

**Honor Society Brunch/Major Gift Benefactors Recognition Remarks**  
**July 17, 2011**  
**Tuscarora Room • Reisner Dining Hall**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining us this afternoon and for giving both the university and the SU Foundation the opportunity to express our deepest gratitude for your support of this wonderful university. I also want to thank you for visiting the Luhrs Center and having the opportunity to see what we consider to be the premier cultural center in the Cumberland Valley — and maybe even a little farther.

Several weeks ago, members of the Class of 2015 were on campus for a day-long orientation program to help acclimate them to their new university. A week from tomorrow, students who are transferring to Ship from other colleges or universities will have their orientation.

While all these students are new to the university family they share something in common with you. They, like you, have placed their trust and their faith in Shippensburg University. They, like you, understand the value of a Ship education. And they, like you, know that Shippensburg and its graduates will play an important role in the future of our nation and the world.

Author Robert Louis Stevenson said, “Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant.”

In some ways, these new students — and all of our nearly 8,500 students — are seeds you have helped plant. Your generous gifts for which I am thanking you today will no doubt bear their fruit in the coming years when outstanding students will benefit from your unselfish commitment to Shippensburg.

The adage that mighty oaks grow from small acorns can be adapted to say educated women and men grow from the seeds of your support. You look to the future with hope, wisdom and insight, and you see that as society changes, the one remaining constant is the need for education. You see a need for leaders and you see the need for an organization to accept the challenge — and responsibility — to educate those leaders. Thanks to your help, we have accepted that challenge and, I say with pride, we are successful in that role.

The funds you so graciously entrust to the SU Foundation that ultimately support Shippensburg University are deeply appreciated. Endowments that provide scholarships to students who are talented and deserving, but who face financial challenges, are crucial to their success — and our collective future. Your funds also help support our student-faculty research program that continues to grow each year and provides an opportunity for more collaborative scholarly work. Also, your funds support our efforts to continually meet the challenge of providing appropriate technology for our students as they prepare for jobs that aren't even dreamed of today.

I said earlier that I am proud of our successes, and, once again, we have had many during the past academic year. For example:

- The Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education approved our request to start a Bachelor of Science degree program in computer engineering, the first such degree program among the 14 PASSHE universities — hopefully this means we are on our way to having an Engineering College one day. The program is in response to a growing need in Pennsylvania for individuals who can develop software and hardware for a class of computer systems known as embedded systems which include microcontrollers, custom embedded systems and mobile computers. Graduates will have the skills to build and develop software for these complex and increasingly ubiquitous computing environments and to help meet the large and growing demand for trained engineers in Pennsylvania and the surrounding region.
- Our Academic Master Plan will be finalized this fall semester and along with some great work earlier this summer on a great set of goals for the next five years, we are well on our way to continue to provide the academic preparation both our students and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania need for a successful future.
- The university signed agreements with two international schools for joint programming. Our pact with La Rochelle International Business School in La Rochelle, France (southwest of Paris in the Bordeaux region) will promote development of joint studies, research and training activities, and other educational programs of mutual interest. Under the agreement, the two institutions agree to cooperate in the exchange of students for either one semester or an entire academic year. The other agreement is with Wrocław University of Economics in Poland to continue work on development of exchange programs between the universities and to promote activities of mutual interest. Tom Verney, from our College of Business, will be in Wrocław in Spring 2012 on a Fulbright Scholarship. Shippensburg has been working with Wrocław University for several years and the signing formalizes the intent of both institutions to cooperate and expand that relationship.
- Shippensburg earned a record seventh Dixon Trophy, the annual award that honors the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference's most successful athletic program. Ship recorded the largest margin of victory in the 16-year history of the award and has finished first or second in the Dixon standings 12 times. It also is the second straight award for the university. Shippensburg totaled 166 points — also a new record — to edge Indiana University of Pennsylvania by 16.5 points. Ship finished last year with seven PSAC championships, including the men's soccer title for the first time since 1975. We also had a record number — 131 scholar student athletes — requiring a 3.25 or above.
- Work was completed in the spring on Huber Art Center's renovation and expansion at a cost of about \$6.8 million. The work included a three-story addition, an increase to the sizes of the existing art laboratories, and added student gallery and locker space. Our formal ribbon cutting will be in September.

- Work is progressing — and I am told a bit ahead of schedule — on the construction and renovation of the Ceddia Union Building. The university will re-occupy some parts of the CUB this August with the work expected to be complete in December 2011.
- The planning for building the new residence halls is in the process of being finalized with the sale of nearly \$75 million in bonds last Tuesday — at a very attractive interest rate for Ship. The project will start with the demolition of the old Faculty Office Building (the Red Barn) this next week. The project, under the direction of Shippensburg University Student Services Inc., is expected to cost about \$225 million for new apartment/suite-style, on-campus housing. This project is a business-style project with the room rents going to pay off the bonds and the first phase is expected to open in Spring 2013.

As proud as I am of these successes, I am prouder still that they come despite some of the most serious fiscal challenges the university has ever faced. Since the 2003-2004 academic year and continuing through the just ended 2010-2011 academic year, the university has cut nearly \$20 million from its budget. In 2011-2012, it looks like we will cut another \$3 to \$4 million.

Those cuts have forced all of us to rethink what we do and how we do it — and we have. Thanks to hard work and lots of input from all members of the campus community, no cuts were made that directly impact the quality of the education we provide or our students' ability to earn their degrees. Our focus is, and always will be, on our students. That focus will remain no matter what fiscal challenges we face. This is our commitment — and our promise — to our students, their parents and to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

We need to remind all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that the numbers should help us move in the right direction. It costs nearly \$16,000 per year to educate a student at Ship — tuition, fees, room, board — the works; it costs nearly \$33,000 per year to incarcerate an adult in Pennsylvania; and upwards of \$60,000 per year to incarcerate a juvenile. Now you tell me what our best investment should be!!!

To say that last year was a challenge is an understatement, and even though I expect the 2011-2012 academic year to also pose challenges, I am optimistic because of some of the changes that I mentioned earlier. Baseball star Yogi Berra, who has his own way with words, said, "Prediction is difficult, especially about the future."

I can't predict the future, but I can promise that the university will continue to adapt, to change and to meet any challenge. We will look to expand our programming where appropriate to meet regional demands, we will continue to prepare our students for an ever-changing world, and we will make the most effective and efficient use of all resources we receive.

And we will do all this thanks to you and your commitment to this great university. You make this university a better place, and for that all members of the campus community are grateful. Thank you again for being here and for all that you do for Ship.