one of the largest incoming groups in school history! You bring richness, diversity, energy and intellect to our community.

Let me say a few words about our freshmen.

One new student is from my home state of Oregon (Go Ducks and Beavers!); 4% of the students are from Tiffin; 10% are from Heidelberg legacy families; 14% are in our Honors Program; 18% competed for Scholars Day awards; 19% are from out-of-state; 21% are minority students; 46% are first generation college students in their families (Awesome!); 46% are females; 54% are males; 68% want to participate in Division III athletics (New men and women's lacrosse teams!); and **100%** of our incoming students are ready to succeed at Heidelberg.

Our entering class is a smart one. The average GPA is the highest in the past 13 years. We have 43 students who achieved perfect 4.0 or above GPAs in high school! The average ACT composite score is only slightly below last year's freshman class all-time school record.

All of our first-year and transfer students are caring and engaging individuals. One of them saved his little sister's life by donating bone marrow to her as a child when she had cancer. Another student created something called "Fourth Friday" in her hometown to increase small business revenue in that town's art district. And one individual won a hometown scholarship award in journalism and creative writing to pursue a career as a screen writer for films or TV.

We have a Scholars Day student here from Japan whose parents and aunt attended Heidelberg. We have another new student whose parents and grandparents all attended Heidelberg. Interesting students meet interesting students here, and sometimes the rest is family history.

One of our new students is a self-trained musician from Arizona who plays five instruments and plans to study Natural Sciences and Pre-Vet. Another student will be commuting nearly an hour each day from home to discover their academic passions and career interests.

We have incoming students from 19 states, including 30 from Michigan. And we are honored to welcome students from Mexico, Libya, Taiwan, China and Germany. Wonderful!

So to all new students, please follow the strong advice of Provost Schwartz. Get engaged. Make choices. Be intentional. Take full advantage of your exciting curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular opportunities here. Our campus has a warm and friendly spirit where students and their professors, advisors and coaches can connect with each other in meaningful ways.

We are reading *Becoming a Learner* (2012) by Matthew L. Sanders for our AIM Hei Common Reading this fall. I finished it. I now encourage all of you to do the same and be ready for your class discussions in the middle of the semester. The author's compelling invitation is to become a lifelong learner while in college. Asking everyone around you lots of questions is a great way to do that.

Following my annual habit of making a pair of additional reading suggestions on this occasion, I strongly recommend two books that seem perhaps more appropriate today than ever before.

The first book is *The fragility of goodness* (1986) by Martha Nussbaum. Dr. Nussbaum has been a preeminent professor of philosophy, ethics and law for several decades at places like Harvard, Brown and the University of Chicago. This work talks about the role of luck and ethics in Greek tragedy, in philosophy, and by implication, in our lives. Nussbaum is a prolific writer. If you are wondering about the role of luck and ethics in American politics these days, this book would be a great read!

The second book is *The Federalist Papers* (1787-1788) by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay. These 85 essays were written anonymously (by these three men) to promote the ratification of the newly crafted United States Constitution. I suggest Papers #1 and #70 by Hamilton (to understand how the union of free government depends on the energy of the presidency and the responsibility of the people) and Papers #10 and #51 by Madison (to understand how free society depends on the multiplicity of factions, interests and liberty for all). If you are also wondering whether we have forgotten who we are in this country, this book would be a great read too!

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 already a better school with all of you here. Our shared goal is that each of you graduate successfully from Heidelberg in four years to pursue your *lives of purpose with distinction*.

It is a great day to be HYPED Student Prince Plus One!

Good luck to all of you and especially to the Class of 2020!

Thank you.