Annual Fund Leadership Benefactors' Celebration Dinner Remarks
November 6, 2010
West Shore Country Club

Good evening everyone! Thank you for allowing me to join you tonight in celebrating our commitment to Shippensburg University.

In just 43 days, seniors in the Class of 2010 will graduate and join about 60,000 Shippensburg alumni living, working — and leading — around the world.

It's hard to believe the semester is about to end; it seems like it just started. But today everything moves so quickly. We live in a high-speed world where we text, Facebook, Tweet, Yelp, Google and YouTube virtually around the clock.

The faster our lives become and the more we can use technology to instantly communicate and access information world's away — the more we need time-honored traditions to keep us grounded. Ship provides that grounding in so many ways. One is in the Ship family, those here tonight who share a sense of community. Others can be found walking on Ship's campus. I found one by simply looking above the door to Rowland Hall. There, carved in stone, is a simple inscription — *Learn and Serve.* Since April 1873, when Ship's first class of 217 students arrived on campus, the University has provided students the opportunity to learn — to earn an education that will help them thrive in society, and to serve — through their professions and as volunteers.

Ship's tradition hasn't changed in more than 139 years, and it will continue well into the future. Like our region's majestic mountains, our service to and support of students is and will remain the bedrock, the foundation, of Shippensburg University.

You, too, are the bedrock of Shippensburg University. You're the foundation that allows our university and, more importantly, our students, to succeed in so many ways. As members of the 1871 Visionary Society, the Hilltop Heritage Society, the Board of Fellows, or the Tower Associates, your never-ending support funds scholarships for talented and deserving students who need your help to reach their dreams. These scholarships provide an education that opens doors — doors that allow our students to serve as business leaders, teachers, community leaders, human service professionals, and elected officials. That education opens doors that our students might have otherwise found closed. It allows them to enter into and travel the world. And, regardless of where in the world they travel, like you, they'll always have a home at Ship, a connection, a sense of community that keeps them grounded. Your generosity makes all of that possible. It allows a younger generation to become Ship students, to graduate and to become part of the foundation that will help future students.

I cannot thank you enough for your support. Tonight, I have another opportunity to publicly thank Don and JoAnn Smith for their outstanding service as National Annual Fund Co-Chairs. They have very capably led a group of dedicated volunteers in successfully raising scholarship funds in what some might euphemistically call a "challenging" economy. Please join me in thanking them for their hard work.

I've had the privilege of getting to know many of you personally. I've learned that like me, you're optimistic. For me, that's good, because it seems to be required of a University President. I've also learned that we share another trait, clairvoyance — we see into the future — and we see that it's very bright! But we're lucky: we get to see the future every day as we look into the faces of our students, students who are eager to learn and serve — who are energized and committed to making the world a better place. We see the future every day in the commitment and dedication of outstanding faculty and staff associates and administrators who take seriously the task of educating our students into future leaders.

No wonder we're optimistic and see such a bright future. Your efforts and those of the entire Ship family are what allow Shippensburg University to succeed in so many areas. Let me give a few examples:

- We recently submitted letters of intent to establish B.S. degrees in computer engineering and software engineering.

- We're developing an I-81 Corridor Coalition Project modeled after the I-95 Corridor Coalition Project at the University of Maryland. It will involve six states, 32 counties, and a delivery system that stretches from Quebec, Canada to Knoxville, TN. Professor George Pomeroy has taken the lead on this project — in conjunction with our partners from Cumberland County.

- We continue discussions with the University of Economics in Wrocław, Poland. Our first visit was in the summer of 2008, with an exchange of two Polish faculty members in October 2008. In April, I signed an intent agreement with my counterpart from Wrocław agreeing to begin work on developing exchange programs between the universities and promoting activities of mutual interest. One outgrowth of that agreement — we hope to soon begin an exchange of faculty.

- We are pleased with the relocation of the Pennsylvania Alliance for Geographic Education to Ship. This is a joint project with the National Geographic Society to be housed in the Geography/Earth Science Department under the able leadership of Dr. Jan Smith.

