Here is a statement that you have never read in one of our quarterly reports: The past two months have been relatively quiet in our university. However, this report comes only two months since the previous report. Even in the last two months, we have engaged in important and interesting advancements of the University.

Following the support of the Council of Trustees, the April meeting of the Board of Governors for the PASSHE did respond to a number of requests from Slippery Rock University that launched important initiatives for our future. The Board approved a Master of Science degree program in Adapted Physical Activity to begin this coming fall; a Guaranteed Energy Savings Agreement (GESA) project to begin this summer estimated at $4.6 million with a simple payback of 15 years; and approval to construct a new 4,500-squarefoot art studio at a cost of about $900,000 with design underway and completion projected for August, 2009. The single most significant approval provided by the Board was to construct a new 76,500-net-square-foot student union building using System bond funds of approximately $37 million. Planning for this signature building has begun and completion of the facility projected for fall, 2011.

All of these initiatives join a set of action plans on our campus that are framed by our University Strategic Plan. Work continues on the articulation of the University Strategic Plan. As indicated in earlier reports, we have now developed an acceptable plan vetted by the University Strategic Planning Committee and available to the entire SRU community.

However, the more I work with this plan the more unsettled I've become that this plan does not challenge us to be a true leader in higher education in service to our students and our communities. In fact, the longer I spend in conversation through the more than 30 faculty department meetings and other sessions across the campus this past year, the more troubled I am about our strategic plan.

Consequently, I've proposed to our faculty another version of our strategic plan that more boldly and convincingly proclaims our mission to prepare the next generation of educated citizens; citizens who are capable of serving the perplexing problems of our planet. By focusing on the educational needs of the future, “2025 and Beyond,” (the current title of the plan) we would proclaim our passion to provide our students with the intellectual skills and the leadership talent to make a difference in the quality of life on our planet throughout their lifetimes. Instead of examining our internal processes and subsuming our mission within the great monotony of every other educational institution of higher education, we would acknowledge:

- There are global forces that will challenge this generation,
- That we are cognizant of those challenges, and
That we proclaim our mission to prepare this generation and those who follow to be a force for positive change in our world.

Defining those challenges is difficult. For the purpose of demonstrating the argument, I've proposed to our faculty five of an infinite possible set:

- Population and demographics;
- Science and technology;
- Understanding other cultures;
- Maintaining commitment to social mobility and;
- Resource allocations and environmental stewardship

For the coming year, the University community will discuss this concept of a strategic plan and develop by consensus what Slippery Rock University believes to be its mission and the appropriate challenges to be addressed by our teaching, research, and service.

This should be exciting work. As a public university we are committed to produce competent, civil, and caring citizens willing to make their communities and possibly the world a better place for all people to live and work. Our students are already engaged. They already recognize these themes as ones they will have responsibility for addressing. We need look no further than any issue of the campus newspaper, The Rock. There are stories every week highlighting our students’ efforts to serve humanity, preserve the environment, and improve our health and welfare. Now, we will see where this version of our strategic thinking will take us.

The past two months have not been without achievements and there are a number of accolades to report. Among the more significant are the numerous accomplishments of our athletic program. Here is a chronicle of the work of our student-athletes and their coaches over the spring season:

- Women’s softball team earned a first-ever berth in the NCAA regional tournament,
- Women’s tennis team earned PSAC runner-up honors and earned a berth in the NCAA Round of 16 for the second time in school history,
- Women’s tennis team coach Matt Meredith was selected as the winner of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association’s East Regional “Coach of the Year” award,
- Women’s outdoor track and field team won a third straight PSAC championship,
- Men’s outdoor track and field team won its first PSAC championship since 2000,
- Women’s and men’s track and field coach, John Papa, was selected as the winner of both the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association men’s and women’s outdoor track and field "Coach of the Year" award as well as the PSAC Outstanding Coach award.
- Women’s track and field assistant coach Dave Labor was selected as the winner of the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association’s East Regional women’s outdoor track and field "Assistant Coach of the Year" award,
- Five SRU women student-athletes (Nicole Blaesser, Jennifer Hansen, Jen Harpp, Whitney Hendershot and Allison Smith) and four male student-athletes (Nate
Hardie, Brad Mueller, Pat Reagan and Jeff Weiss) earned individual berths to the NCAA Division II outdoor track and field national championships,

• 17 Rock spring sport student-athletes (9 baseball, 5 softball, 2 women's tennis) earned All-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference-Western Division status, and

• 181 Rock student-athletes earn PSAC Scholar-Athlete status, a school record and conference-best total. This represented 45% of SRU's total student-athletes.

In addition, SRU was recognized by the NCAA as a recipient of two Diversity in Athletics Awards in the categories of "African-American Graduation: Male Student-Athletes and Gender Diversity" and "Overall Excellence in Diversity."

SRU received the Division II Community Engagement Award of Excellence for creativity in advancing relationships within the community (One of 22 winners across the nation).

And, Slippery Rock University won for the first time the Dixon Trophy as the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference's most successful all-around athletic program.

On accepting the Dixon Trophy at the PSAC luncheon, I said, “Two and one-half years ago we set out to do the right thing for our women athletes and to be in compliance with the law. Receiving this trophy means to our campus that you can do the right thing and remain competitive.”

Other significant achievements in the past two months were:

• Slippery Rock University was one of only 22 institutions in the nation to be cited for “Promising Practices in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Collaboration” by the National Association for Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

• The Slippery Rock University Student Government Association Preschool and Child Care Center has been asked by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to allow publication of its Preschool Curriculum and Daily Schedule as a model for others.

• Slippery Rock University received four Conservation Awards from the Bartramian Audubon Society for establishing Audubon wildlife sanctuaries since 2005. The sanctuaries, part of the University’s green landscape and outdoor learning initiative, preserve 210 acres. The sanctuaries include 83 acres at the Robert A. Macoskey Center for Sustainable Systems Education and Research, 73 acres behind the Old Stone House, 42 acres of Miller forest on Wolf Creek and 16 acres of forest off South Main Street. SRU also received a Certificate of Recognition noting that the properties provide the necessary elements for birds and butterflies to survive.

• Six Slippery Rock University athletic training majors have received $2,000 scholarships from the National Athletic Trainers' Association Research and Education Foundation – the most ever awarded by the association to students.
from one institution. Two students also earned $2,000 scholarships from the Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers’ Society.

- The Slippery Rock University Foundation hosted a spectacular scholarship gala at the Marriott at Cranberry Woods. More than 200 attendees enjoyed the evening of dinner and awards with more than $105,000 contributed from the event.

The semester ended on another high note with the largest single graduation in our University’s history: more than 1,300 degrees awarded. Our Commencement speaker, Dr. Helen C. Sobehart, a 1972 SRU graduate and recently named president at Cardinal Stritch University, was our speaker under cloudless azure skies and gentle wafting winds: As it should always be for Slippery Rock University!