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Dear Ship Faculty, Students, Alumni and Friends:

As the first decade of the 21st Century draws to a close, I find myself thinking about the many events that have shaped our country and world during this time. I also find myself thinking about those events that have shaped Ship during this past decade. I thought it might be nice to highlight some of those changes to Ship in this Holiday Letter.

Since 2000, rapid changes in technology have revolutionized how we teach, how students learn, and how we communicate. Ship actively continues adapting to technology changes and seeking ways to lead this revolution. Communicating with students through e-mail is one simple way that we have integrated technology on campus. E-mail is effective, consistent with our green technology, and financially prudent. That's why I decided to e-mail this Holiday Letter to you. This decision had me thinking about how not too long ago, I dictated letters for someone to type and mail through the post office and how people called my office land-line to discuss the letters. However, I was jolted back to reality as the sound of a student text message hit my Blackberry. (If I had opened a Twitter account, I am certain the student would have quickly followed that text with a "tweet.")

While technology has changed the way we interact with others through social networks like Facebook and "ning," we believe it is important for Ship to retain the face-to-face interaction that is a hallmark of our campus. Therefore, if you walk across our campus on any nice day you will find students sitting in the new red and blue Adirondack chairs that we placed on campus last year. There are 20 chairs, set in groups to encourage talking, laughing, reading, or studying. You will also find students hanging out in the "fishbowl," the new student lounge area of Dauphin Humanities Center. And, students flock daily to our new student recreation center—the ShipRec—to use the exercise equipment, take group exercise classes, run, or play handball, volleyball, basketball or another sport. Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't mention two of the most popular campus gathering places that reopened in Fall 2009, the newly renovated Reisner Dining Hall and the newly renovated first floor of the Lehman Library. Our success integrating the new into the old at Ship keeps us thinking positively about the future, or as students might text, "T+." Amidst these changes, we continue to keep and hold dear our sincere desire that you enjoy this letter and let us know your thoughts—personally, by e-mail, text, or by a "tweet" on Twitter!

The past decade has been an exciting one for Ship. Our many successes during this time provide the necessary platform for us, optimistically and confidently, to enter the second decade of the 21st century—ready to implement more great plans for Ship's future.

One of our most significant achievements during the past decade is our recent 10-year reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. This accomplishment resulted from the efforts of the entire campus community and off-campus representatives. The Commission's Report is one of the best reports I believe the Commission could issue, particularly where it stated: "Overall,

Shippensburg knows its mission and is performing in an exemplary manner. It is an institution of integrity, and a place of significant student learning.” This epitomizes our University’s heart and soul and is a testament to the hard work of those involved in the reaccreditation process. We will follow this reaccreditation process with our recently completed first-ever Academic Master Plan that we will implement in 2010. We designed this Plan to guide our academic growth well into the future.

Ship also set an enrollment record during the past decade, admitting 8,253 students (6,942 undergraduates and 1,311 graduate students) for a 4 percent overall increase. Ship coupled this record with a third consecutive year of higher SAT scores of its first-year students. Ship is, more and more, the University of Choice for exceptional students, students who recognize the importance of education and the education Ship provides.

Some of our other notable achievements at Ship since 2000 include:

- We have the highest four-year graduation rate in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, and we have held this achievement for the last seven years.
- We re-opened the Ezra Lehman Memorial Library. This renovation includes “lollipops”—computer stations that blend technology and personal interaction. Since reopening, student use of the library has increased to the point that the Library recently expanded its hours of operation.
- We reopened a newly renovated Reisner Dining Hall. As mentioned above, this is a place for students to relax over good food and conversation.
- We began the renovation and expansion of Huber Art Center, which includes a three-story addition. We anticipate completing this project during the fall 2010 and re-opening the Center in spring 2011 semester.
- We initiated plans to build all new residence halls and demolish the existing outdated residence halls over the next several years. These new energy-efficient halls will reflect a living-learning concept to help students keep pace with rapidly changing technology that is critical to learning.
- Dr. Karl G. Lorenz, professor of anthropology, is in Cairo, Egypt on a Fulbright Scholars Grant for the 2009-10 academic year conducting research at Lower Egyptian archaeological sites. Dr. Lorenz is the fourth Shippensburg faculty member to receive a Fulbright award since 2000.
- Grace B. Luhrs University Elementary School recently received a \$10,000 environmental education grant from the state for a water reclamation and composting project. The University joins the elementary school in this project to reclaim and store rainwater before it enters the drainage system and to create compost from material that we would otherwise not use.
- The University received a Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education grant to fund an Entrepreneurial Leadership Center. This Center will help Ship students learn the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and allow Ship to support regional economic development.

While I am optimistic and enthusiastic about Ship’s future, I recognize that some of our most difficult challenges lie ahead. The budget continues to be our most pressing challenge. We balanced this year’s

budget using federal stimulus funds, funds that may not be available in the future. We are mindful of the future implications of this and that our balanced budget follows several years of deep cuts.

Thanks to your input, Shippensburg University reduced this year's budget by \$2.8 million. This budget reduction was in addition to cuts of about \$6 million dating back to the 2006-07 academic year. We made sure that these reductions would not interfere with the university's ability—and responsibility—to provide students with a quality education. We remain steadfast in our determination to provide that education despite predictions that future fiscal years forecast limited, or even diminishing, resources. The forecast includes challenges in the 2011-12 budget year when we will face a dramatic increase in pension costs and utility costs, particularly the cost of electricity.

As we move forward, we continue to welcome your suggestions on how to improve Shippensburg University. We also want to thank you again for helping Ship succeed. One of the hallmarks of Shippensburg University has always been its ability to adapt to whatever challenges—and opportunities—arise, a hallmark, that with your support, I know will continue.

Thank you for being part of Ship and best wishes for a joyous holiday season! I look forward to sharing a great 2010 with you.

Sincerely,

Bill