# Annual Fund Leadership Benefactors' Celebration Dinner Remarks West Shore Country Club November 5, 2011

Thank you, Kit. Please join me in another round of applause for Kit, John Clinton and the Shippensburg University Foundation staff for making tonight's event so wonderful.

We live in an ever-changing and increasingly complicated world. New technologies that instantly connect us with people across the globe — may not connect us to the person next door. That's why events, like tonight, are so important to us. As President of Shippensburg University, tonight I have the opportunity to thank you on behalf of the University — and to thank you personally — for your support of this great institution.

Every day SHIP faculty share their knowledge — and wisdom — with students both inside and outside the classroom. They challenge students to be their best — to try new things — and not to fear failure. Every day SHIP staff and administrators strive to provide students and faculty with the necessary resources so they can focus on education.

And every day, throughout the day, we thank you and the many others whose generosity to SHIP makes our jobs possible. Your infectious spirit of philanthropy brings an unparalleled spirit of unity and charity to everyone associated with SHIP. We admire your commitment to educating America's future generations and giving talented students the opportunity to turn their dream of a college education into reality. Without you, we couldn't succeed!!!

Helping to steer this great SHIP are those dedicated individuals involved with the SU Foundation, including its board of directors, numerous volunteers and outstanding Foundation staff. The Board is led by Joel Zullinger, a truly visionary leader. Thanks to the board's guidance and philanthropic passion, the Foundation is a role model among its peers in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Will Joel and the other board members please stand and be recognized?

I'd be remiss if I didn't also recognize members of the Shippensburg University Council of Trustees. Although I have a wonderful Chancellor and a dedicated Board of Governors, these great folks are my real bosses. This group of dedicated individuals gives their time, talent, and treasure — and wisdom — to shape this university. Some of these outstanding individuals are with us tonight. I would ask that they please stand as I call their name and remain standing — Michael Schaul, Chair; Bill Piper, Deb Gentzler, Tom Dunn, Dr. Elnetta Jones, Ken Shoemaker, Glenn Grell, Dennis Castelli, Charlie Goodhart, and our newest member, Gene Herritt. Just yesterday, we were notified by the Governor's Office that our new student trustee, Neely Spence, has been approved and will be joining us for our next round of meetings. Would those individuals please stand and be recognized!!!!!

During the past two years SHIP benefitted from the capable leadership of Don and JoAnn Smith who served as National Annual Fund Co-Chairs. With their guidance, the annual fund drive was hugely successful. Among other things, the fund provides invaluable financial resources to help students offset the cost of their college education. Don and JoAnn recently transitioned their duties to the new Co-Chairs, Ron and Kate Conard. Everyone who knows Ron and Kate knows that their skills, enthusiasm, and dedication to SHIP will ensure the continued success of the annual fund. We look forward to their leadership and to another successful annual fund campaign.

Critical to the Foundation's success are those volunteers who generously give their time and resources to the Foundation, and I want to again thank them for their work. Without them, the Foundation wouldn't be as successful, and for this we are deeply grateful. It didn't go unnoticed that the annual fund's recent success happened during very difficult economic times. We owe a debt of gratitude to those involved who rose to the challenge and inspired donors to share their resources with SHIP.

Earlier, I mentioned John Clinton and the Foundation staff. Thanks to their endless efforts, deserving students have scholarships, faculty members have professional development opportunities, and the region has a premier cultural arts facility the H. Ric Luhrs Performing Arts Center. Thank you for all you do!

As you can imagine, in my job I get some very interesting phone calls. All are very interesting — some are good, while others are, well...not so good. Recently, I got a phone call about a SHIP student that was very good! I want to share it with you because I think you'll agree that this student's talent and hard work ethic represent the characteristics of so many SHIP students. The call came from a senior executive at New Jersey American Water Company. He wanted to discuss one of our students, Courtney Christian, a junior communication/journalism major, who had recently interned with their company. Courtney's responsibilities included establishing the company's social media presence on Facebook. Courtney created and implemented a Facebook program that, among other things, gave the company public attention and another avenue of customer communication. Just two days after Courtney's internship ended — TWO DAYS — and she returned to SHIP to begin another semester, Hurricane Irene ripped through New Jersey and threatened the water supply for many of the company's customers. In the aftermath, social media, particularly Facebook, was the company's primary — if not only — means of communication with its more than 42,000 customers who were without water.

The executive called to tell me that it was Courtney's hard work that allowed the company to provide crucial updates to its customers. Without it, customer communication would have been extremely difficult — if not impossible. He also said that several other executives had noticed Courtney's work. He quoted one who said: "Courtney made the office a better place, both professionally and personally." And another who said that while Courtney was only a college junior, he tried convincing her to keep working at the company. He said he was unsuccessful, WHY — because "She really loves Shippensburg!"

Courtney's story is one of the many success stories we hear each year. Would Courtney please stand!!!! Now, I'd like to share with you some of our other successes. I've divided them into five categories to show the breadth of our success.

