

End-of-Year Faculty Reception April 18, 2011 Old Main Chapel

Good afternoon and thank you for taking time out from your very busy end of the semester schedule. To say this has been an interesting and unusual year would be a major understatement. We faced significant challenges and together found ways to ensure that all that we do for our students continued uninterrupted. I thank you on behalf of the students and myself, for all that you have done this year to make Ship the extraordinary university it is.

Let's start with the elephant in the room: **The Budget**, and I have a bit of optimism about it. You all know that Governor Corbett proposed a 50 percent reduction in our appropriation. That would mean we would receive about \$16 million from the state next year, instead of the \$32 million we received this year. Another way to put it in perspective is that from the 2003-2004 academic year through this year, we cut \$18.5 million from the budget. This proposal wants us to cut nearly the same amount — in one year. His proposal, as you know, would take our overall PASSHE funding back to less than what it was when the PASSHE system was founded in 1983. That would be devastating to not just our budget, but to the culture and fabric of the university itself. Such a cut would change, in many unpleasant ways, not only what we do, but who we are.

But here's some optimism, there is what seems to be a widespread belief in the legislature that the cuts are too deep and, as several legislators said, simply unacceptable. I was at the Senate hearing with Chancellor Cavanaugh and President McNairy of Millersville and the senators' comments were supportive and heartening to hear. The same was true at the House hearing.

Even with that support, there are still likely to be cuts, but I am hopeful that the cuts will be less deep than originally proposed. If that is true, AND — a very big and — we get an appropriate tuition increase and establish a rational tuition policy for the next several years, the reeducations we will have to make will still be difficult, but hopefully more manageable. As of today, I still have no specific information as to what the numbers are and we will not until later in May and, for tuition, late in June. We will, as we have, continue to let you know whenever we have more definitive information and will continue to work with you to keep Ship solvent. Some have asked, "Why do we have to plan for the worst case scenario?" The answer is simple, we cannot afford not to. As we make our plans, we can hopefully reshape the institution in ways we have never thought of before.

I have recently been in Maryland — at Frostburg State University doing a Presidential review and they are under pressure similar to Pennsylvania and have run three years of rolling furloughs and no pay raises in order to accommodate the challenges. I also chaired the Middle States Review for SUNY-New Paltz and they are facing no pay raises and are challenging themselves to build appropriate class sizes — small when necessary, similar to previous years as appropriate, and a little larger if the situation will allow maintaining quality. It is not easy for everyone, but I know we will prevail.

As we move forward and regardless of the budget challenges, I invite you to join me in rethinking, redesigning, and improving our curriculum and course delivery — we have to — we owe it to ourselves, our future, the future of quality higher education, and, most importantly, to OUR STUDENTS. This rethinking, redesigning, and improvement should include the following:

- Course redesign

- Curriculum redesign
- Course schedules
- Increased extended studies and on-line learning and revenue generation as well as new grant and contract revenue
- Maintenance of the Raider Plan
- Begin looking at different ways of delivery:
 - ✓ Instead of 40/3 credit hour course, why can we not deliver our 120 hour program as 30/4 credit hour courses. This would build a student program of four courses a semester and possible graduation in 3 ½ years on a normal schedule. Or six semesters of four courses and a final two semesters of three each. I would also allow a faculty load of 3 courses a semester for all. Interesting and I would like to investigate it further. This challenges us in many ways — for a 36 hour major — 9 courses instead of 12; transfer issues, graduation issues, and scheduling issues. So I will be asking some folks to look into it.
 - ✓ Rethink what the week looks like — from MWF//T/Th to M/W//T/Th//Fri/Sat or even more interesting M/Th//T/F with Wednesday left open for meetings, convocations, guest speakers, etc.

The challenges are out there and we must reach beyond what we are doing today to redefine our future for ourselves — collectively and through compromise.

As I said, we have had an outstanding year despite the fiscal uncertainties. Let me highlight some:

- On April 7, the PASSHE Board of Governors approved our new Bachelor of Science degree program in computer engineering. It is the first program of its type in PASSHE, and will allow us to use our already outstanding computer science faculty to provide students with the opportunity to fill an ever-growing need in Pennsylvania for graduates with these new skills and experiences. Congratulations to Carol Wellington and Tom Briggs for their commitment to this project and we will do it with no new resources — I challenge the rest of us to build and re build programs that will allow new revenue with reallocation of resources — always to our advantage.
- The Modern Languages Department received national recognition from the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. It was the first time in the department's history it received this recognition and I want to thank Agnes Ragone, and all members of the department for their hard work.
- Last fall, we were named a "2010 Great College to Work For" by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* based on surveys completed by various employees. We were one of only 97 universities or colleges to earn the distinction. The *Chronicle* recently completed the survey again so we are waiting for those results and hope we will again earn this honor in 2011.
- We were again honored this year by several national publications. *U.S. News & World Report* named us one of the best in the North, *G.I. Jobs Magazine* named us a "Military Friendly School," and *U.S. News and World Report* recognized the John L. Grove College of Business as among the best business programs in the nation.
- Huber Art Center is open, and I encourage you to visit and walk around this outstanding new facility. Members of the art department did a great job in helping design the building and its beauty and functionality are a testament to their efforts.

- Work is progressing on the CUB and plans are continuing for construction of all-new residence halls. That project has unfortunately been delayed so we anticipate opening the first new hall sometime in early 2013.
- Our Celebration of Student Research Conference tomorrow (April 19) is an outstanding success with nearly 500 students and nearly 90 faculty members presenting results of their research projects. This program has grown significantly in recent years, and I thank all of you who are involved in helping your students learn valuable skills through joint projects with them.
- I know we are putting the final touches on our academic master plan, and I am very hopeful that soon we will have a document that will begin to guide us for the next five years.

These are just a few of the many highlights for the year; I know that there are many others that I could mention. Shippensburg University is, I think, fortunate that we have been able to work from a position of strength, to build on all the good that we do and come together to do all that we can do to help this great university.

In difficult times, it's sometimes hard to see the good, but at Ship we have so many good things happening that it is easy to be positive about what we've done. In the coming weeks and months, remember that we are a great university and by working together we will continue to make it even better. Thank you and best wishes for the rest of the semester and a great summer.