- We'll continue our focus on preparing an academic master plan to help guide us in planning programs and related services. This plan is necessary in our ever-changing world so that we're prepared to continue our excellence and to meet new demands as we help our students become leaders in their respective disciplines.

If you had the opportunity to join us at the President's Recognition Dinner in September, you heard me describe four future jobs, the human/robot interaction specialist, the animal migration engineer, the world watcher, and the forecaster of everything. While our academic master plan doesn't get this specific, let me stretch your imagination a bit with three more future jobs from www.Futuresavvy.net.

- Old Age Wellness Managers/Consultant Specialists will draw on a range of medical, pharmaceutical, prosthetic, psychiatric, natural, and fitness solutions to help manage health and personal needs of the aging population — including ME.

- Vertical Farmers. Someday, possibly, city-based vertical farms will grow hydroponically fed food in multi-story buildings, dramatically increasing farm yield while reducing environmental degradation. The managers of these farms will require expertise in a range of scientific disciplines, engineering and commerce.

- Climate Change Reversal Specialist**.** As the threats and impacts of climate change increase, a new breed of engineer-scientists will be required to help reduce or reverse the effects of climate change by applying multi-disciplinary solutions such as erecting giant umbrellas that deflect the sun's rays.

The keys to our future — to our success as a society — are students like those at Shippensburg University! To facilitate their success, we'll keep adapting our academic programs so we can help them develop the skills necessary to meet future challenges. We'll enhance and strengthen programs such as the Joint Undergraduate Student/Faculty Research Program, the Honors Program, and the Entrepreneurship Leadership Program. These programs already set our students apart from their peers. We see that in graduate schools who recruit our students and public and private sector businesses who seek our students for leadership positions.

We are strongly committed to making changes in our programs for science, technology, engineering and mathematics or STEM. We will enhance our already strong and diverse STEM programs as we work to add new educational opportunities like engineering.

I hope you've recently had a chance to visit our campus. If so, you've noticed several major construction projects underway. These are necessary to serve our students and provide facilities that accommodate current teaching technology. Some of my colleagues believe we have more pending projects than in any prior decade, which bodes well for our future viability. The Huber Art Center expansion and renovation is on schedule — and will be completed early in 2011. Faculty and students will begin moving back into that building after the first of the year. Our largest current project is the Ceddia Union Building expansion.

This expansion will allow us to involve more students in campus clubs and leadership opportunities, to accommodate our ever-growing student population, and to offer more gathering places where students can learn to live and serve together. If plans stay on course, next spring we'll begin the first phase for constructing all-new residence halls. This may be one of the most important projects in the university's history because it ushers in an entirely new living-learning concept.

While new construction is important, it's equally important to preserve and update our oldest facilities. In the 1980s when we renovated Old Main, we didn't have enough money to finish the fourth floor. That floor was home to hundreds of students. That home is a precious part of our history and foundation; therefore, we hope to restore several of those rooms to their original design and furnishings to preserve this heritage for our alumni and others. For the same reasons, we'd like to renovate Stewart Hall. Built in 1893 this building, with its awe-inspiring original wood ceiling, is at the entrance to Shippensburg University. Renovated, it would serve as a window to our world, an exhibition center and a fitting home for the Alumni Association — the Rife Alumni Center at Stewart Hall.

Another window to Ship's academic education is athletics. Athletic opportunities bring scholar-athletes to Shippensburg. Their performance on and off the field connects us to the outside world. Currently, we see this as we gain attention from our nationally ranked women's field hockey team and our men's and women's cross country team — that hosts potential Olympic athletes! Athletics allow us to showcase the University in venues that are otherwise unavailable. If seeing is believing, next time you watch a televised college football game, watch the halftime show when each team's college shows a film highlighting their academic offerings — in a beautiful campus setting. Therefore, we've begun upgrading our athletic facilities including adding new all-weather artificial turf on the football field and the field

hockey/soccer/lacrosse field. Next, we hope to modernize the locker rooms and get new lighting for the athletic fields so students can *study during the day* and *practice at night* — for the optimal use of their time!

