Slippery Rock University
Council of Trustees
June 7, 2013

President’s Report

I find myself somewhat surprised that a mere 368 days ago I was starting my first day of service to the University as your new president. The days...and nights...have flown by.

This has been a year of discovery and new pathways for the University and for Henry and me. As promised from the start, I spent the year learning as much as I could about Slippery Rock University, our community and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

I’ve engaged in numerous campus activities with our students, faculty, and staff...the collective community that is the heart and soul of SRU. Through college leadership meetings, student meetings and formal and informal lunches and dinners, I’ve talked, but mostly listened and learned a great deal. I’ve traveled from California to Florida, and eight states in between to talk with more than 2100 alumni and donors, to hear their stories and share their love of SRU.

I’ve taken students to Harrisburg to advocate for higher education funding, and have hosted members of the legislature on campus to reinforce the truisms, “public universities serving the public good, require public support.” This investment in education, particularly at Slippery Rock University, pays off ten-fold for the commonwealth socially, culturally and economically.

It’s been fun to experience my first homecoming, WOW weekend, undergraduate research symposium, honors convocation and commencement. And, it was an honor, to prepare and deliver my first state of the university address...the capstone report of my first year.

As I told the audience, time passes quickly, but some things don’t change.

SRU remains an institution of quality, committed to excelling as a caring community of lifelong learners connecting with the world. This is not just our opinion. It is fact validated by numerous external associations that have named us a College of Distinction, one of the most environmentally responsible colleges, one of the best Universities in the Northeast, one of the safest colleges in the nation, and just last month, one of the Healthiest Employers in Western Pennsylvania.

Our therapeutic recreation program recently became only the fourth such program in the country to earn accreditation and the McLachlan Student Health Center earned three-year accreditation from the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care. Nationwide, less than 20 percent of University Health Centers are accredited.

Time does change some things. As you know, the state system is searching for a new chancellor, we have a new provost, and with the retirements of two vice presidents and the departure of our associate provost for information technology, we are searching for top-notch professionals to fill key positions on our leadership team.
The campus has undergone several transformations to improve the learning environment. The Patterson Hall remodeling and new addition are complete, Phase II of the Technology Learning Center opened, Dinger has new HVAC, McKay has new technology and the Swope practice rooms have been renovated and, much to the delight of everyone, soundproofed.

The Performing Arts Building design is currently being re-engineered and the safety management lab has been designed.

To meet market demands, we are proposing exciting new changes on the curricular side as well. We have proposals awaiting board of governor approval for a master of science in school health nursing, a master of business administration and a physician’s assistant master’s. Our goal is provide quality programs that are agile enough to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students.

With a declining population of traditional students and the proliferation of higher education providers in the region (both for-profit and not-for-profit) the higher education marketplace has never been more competitive. As you saw earlier, our enrollment marketing is utilizing new tools and new messages to engage potential students and to influence their decision as to where to continue their education. We want all students, traditional and non-traditional to see SRU as THE BEST CHOICE and thus THE FIRST CHOICE as a place to build their monumental future.

This is a challenge, but thanks to Amanda Yale’s team and the collaboration of efforts by other segments of the University, we are holding our own in enrollment. Based upon current data we expect fall enrollment to be down 2.5 – 3.0 percent compared to last year. While this decrease is less than many of our competitors, it still provides a budget challenge since loss of enrollment equals loss of tuition and fee dollars to support our programs.

We do have several bright spots in our enrollment picture. The quality of our incoming students remains high – on this point we will not compromise. Our online programs helped our summer and winter session to grow by 7.2 and 106 percent respectively. We continue to attract underrepresented minority students and our graduate applications are showing a slight increase. This summer we are offering more than 200 courses including international study opportunities, liberal studies and a host of online courses.

Eleven Slippery Rock University students are spending their summer pre-session at the abbey at Wroxton College in England. The study-abroad opportunity is part of a “Power and Authority” summer school course taught by Lia Paradis, associate professor of history. The course traces British power from the monarchs (1700s) through World War II, including the change to aristocratic rule and the current rule of the people.

