

Leading Ourselves Forward & Upward!

Faculty and Staff Fall 2016 Welcoming Address

August 18 & 23, 2016

Change. Aim. Conviction. Vigilance. Purpose. Delivery. Distinction.

Welcome to All

Greetings to everyone! It is so nice to see faculty and staff colleagues return to campus to start another school year together. It is wonderful to welcome new faculty and staff members to the Heidelberg family. In the meaningful and optimistic spirit of Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *eternal recurrence*, we become reacquainted with one another again in the days ahead.

I hope that all of you had some fun and experienced something new or old that was extraordinary for you this summer. After talking about it for at least ten years, our family highlight was a trip to Italy. Beautiful art, stunning architecture, bullet fast trains, ancient cart paths, al dente pasta, great wine, and several breathless moments locked into the time tunnel of human imagination, individual genius and elite achievements. Did I mention the pasta and wine? All of that plus two Team Italy matches in the European 2016 Championship and Brexit in the same week! Quite extraordinary and lucky for us.

As we start the school year, I would like to welcome back Drs. Julie and Marc O'Reilly after their successful sabbaticals last winter and spring. I want to congratulate again our colleagues Dr. Courtney DeMayo, Dr. Aaron Roerdink and Dr. Kristen Williams on their well-deserved promotions to associate professor with tenure! Another bravo to Dr. Trevor Bates for earning his doctorate this summer! And I say "Good luck, Ken!" to Dr. Ken Baker as he starts his 32nd and final year of teaching!

Say, if you have not been inside Gundlach Theatre since last spring, please check it out. Our theatre is refurbished with new seating, new carpeting and new painting. We also installed state-of-the-art hearing technology for our guests who need it. It looks fabulous and it will sound fabulous! An entirely new lighting system will be installed later this fall too.

Meanwhile, with a friendly smile toward my Humanities colleagues, how about a major shout out for all the great work on the Pfleiderer Center. Window wood trim painting, re-glazing, caulking, high wood repairs, and chimney masonry repairs. Thank you, Mr. Rod Morrison ... we finally did it!

HYPED

Most of you know more deeply than I the exhilaration washing over us as we begin anew each fall. To walk again side-by-side with our students, all of whom are charged up with their life's expectations and unfolding sense of purpose, is truly the incredible gift of our shared profession.

We should feel charged up and emboldened beyond expectations for ourselves as well compared to recent years. For the first time in school history, the Student Affairs Team will take about 400 students to Hocking Hills for their overnight HYPE Common Experience. They will have fun, learn and bond. We will bring all of them back to campus safely. Our students will be ready to engage on the HYPE Days and embrace what could become their signature learning experience.

The incoming first-year class of students stands presently at about 380 young men and women. If it holds, that would be the 7th largest entering class in Heidelberg history! This class is more balanced in terms of diversity and gender than in recent years and the academic credentials have ticked up slightly again. We are also expecting to welcome over 40 transfer students and nearly 30 undergraduate and graduate international students to our campus this fall. And we currently have 211 registered sophomores from last year's small class of 272 students (77%!) ... our first retention over 70% in 15 years and the second highest rate in nearly 30 years! And with 16 of our May seniors enrolled in the PlusOneAdvantage Free MBA program (triple from last year), that idea is starting to stick. Total undergraduate enrollment could reach 1,100 students this fall for only the 14th time in school history. Our enrollment is gaining pulse. We need to repeat this success forever.

We set a school record for the annual Heidelberg Fund and had 60% employee participation last year. Our total cash giving was the second highest all-time and we added several million dollars to ACCE. We secured lead cash gifts for the France Hall Restoration & Renovation project and the Student & Community Welcome Center project. Our fundraising is steady and strong. We also rolled out the new University Logo, the new Brand Guidelines, and the new Website early this summer. Our brand is heating up. We need to keep advancing.

Standing on these successes and momentum, we look ahead to many great things for our students this year. Excellent classroom opportunities, six HYPE Days, the Lichtman-Behm Genocide Awareness Week, the Patricia Adams Lecture Series, international study, community service, faculty-mentored research, new theatre, more internships, competitive athletic teams (including lacrosse), and an emerging Marching Band. We should be HYPED because our students are HYPED.

It is a great day to be a Student Prince!

Our Shared Leadership Charge

At the same time, we have challenges and issues to address. We need to understand, align and lead Heidelberg together. We need to charge forward and upward for our students and for ourselves. With our leadership in mind, I want to share seven critical points for consideration.

