President’s remarks to the
Council of Trustees
March 8, 2013

To borrow the words of legendary broadcaster Gabriel Heather, “There’s good news tonight.”

After what seemed like an interminable long winter break, campus finally returned to normal with the start of the winter semester. Although as predicted, enrollment was slightly down, this was offset by news that 946 students took classes during winter session, an increase of 515 students (+119 percent) compared to last year. Winter session generated 2,821 credit hours, an increase of 1,563 credit hours (+124 percent) compared to the prior year. All winter session courses were offered through the University’s Desire2Learn online system. Students tell us they found winter session attractive for a number of reasons. It allowed them to complete work toward graduation, get a jump on the upcoming year’s load and explore new academic areas. We see winter session as a growth area and have already begun to study how we can provide more learning opportunities for our students next year.

In early February, after nearly two years of negotiations, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and APSCUF, the union representing the faculty systemwide reached a tentative agreement that averted a potential job action. Earlier this week, APSCUF conducted a ratification vote on each of the 14 campuses. Those votes are being counted today in Harrisburg, so hopefully by the end of the day we’ll be one-step closer to closing this chapter.

I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention that a major player in moving contract talks forward was our own former provost, Bill Williams. Bill officially retired February 8 after serving the University for nearly 32 years. Two of his last acts were to “bring the contract home,” and provide a smooth transition for our new Provost. Although the Academic Affairs Committee introduced him earlier, I want to officially welcome and acknowledge Dr. Philip Way. I know he is going to provide great leadership for the University.

On the heels of the tentative agreement, Gov. Tom Corbett announced his proposed budget, which included “flat funding” for the 14 state-owned and four state-related universities. This was certainly good news compared to the past two years when higher education appropriations were drastically cut. However, with flat funding, the level of state support is roughly equal to funding levels for Fiscal Year 1997-98, when the University enrolled 7,038 students. We now serve 8,559 students.

Those of you who’ve been around the commonwealth much longer than I understand much can happen between the time the Governor proposes a budget and one is finally passed. PASSHE representatives appeared before the House Appropriation Committee, last Monday, and the Senate Appropriations Committee, last Tuesday, to both thank them for their support of higher education, and to remind them that nearly 75 percent of the revenue that pays for the operation of PASSHE universities now comes from students. PASSHE, including a team from SRU, will be back on the hill April 16 to tell our stories and put a personal face on the value of an affordable, accessible and attainable education. I hope you can join us in this effort.

One Slippery Rock University alumnus, whose life success is a testament to the education he received at SRU, recently returned to campus to share his story. Robert Stevens, ’76, currently the executive chairman of Lockheed Martin, grew up the son of a steelworker and was the first in his
family to attend college. He used that opportunity and personal initiative to become arguably one of the most accomplished business leaders in the world.

During his visit, he spoke to students about leadership and the importance of honesty, integrity and character. He had the standing-room-only crowd mesmerized when he told them, "leadership potential resides in everyone. But more than the potential, I believe it is everybody's responsibility to find those moments in time where your leadership, and only your leadership, will be essential to what outcomes you can achieve."

Finding one's moments. A message that clearly underscores the University's commitment to produce competent, civil and caring citizens who will make their communities and our world a better place for all people to live and work.

Earlier this week, the University received external validation of our success in this area when we were notified SRU was named to the 2013 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The Honor Roll recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. Selection to the Honor Roll is recognition from the highest levels of the federal government of our commitment to service and civic engagement on the campus and in our nation.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the thousands of SRU students and their advisers who participate in volunteer and academic service learning opportunities in the commonwealth, across the nation and internationally. I'd especially like to acknowledge the great work Brad Kovaleski, Laurel Dagnon, Lorraine Stubbs and Julie Varnish are doing with our Center for Student Involvement and Leadership.

This has been a busy week for the University. Monday through Wednesday we hosted our fourth annual Diversity and Inclusion Series. This year's series focused on Title IX: Today and Tomorrow and featured keynote addresses by Ann Cody and Dr. Donna Lopiano.

Ann has been a Washington veteran and Paralympic sport expert for more than two decades serving in various capacities including federal affairs, Paralympic Games management, and as an athlete. She has been recognized by the Women's Sports Foundation as one of 40 women who made a significant impact on society after playing sports during the 40-years of the Title IX era.