Shippensburg's history is written in the people who bring life to the university, including the students and faculty. As we enjoy another year of record enrollment, we realize that more and more families recognize the first-class affordable education Ship provides. We are distinguishing ourselves as the place to get an education. Undoubtedly our students are among the best and brightest. They're smart, inquisitive, and eager to learn. They choose Ship not only to get an excellent education, but also because they know that Ship offers small class sizes, caring professors, and a unique sense of community that will enhance their learning. Ship students and alumni realize Ship is a precious place, a place they'll call home while they earn their degree and well after they graduate. Ship will keep its students grounded no matter how far they travel. At Ship, students will make friendships and connections that will last throughout their lives. Students come to Ship to become part of the "Ship family." Being part of that family is very special; it's the reason you're here tonight and the reason you continue to support Ship.

I'm very proud that most of our graduates stay in Pennsylvania. They're the physicians, scientists, educators, elected officials, and leaders that Pennsylvania needs to grow its economy, to help it participate in an ever-more complex global world. The education students receive at Ship allows them to meet the Commonwealth's changing needs and make wide-spread and significant contributions at home and around the world.

Shippensburg continues to offer students an opportunity to learn from — and become friends with — a cadre of faculty that I think is second to none. The faculty is deeply committed to their profession and their students; they're passionate about learning and teaching; they're committed to service to the campus, community or their academic field, and making intellectual contributions through scholarly research and applied scholarship.

It's a huge task to provide students with what they need and offer faculty opportunities to develop. Like other institutions, we're facing serious economic challenges. To show you how serious: In 1983, when the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education began, we received nearly 65 percent of our educational and general fund budget from the state. This year, it was only about 33 percent. Since the 2003-2004 academic year, the university has cut more than $14 million from its budget, and that excludes the cuts of over $4.4 million that were necessary to balance this year's budget.

Thanks to hard work and input from the entire campus community, we didn't make any cuts that directly impacted the quality of education we provide or our students' ability to earn a degree. While we successfully met this year's budgetary challenges, the future outlook is very challenging. I expect that we may face cuts ranging from 5 percent to 15 percent for the 2011-2012 academic year. Also, next year our electricity costs will rise (as the caps come off those rates), and we will have increases in our health-care costs and retirement funding.

Our efforts to contain costs have been effective, but there are limits. We've been able to maintain our excellence thanks to your contributions and those of others who support the University. The annual fund provides talented — and deserving — students with merit and needs-based scholarships. It pays for joint undergraduate student/faculty research opportunities for all academic disciplines and offsets costs related to student conferences and competitions. It allows faculty to serve as mentors in joint research projects and to obtain valuable professional development and research opportunities.

To illustrate this, last year, your contributions funded 77 joint undergraduate student/faculty — for a total of $50,000. They provided over 700 students with academic and athletic scholarships and awards. They allowed students to attend competitions like Students in Free Enterprise and Supply Chain Management. They allowed faculty to interact with their peers and present research at national and international conferences like the Literary London Annual International Conference and the Mid-Atlantic Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference.

Now, more than ever, we need your help. You've blessed us by generously sharing your resources. Those contributions have earned, dipping into my business college background, a wonderful return on investment. We see those returns in the faces and the lives of our students and in the contributions they'll give back to all of us.

Author Henry James said: "Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind."

You have been kind. You have been kind. You have been kind. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I said university presidents are clairvoyant. Thanks to your kindness, generosity, and belief in us I see a bright future for Shippensburg University, its students and all members of our campus community — one that will be unparalleled in our nearly 140 year history. Ship's future is your future, and it will be one that, I firmly believe, will make you proud.

Thank you again for all that you do for Ship, and thank you so much for being here tonight.