

**Fall 2012 Faculty Welcome Remarks**  
**August 22, 2012**  
**H. Ric Luhrs Performing Arts Center**

Thank you Barbara, and good morning everyone.

I hope that over the summer you had an opportunity to relax, recharge, and prepare for what I know will be another outstanding year. It's hard to believe that early tomorrow morning, members of the Class of 2016 will begin arriving on campus with their parents and — seemingly — everything they own. It always amazes me to watch new students unload cases upon cases of water, cartons of food, flat-panel TVs, Wi games, bedding, dishes, utensils, and stacks of clothing and neatly pack them into their residence hall rooms.

Each August since 1998, Beloit College has released the Beloit College Mindset List. It provides a look at the incoming class of freshman, like our first-year students at Ship — the Class of 2016. I'd like to share with you 12 items from the new set of values and backgrounds for this generation of entering students (the complete list of 75 items can be found at [www.beloit.edu](http://www.beloit.edu)):

1. Since these students were born in 1994, Kurt Cobain, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Richard Nixon and John Wayne Gacy have always been dead.
2. Robert De Niro is thought of as Greg Focker's long-suffering father-in-law, not as Vito Corleone.
3. They have never seen an airplane "ticket."
4. For most of their lives, maintaining relations between the United States and the rest of the world has been a woman's job in the State Department.
5. They repeatedly remind their parents not to refer to their CDs and DVDs as "tapes."
6. Along with online view books, parents have always been able to check the crime stats for the colleges their kids have selected.
7. They were too young to enjoy the 1994 World Series, but then neither did anyone else.
8. Before they purchase an assigned textbook, they'll investigate whether it's available for rent or purchase as an e-book.
9. History has always had its own channel.
10. They have no recollection of when Arianna Huffington was a conservative.
11. They watch television everywhere but on a television, and
12. Point-and-shoot cameras are soooooo last millennium.

Over the summer, I had some time to do a little reading and reflect on what I see as some truly unprecedented occurrences that happened during the past year. I leave it to my colleagues in the sociology and anthropology department to fully analyze the impact of some of those recent societal changes, but here are several important ones relating to education that I'd like to discuss:

Education — at all levels — remains under unprecedented and unrelenting scrutiny. I believe in accountability and that at Ship we are accountable for everything we do. That's always been one of our hallmarks, and it remains a philosophy to which we all adhere, so I'm not too worried about accountability. But I am worried about some current views that higher education is just for society's elite or that higher education isn't really that important.

I periodically read the comments on websites of area newspapers and television stations. More and more, it seems that those commenters question not just the value of higher education, but the value of an education even at the basic level. Some also question why we, as taxpayers should pay for others to receive an education. Those people seem to have forgotten our collective responsibility to each other as members of society to educate future generations for success.

Another issue that concerns me involves funding of education — a highly charged topic. The 2012-13 Commonwealth budget maintained level funding for PASSHE. While this might not seem like good news, it actually is when you consider that the original proposed budget included a 20% cut in funding. In addition, the Board of Governors approved a tuition increase of \$188 for this year. This increase is well below what we need, but the Board of Governors and all the presidents agree that any increase should be reasonable and the funding difference shouldn't be made-up by students, especially in these difficult economic times. Even with that increase, and with final enrollment numbers not yet known, we still have to make budget cuts of approximately \$750,000. In recent years we faced very significant deficits, made cuts as needed and as appropriate, while we maintained our programming, our quality and our employee levels. Once again, we will engage in the collaborative process of finding ways to do more with less at Ship, a challenge at which, unfortunately, we are very good. And again we will carefully fill positions, limit purchases and aggressively look for ways to enhance our revenue. As we move forward through that aggressive posture for the future, we will try to find ways to do more with more!!

Another observation that troubles me deeply is the seemingly endless disparaging of teachers, faculty members, and professional staff at colleges and universities. When I hear you described as overpaid, underworked and pampered, I disagree.

Those making such comments:

- Don't know your skills and talents and how you're always fine-tuning those to improve our student's education and foster the critical thinking they'll need to succeed in a confusing and rapidly changing world.

- Don't know your commitment to learning and giving our students a first-class education so they can achieve their dreams.
- Don't know how passionate you are about educating our students and the lengths you'll go to do that so they can lead our businesses, communities, and country.
- But I do — I see it in action every day.

I appreciate everything you do for your students and for this university. Every day, in so many ways, you provide our students with an education that will make an unbelievable difference in their lives. It's an education I'd stack up against other institutions in Pennsylvania, the Eastern United States region, and the United States as a whole knowing we do as well — or better — than they do.

In our Academic Master Plan — that I know will be completed by the end of the Fall 2012 semester — the first sentence of our mission statement reads:

“Student learning is at the center of the academic mission of Shippensburg University.”