1. Dealing with Ambiguity ... Change

Not much in our lives is as certain, secure, guaranteed or permanent as we might all believe or want to believe. Ambiguity abounds and there is more “grey” in life than “black or white” with most things everywhere and for everyone. Most people might agree that the biggest source of concern about ambiguity is when we are faced with important changes in how we are living, in what we are doing, or in what we have in hand at the time. Merely the suggestion of change can be rattling and unnerving for many people. We all react differently. I respect these feelings.

Despite all of our individual and community anxiety, questions, concerns and fears, we must deal with the ambiguity of change in our lives effectively all of the time. That is life. It is the same for institutions like Heidelberg. Very few things in the life of our University can ever really be considered guaranteed or permanent. In fact, I believe strongly that we must always be changing some things (not everything) to make Heidelberg a better place for our students and ourselves.

Heidelberg has been dealing with ambiguity and the need for change since our founding. Given the demands, pressures and threats from the challenging higher education world around us, we need to continue changing elements of who we are, how we operate, and what we deliver to bring more value and impact to our students. Heidelberg needs more change to move forward and upward. I have confidence in our collective ability to handle it successfully.

2. What Really Matters ... Aim

Our dialogue on what really matters is therefore extremely important. We need to aim at the right things in order to change (or keep) the right things for our students and ourselves. Our overall strategic focus must remain dialed in on ensuring *student education excellence* and *student success*. What else can it be? To spur meaningful progress, we should discuss and consider four seminal questions about Heidelberg's future with greater acuity and commitment during this year. Then we need to take strong and prompt action on our answers.

First, and most importantly, what is our academic plan to deliver more distinctive, more relevant, and more sustaining student value and impact over the next five years and beyond? We need to make the Heidelberg academic whole greater than the sum of the Heidelberg academic parts by defining ourselves academically, setting sharper programming priorities, implementing with persistent excellence, delivering more consistently, and assessing all educational student outcomes. I believe that Provost Beth Schwartz, the Academic Leadership Team, and the Faculty can lead us to accomplish this now.

Second, what are the co-curricular and extra-curricular student life living, learning and leading experiences to better prepare our students for their careers and lives in a more challenging and diverse world over the next five years and beyond? We need to implement our new HYPE Program successfully. We also need a Student Affairs plan and an HR employee plan to guide us confidently to becoming a more diverse and multicultural campus community. I believe that we can strengthen our student and broader community culture with the collaborative guidance of Mr. Dustin Brentlinger and Ms. Margaret Rudolph.

Third, what are the innovative external strategic partnerships and integrated initiatives to gain higher education market preeminence over the next five years and beyond? We need to explore breakthrough ideas, cultivate unexpected strategic relationships, develop market advantageous initiatives, and implement new programs and projects aggressively. We seek partners with whom to share growth opportunities. Urgently. I believe that campus leadership and Board of Trustees leadership can do this together.

Fourth, what is our profitable and sustainable operational business model to fund our continuing transformation, improvement and growth successfully over the next five years and beyond? We need to eliminate our long-running annual operating budget deficits and establish the permanent practice of planning and delivering an annual budget surplus driven by enrollment. I believe that vice presidents Doug Kellar and Hoa Nguyen, by working collaboratively with their teams and others across campus, can lead us to do this successfully.

These are important questions. I encourage all of us to address them with forward and upward action in mind.

3. Heart of a Lion ... Conviction

If we truly want to take aim at addressing these central questions and tackle the tough issues embedded in all of them, while surrounded by ambiguity all of the time, then that will take brave hearts and roaring conviction. If “faith” is biblically described as the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen, then perhaps a community of conviction can build faith in creating the things that we want to see for our students and ourselves. We can do that.

Like a true Gryffindor at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and in the gritty spirit of the historical figure portrayed in the currently hot Broadway musical *Hamilton*, we need to work smarter and harder to advance this institution more boldly and bravely than ever before. I believe that we can do it because I believe in us.

The music, the staging, the diverse casting, the story behind the story, and the awesome genius of Lin-Manuel Miranda in bringing *Hamilton* to life is incredible, inspiring and wonderful. Having just gotten immersed in the music recently, I look forward to seeing the live show someday. It took Miranda about seven years of unbending determination and conviction to bring his original idea in 2008 through the White House in 2009 and onto Broadway last year. Awesome.