Donna, an educator, former coach, longtime director of women's athletics at the University of Texas at Austin and former chief executive officer of the Women's Sports Foundation, has devoted more than four decades advocating for equality in college athletics, particularly on behalf of increased opportunities for women. She was recently honored with the NCAA President's Gerald R. Ford Award at the 2013 NCAA Convention.

As part of the program, the University awarded its inaugural Title IX Champion Award to Dr. Carol Matteson. This award recognizes and honors an individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of gender equity.

A Slippery Rock University graduate, Dr. Matteson became the fifth president of Mount Ida College in 2000 and retired in 2010, after a decade of leadership. A nationally recognized leader and champion for the advancement of higher education, she has served in executive and faculty positions at public and private colleges and universities across the country. In 1991 she was named a "Distinguished Educator" in Pennsylvania and in 1999 she received SRU's outstanding alumni award.

Over her lifetime, she has been engaged in understanding the critical issues facing education and has
been dedicated to helping students of all ages learn to turn their potential into a lifetime of personal and professional achievement.

It was an honor for me to welcome Carol home and to present her with this signature award. She certainly exemplifies the highest level of SRU success.

Additional SRU success stories I’d like to share in this report range from the Grammies, to Disney on Ice to the Atlanta Falcons.

- Stephen Hawk, Slippery Rock University professor of music, was nominated for a Grammy for the fifth time in his career. Hawk played lead trumpet on Bob Mintzer’s Big Band “For the Moment” CD, which had been nominated for Best Large Jazz Ensemble CD of the Year.

- Stephanie Clark, a Slippery Rock communication/journalism major from McDonald, displayed her 17 years of figure skating excellence when she was invited to audition for “Disney On Ice.” Clark, who has won 81 medals and ribbons since she was 5, was required to demonstrate footwork, choreography, jumps, spins and theatrical elements as part of the audition. Clark now has to exhibit her patience, as cast assignments will not be announced until June.

- Eric Avila, a 2010 Slippery Rock University athletic training graduate, has been hired as an assistant athletic trainer by the Atlanta Falcons of the National Football League. Avila, who received his master’s degree in adapted physical activity from SRU in December, had been an intern with the Falcons. A New York City native, Avila was the first person in his immediate family to earn a college degree.

- The Pennsylvania State Association named Robert Ogoreuc, an assistant professor of physical education, Physical Education Teacher of the Year for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

- Bruce Boliver, an assistant professor of parks and recreation, has received the 2010 Resort and Commercial Recreation Association Fellowship Award. Boliver is only the sixth person and the first since 2008 to receive the award in the 32 years it has been in existence.

- Slippery Rock University’s Public Relations area was awarded 10 national and 2 regional awards in three adjudicated competitions. Competing against both professional advertising agencies and in-house designers, SRU won five awards in the national Collegiate Advertising Award program, five awards in the Educational Advertising Awards program, and two awards from CUPRAP, the association of communicators in education.

- Slippery Rock University’s therapeutic recreation program has joined an elite group of only three other institutions in the United States to earn accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs.

- Slippery Rock University’s Student Counseling Center has been re-accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services Inc.

- The “We Can Read” book project, organized by the Student Nonprofit Alliance in memory of those killed Dec. 14 in Newtown, Conn., collected nearly 10,000 books nationally.

- Senior pole vault standout Cameron Daugherty was named as the Atlantic Region Field Athlete of the Year by the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. Daugherty is the lone SRU male athlete who will compete in the NCAA Division II National Championship meet March 9 in Birmingham, Ala. He is in search of his fourth All-America honor and his second national title after winning the event at the outdoor national meet last spring.

- Emily Lobdell, a junior from Warren, Pa., tossed a six inning no hitter to lead The Rock women’s softball team to a 9-0 win over Bluefield State College.
• Lou Trivino, a junior from Greenland, Pa., pitched a no-hit shout to lead SRU to a 10-0 win over Bloomsburg University. SRU (7-0), which is off to its best start since 2005, is currently ranked No. 18 by the National College Baseball Writers Association.

• SRU student-athletes excel both on-and-off the field. Five teams – Field Hockey, Football, women’s Lacrosse, and men’s and women’s Track and Field – won All-PSAC academic honors. Thirteen of 15 teams placed in the top six in the PSAC.