Growing our enrollment is critical to our success, since tuition and fees now account for nearly 70 percent of our budget. The other 30 percent comes from state appropriations and private funds and there are no guarantee what those numbers might be. The governor has proposed flat funding for this fiscal year, but the budget isn’t done until the governor, the house and the senate all agree on the numbers. While we are grateful not to be facing another year of double digit cuts in funding, flat funding will only provide the support we received in the late 90s when we were a much smaller institution.
However, as I told the audience attending the State of the University address, while we're waiting there are things we can and must do. We need to find ways to open new international student pathways to SRU, we need to assess and develop market driven post-baccalaureate certificates, we need to aggressively partner with regional employers and community colleges, and we need to promote the value of a ROCK SOLID education.

This should be easy. We have exciting things happening at Slippery Rock University and we are proud of our students. Later in my report, you will read a snippet of our students' achievements in and out of the classroom.

The spring semester saw SRU students continue the University's long tradition of service. SRU students offered hurricane relief in small towns throughout New Jersey, presented "anti-bullying" programs in area schools, cared for unwanted animals at local shelters, donated hundreds of pints of blood, raised $52,096 for St. Jude's hospital and contributed more than 5,000 pounds of food to the local food bank.

For the past decade, Slippery Rock University students have been lending a hand to help restore the once-decaying mill town of Braddock. Students returned this year to work alongside the North Braddock Volunteer Fire Department and students from Pikeville, Ky., to help revitalize the community by putting up fencing, assisting with Code Enforcement Data Sheets, painting, planting trees and cleaning up around the Carnegie Library in preparation of its recognition as a Historical Landmark.

The Rocket, the student newspaper at Slippery Rock University, garnered 34 awards from five regional and national journalism associations for work done by its editors and contributors in 2012-13. The Rocket was one of three newspapers nationwide to be named Most Outstanding University Newspaper for 2012-13 by the American Scholastic Press Association. The Society of Professional Journalists named The Rocket the Best All-Around Non-Daily Newspaper (Medium) in their 4th region. The Society for Collegiate Journalists awarded The Rocket an Honorable Mention for Overall Newspaper Excellence (weekly or less). The Rocket's website was also awarded a Third Place designation by the Society for Collegiate Journalists and an Honorable Mention award by the Pennsylvania News Media Association.

Rocket Photo Editor Alex Mowrey received 17 regional and national individual prizes including two First Place National awards and one National Finalist award from the Society of Professional Journalists and two national awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

Kortnee Kozlara, a biology major from Strattanville, and Amber Lellock, a biology major from Rosssiter, received first place awards at the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania University Biologist Meeting. Kozlara's award was for her research examining fermentation in yeast. Lellock's award for her work on cell growth rates in yeast with a mutation that affects sugar metabolism.

Jared Figel, a senior history and philosophy major from Mars, received first place for his paper, "A Critical Response to Richard Swinburne," and Benjamin Zeiger, a junior psychology and philosophy major from New Castle, received a third-place honor for his paper "God and Forgiveness: A Critique," at the 26th annual conference of the PASSHE Interdisciplinary Association for Philosophy and Religious Studies.
This spring we also opened our campus to host a series of workshops to better understand Autism, the environment and the importance of arts and culture.

We hosted the 3rd Congressional District component of the national 2013 Congressional Art Competition. The competition is for high school students, with the winning student receiving the opportunity to display his or her artwork in the U.S. Capitol. SRU art professors judged students’ art and selected first-, second- and third-place winners. Second and third place finishers will have their art displayed in the Washington, D.C., Office of U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, R-3rd District.

It was certainly a pleasure to attend my first Alumni Association Annual Awards Banquet and to honor four SRU graduates with Young Alumni Awards. This year’s awardees were:

- Lyndse Costabile, a 2007 College of Business, Information and Social Sciences graduate and current associate director of development for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University’s Institutional Advancement team;
- Richard Moore III, a 2005 College of Business, Information and Social Sciences graduate, now an account manager in the U.S. Commercial Compliance Practice at CIS, a leading life sciences consulting firm;
- Terry Rodgers, a 2009 from the School of Business, Information and Social Sciences communication graduate, now serving as coordinator of business communication and social media for the Pirates baseball team; and
- Rosie Trump, 2003 dance graduate from the College of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts, now a free-lance artist and dance critic who will become an assistant professor of dance in the theater and dance department at the University of Nevada, Reno in the fall.