Yet for me, the story of Alexander Hamilton's life is the greater inspiration. In his outstanding biography *Alexander Hamilton* (2004), Ron Chernow described Hamilton as "the little lion." He was smart, insightful, hard-working, innovative, assertive, bold and courageous. General George Washington admired the 22-year old colonel's "brilliant courage and admirable skill" during the Revolutionary War. Hamilton went on to make numerous huge and astounding contributions to secure the founding of our country before, during and after joining Washington's presidential cabinet. Throughout his life, Hamilton's overwhelming sense of personal urgency added energy and focus to everything. And he never quit.

As a Heidelberg community, we need to embody these same Hamiltonian characteristics going forward and upward. I think that we are already smart, insightful and hard-working. That is great! But we need to become more innovative, more assertive, bolder, and more courageous. That is the heart of a lion!

4. Productive Paranoia ... Vigilance

Every lion in the jungle must stay vigilant at all times because there is always another animal that can kill it. We should worry more about the educational world around Heidelberg. We all know the threatening external facts about changing student demographics, rising tuition costs, stratified access to higher education, increased governmental expectations, higher assessment scrutiny, intensified competitive programming, and many other political, economic and social issues. Since there are no guarantees about success and no assurances against failure, especially for institutions like us that are not "rich and famous," we must stay on extra mental guard and advance forward with greater vigilance and clearer intent.

In his book *Great by Choice* (2011), Jim Collins describes how great organizations and great leadership communities embrace "productive paranoia" at all times, and especially in good times, in order to be ready when setbacks, unpredictable events, failures, and even bad luck attack. The key is to always ask ourselves "What if? What if? What if?" The answer is not to choose the safe and easy lateral path. No, that becomes the downward path. The answer is to choose the more challenging upward path, to maintain hypervigilance at all times, and to stay better prepared for everything in the jungle. We need to worry more productively to win as an institution.

5. Transforming Generations ... Purpose

One of our greatest presidents, Reverend George W. Williard, reminds us of our original purpose near the end of his Baccalaureate Address to the “Ladies and Gentlemen” in the Class of 1868:

“If you would, therefore, be a successful minister, lawyer, physician, farmer, artist, or anything else, have one grand aim before you, and bend your energies to it with the determination to succeed if it be possible. There is an almost omnipotent power in a resolute will, which yields only to what is beyond the power of man. Most of the failures that occur in life are the result of timidity, irresolution, and vacillation, whereas those who determine to succeed have most generally gained their point.”

We have always emphasized the liberal arts and professional education for our students to prepare them for the widest possible range of their chosen career and life paths while focusing on student success at all times. We have always cared about each individual student uniquely in our efforts to enrich and transform their lives. Ultimately, I believe that Heidelberg’s transformational purpose to help generations of students be successful in their lives progresses decade by decade in this manner. We transform generations one student at a time.

It is time to renew our institutional vows. For the sake of our students and ourselves, we must pursue our purpose with even more transformational impact.

6. Last Three Feet of the Sale ... Delivery

Our purpose and impact is transformational when we deliver successfully. One of the qualities or characteristics of modern higher education in this country is that so much of it has become transactional in the eyes, hands, minds and hearts of students and their families. What school, what major, what cost, what jobs, what careers, for what pay? In truth historically, that has always been the case because education has always been connected to jobs and careers. Perhaps it is more accurate to say simply that it appears to be a much more transactional student experience and relationship today than ever before. Fine.

If we stand (as always) at the transactional counter of college learning and life readiness, then we must work to elevate the transaction while holding tightly to the transformation.

One of my dearest friends ever was named Ken Kimmel. He passed away exactly one year ago due to cancer. We worked together at Dunkin' Brands for about 13 years. Ken initiated and led a tremendously successful campaign for the Dunkin' Donuts brand called "The Last Three Feet of the Sale" many years ago. It was an operational rallying call to ensure that we delivered the foodservice excellence that we were promising in our advertising and branding to our customers at every DD location in the United States. We conducted months of targeted frontline counter training and restaurant hospitality management training. Our focus was on finishing each customer transaction successfully. In addition, we made hundreds of 36-inch cubed yardsticks with leather strap handles and the delivery cues printed on the four sides. We passed them out coast-to-coast. There were moments in meetings when people would lift these sticks up like swords to declare the battle cry of delivering customer excellence. It was just a fun little tactic to reinforce something very important. It worked to improve operations and sales.

