

Musings, Confessions and Declarations!
President's Fall 2018 Welcoming Address
24 August 2018

Good afternoon to everyone. This week is outstanding! We rolled out year three of our *HYPE Career Ready Program*, all students began their classes, and we pinned the first years at Opening Convocation. I am delighted to welcome new faculty and staff members to our community and to greet the return of colleagues. It is nice to be in one room.

Without fanfare and with positive intent, I would like to share some *Musings, Confessions and Declarations!* to help us think about our year ahead. I hope these aphorisms are not untimely for this occasion.

1. Transformation. Why would anyone or anything ever change itself intentionally to something other than what they are now? Why go through the difficulties, sacrifices and sometimes pain? I think most would answer because the change is worth it. With choice, do it to thrive. Go up. But sometimes there is no choice. Do it to survive. Do not go down. We should be motivated for both reasons.

big opportunities for learning and integrate everything holistically into one *purposeful* journey. We need to communicate the features *plus* benefits *plus* results of our *distinctive* educational experience. I think that we can position the Heidelberg brand successfully on the *Big Opportunities Life Advantages* platform driven by *Heidelberg Advantage Plus* messaging and aimed at the our *Life of Purpose with Distinction* promise. These are *compelling* ideas.

5. Students and Competition. The defining question for us is: Who comes to Heidelberg, especially females and non-cyber students? Who comes to Heidelberg for four years, especially males and underrepresented students? Our responses and actions should be intentionally strategic rather than tactically reactionary. We must hold to our central identity as a liberal arts and professional education institution but not become fossilized in our thinking, resourcing and programming. How do we stay anchored and become more fresh, contemporary, and relevant in fulfilling our core student mission?

6. Rise Up ... Graduation. The goal of most students in higher education should be to earn a diploma in four years or less. Why have only about 40% of all the students who enrolled at Heidelberg in the past 25 years succeeded here in four years? We are rated, ranked, evaluated and chosen on this mediocre graduation rate. I hope this bothers all of us! This measurement is the key metric for judging success or failure in fulfilling our core student mission and setting our growth trajectory. For these reasons, our number one strategic objective is to improve our four-year graduation rate significantly as soon as possible. Knowing that we cannot be everything, do everything or have everything, we have big choices to make in order to accomplish this purpose. We must evaluate and prioritize our strategic initiatives prudently. We can do it together!

7. Errors and Mistakes. I make my full share of errors and mistakes. In all cases, I do my best to learn something and then go forward more prepared and motivated to help make Heidelberg a better and stronger school. Looking back, I realize that with sharper insight from others, *HYPE Career Ready* is much better! I believe I have also failed to ask enough of the right questions in certain key situations. In reflecting overall, I regret that some of my criticism of major turning points in Heidelberg's storied history has been harsh at times. All of our work is hard all of the time.

powerful and inspiring. It even goes across generations here! I feel lucky to be part of it.

12. Responsibility and Accountability. I think that all of us are playing a team sport at Heidelberg University. The only way for Heidelberg to win is for our students to win and that means education and graduation. We all have individual responsibilities and all of us must play our positions exceptionally well for us to succeed. If we hold ourselves more accountable to Heidelberg's institutional mission, then our different kinds of expertise and stewardship will have greater value. We need to imagine ourselves like Senator John Glenn at age 77 going into space aboard the 7-person Discovery Space Shuttle in 1998 rather than as Astronaut John Glenn orbiting the earth for the first time solo on Mercury Friendship 7 in 1962.

13. Fear of Change. Like everyone, I have my own tolerance levels for change.

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