To make Student Learning the Center of the Academic Mission at Ship, we'll do these four things:

1. First, and especially for the new undergraduate students arriving tomorrow, we want to support you, the faculty in every way possible so that you can continue to embrace and employ the following “Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” first articulated by Chickering and Gamson 25 years ago and are no less relevant today:

They said good practice in undergraduate education:

- Encourages student-faculty contact.
  - Encourages cooperation among students.
  - Encourages active learning.
  - Gives prompt feedback.
  - Emphasizes time on task.
  - Communicates high expectations.
  - Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.
2. Second, our new Performance Funding indicators are ones where we control a portion of our funding with a focus on the high impact educational practice of undergraduate research.
  3. Third, the work of two groups will be especially important to support Our Middle States recommendations and preparation for our 2014 PRR-Periodic Review Report for Middle States. These two groups are:
    - The CUE (Center for Urban Education) Equity Scorecard Campus Evidence Team — look for their report and recommendations which will revolve around the question of institutional policies and practices that may impact equity, and
    - The Academic Affairs Assessment Team (AAAT) — they're dedicated to expanding the culture of assessment and keeping up our momentum heading into the PRR, providing funding for

departments and programs to undertake assessment projects, and keeping you informed through the assessment website: [www.ship.edu/aaat](http://www.ship.edu/aaat)

4. Fourth, to promote and support innovation in teaching, learning, and assessment, Shippensburg University is hosting a conference this fall entitled: “Emerging and Innovative Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Practices to Ensure Student Success.” Over 118 proposals were received from faculty throughout PASSHE for presentation at this seminar. Considering that, and the work put into this seminar, we know it will be outstanding and we look forward to attending.

During the summer I also learned more about MOOC’s – Massive Open On-Line Courses, the Khan Academy, and new ventures like TED and Coursera – WOW!! What great changes are out there! It allowed me to think about the many successes we’ve accomplished together and what we plan for this year and beyond:

- For the third straight year, we were named one of the best colleges in the nation to work for, according to a survey by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Even better is that we were ranked in three categories: collaborative governance, work/life balance and supervisor/department chair relationship. All of these categories reflect our belief in the importance of our employees and our unique culture. And .... even better, we were the only one of the 14 PASSHE universities to be recognized.
- Last year, we were awarded more than \$3 million in grants from such organizations as the National Science Foundation, NASA, USDA Forest Service and the U.S. Agency for International Development. One of those grants led to the formation of the Pennsylvania STEM University Partnership for the Advancement of Academic Women, a collaborative effort that will have a major impact in those areas in the next few years.
- We continue to review and enhance our academic programming with a new Master of Teaching in science education degree and a Bachelor of Science in software engineering degree. These were the first of their kind in PASSHE and show that we remain in the forefront of the system universities in meeting the needs of our students and the region. Our programs are also being offered in wider areas including our MBA in East Stroudsburg and expanding the MSW program into Schuylkill County.
- Multiple student groups, led by their faculty advisers or in cooperation with faculty, earned various national awards. These included the Women in Computer Science Club, SUTV, the Investment Management Program, the Chess Club, and the Software Engineering team. Your efforts in conjunction with your students allow them to excel and to earn these prestigious accomplishments.
- Nowhere was your commitment to students more evident last year than during the annual Celebration of Student Research Conference. The diverse and innovative research you helped about 500 students present was impressive. I look forward to an even better celebration in the spring of 2013.
- Your support of student research also prompted the start of the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience program. The 12 students and 12 faculty members are involved in a range of research projects that will be presented on Academic Day.

- Several of our faculty members are also working on various smartphone apps in areas such as pre-calculus to help our students learn better. Someone asked if I was getting Janet Bufalino's fashion app so I didn't wear the same outfit too often!
- You may have heard that the governor signed the Higher Education Modernization Act that will give us new ways to save money and new opportunities to enhance our academic programming. Thanks to the act, we can now work more closely with you to help you use your research abilities to develop valuable products and services. It also gives us the ability to offer applied or professional doctorates in a number of high-demand fields in our region. I'm excited about these changes and working with you on these projects.
- We're also very glad that we received several accreditations last year. The board of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs extended accredited status to the clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and student affairs and college counseling programs. The International Association of Counseling Services also re-accredited the Counseling Center. Congratulations to all involved in those efforts.

Again, tomorrow morning, very early, a new generation of students joins the Ship family. They will come to us in search of many things, including an outstanding education. They will also come to us with enthusiasm, with hope and, most importantly, with great potential. Our job is to help them reach that potential. That's what we do and that's what we do well. For that, I again thank you and look forward to a great 2012-13 academic year.

I hope to see everyone at the BBQ tonight at 6 pm at the Student Recreation Complex as we celebrate the opening of another academic year.

Thank you and welcome back!