# Success Number 1 — Opening Doors to a SHIP Education

- The university signed agreements for joint programs with two international schools. One, with La Rochelle International Business School in La Rochelle, France, will promote developing joint studies, research, training, and other educational programs of mutual interest. The other, with Wrocław University of Economics in Poland, will promote developing exchange programs and activities of mutual interest between our two universities.
- Starting next spring, the John L. Grove College of Business will bring its nationally accredited MBA program to East Stroudsburg University's campus. By jointly offering this program, Shippensburg and East Stroudsburg, will not only continue meeting a growing need in that region, but also continue making the most effective and efficient use of the resources the Commonwealth has entrusted to us.
- This semester we also made our MBA program available in Harrisburg to full- and part-time students. This new MBA—Emerging Leaders Cohort is a one-year, full-time program. It's designed for recent college graduates, with limited, if any, work experience, who seek professional experience while completing their MBA.

# Success Number 2 — Expanding to Meet New Educational Demands

- We continue enhancing our learning environment by attracting a diverse student body. We see this in several ways, including the 4.9% increase in our undergraduate minority student applications and the 6.8% increase in our undergraduate out-of-state applications.
- Additionally, last year, we received approval to offer a new Bachelor of Science degree program in computer engineering. This is the first degree program of this kind among the 14 PASSHE universities. This program's positive impacts include:
  - Filling the Commonwealth's need for a cost-effective option for students seeking a computer-engineering degree;
  - Assisting Pennsylvania's business community in its growing need for computer engineering professionals;
  - Offering another way for Shippensburg University to continue serving our citizens; and
  - Providing opportunities for young Pennsylvanians to remain in, and contribute to, the future of our state.

# Success Number 3 — Improving SHIP's Student Learning Environment

Last spring the \$6.8 million Huber Art Center's renovation and expansion was completed. Hundreds from the community and university met on campus to enjoy a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate its re-opening. If you have a chance, please tour this beautiful Center!

- Work progresses on the Ceddia Union Building renovation— the CUB. In September, students re-occupied the newly renovated space, and we expect work to be completed on the remaining space early next year. The renovated space is now home to the new-and greatly expanded Follett Bookstore, a new food service dining hall and courtyard amphitheater, game rooms (Wii, Guitar Hero, Dance-Dance Revolution, Sony PlayStation) and of course for the rest of us (chess, checkers, and cards), a beautiful student lounge, student-senate office and work space, and other student friendly spaces that make the CUB the central place for student life on campus.
- Construction began for our new residence halls to replace the existing ones that have been rendered obsolete by age and technology. The first hall, which should open by the start of Spring Semester 2013, will include dedicated space for our Honors Program. That space will help provide Honors students with a total living-learning experience during their college years. After Phase 1 is complete, we will begin Phase 2 with completion in Summer 2014, and Phase 3 with completion in Summer 2015. Granted, as some say "there's dirt everywhere." But, this may be the largest single construction project ever on our campus. It dramatically enhances our support of students and will make SHIP even more attractive to potential students and others.

## Success Number 4 — Improving our Communities

- During Fall Break 2010, SHIP students and faculty showed their commitment to helping others when more than 60 of them traveled to the Gulf of Mexico to aid in the Gulf oil spill clean-up.
- Then, in August 2011, more than 400 first-year students participated in service learning projects as part of their orientation to university life. This high level of participation continues to show that SHIP students see their education as not just a means to material gain; but also as a way to strengthen our communities.
- Our students continue fundraising to help those in need. A prime example of this happened recently when our Number-2 ranked women's field hockey team raised money for Breast Cancer Awareness. Then they did something extraordinary — something to remind us that "actions speak louder than words;" and what it means to be "part of the SHIP family." On October 5, throughout the game with Seton Hill, the field hockey team collected donations for the LUNGevity Foundation, a foundation to help prevent lung cancer. But, that's only part of the story. Before the game, each Shippensburg player wore a special shirt with the name "Taylor" and the number "1" emblazoned across the back." The shirts recognized Jim Taylor, the father of one of the team's players, and its captain, Kristina "Tina" Taylor. Until his untimely death last summer from lung cancer, Jim and his wife, Karen, spent more than three years traveling over 400 miles round trip to cheer for the team at each of its home games. After the game, the students shared their favorite memories about Jim. Several described how Jim took them into his family when their families couldn't travel to the games. Like so many others, Jim, his wife Karen, Coach Bertie Landes, and the team embody the spirit of the SHIP family. Would Tina, her mom, Karen, and Coach Landes please stand!!!!!!!

