

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

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 athletics

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-cure9ITJ.1545 TD0 w.154shbdr acuity

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

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

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

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.