Please look around. We are seeing new victories in recruiting, retaining, graduating and placing our students. We must sustain these victories. We need to continuously sharpen the positive momentum of the Admissions Team in recruiting more new students. We need to continuously sharpen the great progress of the Owen Center in enabling our students to persist here academically. We need to continuously sharpen the excellent improvements of highly engaged Faculty in building student demand and higher graduation rates in their disciplines. We need to continuously sharpen the strong efforts of Faculty and Staff in placing students in their chosen internships, service paths, jobs and graduate programs. I would encourage all of us to relentlessly improve the delivery of sustainable value with high impact to our students ... right up to the last three feet of their educational experiences ... with every student everytime.

7. Leading Ourselves Forward and Upward ... Distinction

Why are we here? Why do we come to Heidelberg? Why do we work at Heidelberg? Why do we stay at Heidelberg? For most of us, I believe, it is about the quest for individual excellence and institutional distinction on behalf of our students. Me too. Since coming here in 2009, this quest has motivated me for several reasons having to do with our past and our future.

Like others, I came here to help fulfill the lofty educational vision, great student promise, and high-minded institutional aspiration of our founders in 1850. I bet this feeling is shared by many faculty, administrators, staff, trustees and alumni over the past 166 years. The bothersome thing, however, is that we should have become a more preeminent college a long time ago. By all standard measures of institutional reputation, academic excellence and financial well-being, we should be a much stronger institution by now. Unfortunately, our history includes some poor leadership decisions, key growth opportunities that we failed to grasp or hold onto, long stretches of organizational complacency, and perhaps not enough shared commitment to become a greater institution.

It might surprise many folks to know that we were at the vanguard of integrating liberal arts and professional education distinctively a long time ago. But leadership failed. If only President George Williard had won the day and secured a permanent academic home for our fledgling “Commerce Department” that began in 1888 ... only 7 years after the University of Pennsylvania pioneered the undergraduate idea by starting the Wharton School of Finance and Economy in 1881 and 12 years before Dartmouth College pioneered the graduate idea by launching the Tuck School MBA program in 1900. Instead, the Heidelberg Commercial College was sold off 30 years later and became the Tiffin Business University in 1918. Think about the impact of that lost academic opportunity for our students and ourselves over the past century!

There are other actions and decisions in our history that appear to have limited our success over the long run, especially in financial affairs. It seems that we sat on large cash and stock gifts back in our history. For example, I believe that we received nearly \$100,000 about one hundred years ago that could have gone into a permanent endowment. Based on reasonable investment assumptions over the century that followed, that sum could have grown to nearly \$100 million and would thus be generating nearly \$5 million for us annually today!

These things bother me in our history. I do not want us to make similar mistakes. We cannot go backwards and redress what could have, would have or should have happened. Instead, I think about fulfilling our institutional destiny in the future. Beginning with our students of today and tomorrow, and including all of the faculty, administrators, staff, trustees, alumni and friends now and in the decades ahead, we should be working forward together to take Heidelberg upward to a much stronger and loftier station in American higher education. Why not?

This vision requires real institutional distinction because the aim is high. Ultimately, real distinction means being better at many meaningful things compared to other schools. Ideally, it means being truly best at something important. It will take hard work by all of us for a long time to lead ourselves forward and upward with that in mind. But this is the right aspiration and I believe that we can reach it. And it matters to me to be a part of our school's history today such that those who follow us in 100 years are genuinely grateful for what we did to change our trajectory boldly and to succeed dramatically. I hope that this matters to all of you too.

Our Shared Leadership Imperative

Our shared leadership imperative is defined by these seven points. *Change.* We need to change some things but not everything in an ambiguous world for our students and ourselves. *Aim.* We need to aim at what really matters academically and in other ways for our students and ourselves. *Conviction.* We need brave hearts and roaring conviction for our students and ourselves. *Vigilance.* We need to worry about the educational world around us more productively and move vigilantly for our students and ourselves. *Purpose.* We need to pursue our transformational purpose with even more transformational impact for our students and ourselves. *Delivery.* We need to deliver more sustainable value with high impact at the transactional counter of college learning and life readiness for our students and ourselves. *Distinction.* And we need to lead ourselves boldly forward and upward to achieve true Heidelberg University distinction for our students and ourselves.

I hope that these thoughts are helpful. Have an outstanding school year, everyone.

Thank you.

It is an awesome day to be a *HYPED Student Prince Plus One!*