### Success Number 5 — Showcasing SHIP's Academic Excellence

- A recent success came from the extraordinary efforts of our student-run TV station, SUTV. SUTV was one of only two university TV programs recently nominated regionally for an Emmy. Although Temple won the award, this nomination is an outstanding achievement that speaks volumes for the quality of SUTV programs!
- Last, but certainly not least, our student successes in regional and national competitions continue to showcase SHIP's academic excellence. Some of those from students of the John L. Grove College of Business are:
  - The Supply Chain Management Team who placed first in the 2011 Council of Supply Chain Management Annual (National) Conference Pittsburgh College Challenge;
  - The Shippensburg Human Resource Management Club (SHRM) who placed second in the 2011 SHRM Northeast Regional HR Case Competition in Rochester, NY;
  - The Students in Free Enterprise Team (SIFE) who was first runner-up in the SIFE regional competition in Philadelphia; and
  - The Investment Management Program team who placed third in the R.I.S.E. XI Conference.

We're building on those successes, and many others, in developing a strategic vision for SHIP's future. We took that approach at the summer retreat of President's Cabinet, when we produced a soon-to-be-agreed-upon set of university goals — driven by the Academic Master Plan and measured by student achievement — that will be vetted this fall and hopefully approved as part of our Vision-Mission-and Goals for 2012 to 2017.

Central to those plans is our continued efforts to enhance our student's academic experience, including our joint undergraduate student-faculty research program. Last year participation in this program dramatically increased 30% over the previous year as about 500 students and 90 faculty co-researchers and mentors displayed their research. We believe that involving more students in this program will strengthen student-faculty relationships and provide students with invaluable learning experiences.

I'm reading Walter Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, which, I believe, reinforces our vision to continue to integrate STEM courses into our current curriculum — and enhances the appeal of a SHIP education. As I share this with you, I think you'll agree.

To begin with Steve credits a teacher for inspiring him when he hit a "rough patch." He said she did that by caring about him and challenging him. He said that because she saw something in him, he "learned more from her, than any other teacher, and if it hadn't been for her, I'm sure I would have gone to jail." (page 516). When I read that, I thought of SHIP's faculty, a faculty that's widely recognized for caring about and challenging our students. I can't count the number

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Walter Isaccson (2011). Steve Jobs. Simon & Schuster. [Kindle Edition].

of SHIP students who credit their success to that SHIP faculty member who made the extra effort to inspire them to study, to pursue their dream for graduate school, or simply to hang in there during a "rough patch." And, talk about inspiring critical thinking, I'll never forget that group of SHIP students who described their favorite class as one where: "The teacher makes us think so hard that our brains hurt!"

That inspiring faculty also encouraged us to continue to integrate STEM disciplines and humanities into our Academic Master Plan. We believe that's critical to meeting the educational demands of the 21st century and, the following discussion by Steve and the author explain why in a very descriptive manner. To begin with, Steve explains that as a child he always thought of himself as a humanities person, but he liked electronics. Then he said: "...I read something that one of my heroes.... said about the importance of people who could stand at the intersection of humanities and sciences, and I decided that's what I wanted to do." (page 250). He explains that he developed intellectually when he found himself at this intersection! He said at that point he watched the interactions of those "...geekily immersed in electronics and those into literature and creative endeavors." He said he "...started to listen to music a whole lot and I started to read more outside of just science and technology — Shakespeare, Plato. I loved reading Lear." Other favorites were *Moby Dick* and the poems of Dylan Thomas (page 625).

Isaacson, the author, expands upon this by saying he believes the key to "creating innovative economies in the twenty-first century" will occur when someone with a strong personality has a "feel for both the humanities and the sciences." (page 250).

That describes a SHIP education, one that our Academic Master plan will enhance, one that gives SHIP students an opportunity to reach that intersection where they can create innovative economies in the 21st century. At SHIP we'll give them an opportunity to get a "feel for both the humanities and the sciences" by continuing to offer and emphasize courses in the Humanities, expanding our offerings in STEM disciplines, and enhancing the opportunity to apply those skills in business and educational and service settings with courses in our AACSB Accredited College of Business and our NCATE Accredited College of Education and Human Services! Combine that opportunity with SHIP's caring and inspiring faculty, and you have a recipe for success in the 21st century! Will any of our great faculty — or former faculty — who are here tonight please stand and be recognized!!

Our plans, of course, are somewhat contingent on our fiscal resources. Unfortunately, we have had to cut tens of millions of dollars from our university's budget in recent years; cuts that make it difficult to change and implement programs. That's why the support you provide — support for student scholarships, faculty professional development, and other scholarly endeavors — is so critical. That's particularly true when you consider that while we're a state-owned university, this year the Commonwealth is providing only 26 percent of our funding — down from 32% just last year.

Playwright Tennessee Williams said: "Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose." I am thankful that you have chosen to be friends of SHIP, and we are honored by that friendship. I promise that we will do everything possible to continue to earn your friendship and to make you proud of the time, talent, and treasure that you so generously share with us.

Once again, thank you so much for your time. And, thank you for everything you do for SHIP! Please enjoy the rest of the evening, and travel home safely.