• SRU’s women’s cross country team earned All-Academic Team honors and Shannon Byerly, Stephanie Case, Abby Michaelian, Jenny Picot and Kara Styles earned All-Academic individual honors from the U. S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. In order to be eligible for the individual All-Academic honor, a student-athlete must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or above and must finish in the top 30 percent of all athletes that are eligible to compete at the NCAA Regional Championships. The team earned academic team honors by posting a team GPA of 3.29 for the fall semester.

• SRU’s men’s cross country team earned All-Academic Team honors and Travis Arrigoni, Michael Beegle and Eric Geddis earned All-Academic individual honors from the U. S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. In order to be eligible for the individual All-Academic honor, a student-athlete must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or above and must finish in the top 30 percent of all athletes that are eligible to compete at the NCAA Regional Championships. The team earned academic team honors by posting a team GPA of 3.49 for the fall semester.

• Six members of the men’s track and field team were named to All-Academic honors by the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association for their performance in the classroom and in the field of competition. In order to be eligible for All-Academic honors, a student-athlete must maintain above a 3.25 cumulative grade point average and reach at least the NCAA provisional qualifying standard in their respective event at some point during the indoor or outdoor seasons. Earning All-Academic Honors were: Cameron Daugherty, Trevor Foley, Ethan Geisler, Kevin Jewel, Dan Hedglin and Kyle Toms.

• Kara Styles, a Slippery Rock University physical therapy graduate student from Windber and a distance runner on the women’s cross country team, was named to the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Fall Top 10 in honor of her excellence in the classroom and on the field of competition.

• Five members of the Slippery Rock University men’s and women’s indoor track and field teams earned first-place awards at the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Championships. SRU’s Cameron Daugherty, a criminal justice major from Jacksonville, N. C., and Julia Cain, an exercise science major from Magnolia, Ohio, each captured first place in the pole vault at the championship hosted by Edinboro University. Dan Hedglin, a health and physical education major from Pittsburgh, repeated his first place title in the 60-meter hurdles; D. J. Chisom, an elementary education/special education major from Midland, took first in the 60-meter dash with a time of 6.91 seconds; and Derick Fiedler, an undecided major from Erie, took first in the heptathlon.

• SRU led the nation with 19 selections to the 2012 NFHCA National Academic Squad, which honors field hockey student-athletes with a 3.30 or above GPA. Highlighting the list of honorees for SRU was senior Gabrielle Malishchak, who was the lone four-time selection on The Rock’s roster. SRU earned a National Academic Team Award for their collective GPA of 3.46, just 0.01 points off the top GPA in the nation.

• Barbiann Davis, a “registered nurse to bachelor of science in nursing student” from Ambridge, was presented the national Inspired Comfort Award from Cherokee Uniforms for her impact on the lives of others through extraordinary patient care, sacrifice and innovation while serving as an inspiration to others.

• Regina McDonald, a 1973 Slippery Rock University education graduate, has been named acting chief of police for the city of Pittsburgh by Mayor Luke Ravenstahl.
• Slippery Rock University graduate and Rutgers University head women's basketball coach C. Vivian Stringer became the fourth coach in women's basketball history and the seventh coach in Division I basketball history to reach 900 career wins.

• The Robert M. Smith Student Center won "Best Education Design" in the International Interior Design Association of New England 2013 competition. Project partners were: Sasaki, DRS Architects, Gateway Engineers, LAM Partner, Inc., Hammer Design Associates and CJL Engineering.

• The Rocket, Slippery Rock University's weekly student newspaper, won five Keystone Awards, including a first place award for feature photo, from the Pennsylvania News Media Association. The Rocket won three photo awards, one news-writing award and an award for their online edition.

In closing, I'd like to share one additional success and an invitation. Our men's basketball team is playing in a PSAC semifinal game tonight at 5:30 p.m. at IUP against East Stroudsburg. The Rock advanced to the semifinals by posting an opening round win at home against California University of Pennsylvania and a heart-stopping quarterfinal overtime win last Tuesday against Gannon at Gannon. An SRU win tonight will put them in the championship game Saturday at 7 p.m. at IUP against the winner of the IUP versus West Chester semifinal. We'd love to have you join us, but if you can't, you can follow the action via an Internet broadcast on www.rockathletics.com.