For me, one of the best ways to close out my first year is to look to the future. As you heard at the beginning of our session, the University is beginning preparations for the celebration of our 125th anniversary as an institution of higher learning. The leadership team and sub-committees are already working to identify programs and activities.

I want to publicly thank Judy Silva, George Mihalik and Laurel Dagnon for stepping forward to serve as tri-chairs of the steering committee, and special thanks to Wilma Cavill and Bob Watson for agreeing to serve as honorary co-chairs and resident historians for the event. The committee has selected the theme, “Celebrating our Honored Traditions. Embracing our Unlimited Potential.” I couldn’t be more pleased with this sentiment, it sums up perfectly our past, present, and future. The best is yet to come.

As is my custom, I will close my report by sharing with you a sampling of recent success stories.

**ALUMNI**

Michael Wolf, ’88, was appointed by Gov. Tom Corbett and confirmed by the Pa. Senate, as the Secretary of the Department of Health. The department regulates hospitals, nursing homes and various other health care facilities, while supporting public health and prevention initiatives.
George Mihalik, '74, '76, was the recipient of the Eastern Collegiate Football Officials Association's sportsmanship award. Mihalik has a 166-102-4 record in 25 seasons as head coach of the Rock football team.

John Hicks, '63, a member of the Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees and an SRU professor emeritus of elementary education, has been re-elected president of the Pennsylvania Association of Council of Trustees. Hicks, who was named an SRU trustee in 2007, has been active in PACT since his appointment.

Tom Pitzer, a 2008 Slippery Rock University sport management graduate, has been named director of guest services for First & Goal Inc.

Robert Blanc, a 1982 Slippery Rock University allied health graduate, has been named the NCAA Division I Head Athletic Trainer of the Year by the National Athletic Trainers' Association. Blanc has been the head athletic trainer for the University of Pittsburgh football team for 26 years.

Robert Kobet, a 1993 Slippery Rock University graduate and award-winning green architect, came home for the University's "Earth Days 2013" program to present a keynote lecture "Changing Cultures and Communities Through Integrated Sustainability Education."

Troy Morris, a 2007 and 2009 Slippery Rock University mathematics graduate, has received the New Teacher Award from the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers in Mathematics. Morris teaches math at Mercer Middle/High School. The award recognizes his enthusiasm for this students' learning and for introducing initiatives to develop innovative strategies in teaching.

Sarah Patterson, a 1978 Slippery Rock University physical education graduate and 35-year head women's gymnastic coach at the University of Alabama, received the Amanda Grace Taylor Watson Distinctive Image Award from the Capstone Men and Women organization at the University of Alabama. The award is given to persons who exemplify the essence of the university in all aspects of life.

Monte Ortel, a 2004 Slippery Rock University sport management master's degree graduate, has been named director of The Greenbrier Classic, a PGA TOUR FedExCup event.

**FACULTY**

Jacqueline Jensen, SRU instructor of mathematics, earned the Distinguished Faculty Mentor of Undergraduate Mathematics Students Award from the Allegheny Mountain Section of the Mathematical Association of America. The award honors mathematicians who make a significant contribution to the development of mathematics majors as scholars.

John Golden, instructor in Slippery Rock University's School of Business and managing director of the Sustainable Enterprise Accelerator, has completed the National Business Incubation Association's Incubator Management Certificate Program.

Matt Meredith, Slippery Rock University women's tennis coach and a 1992 secondary education graduate, recorded his 250th career victory when his squad beat NCAA Division II Atlantic Regional rival University of Charleston, 6-3. The win improved
Meredith's 15-season career record to 250-97 and gave this year's Rock squad a 9-6 record. While at SRU, Meredith was an outstanding player on the tennis team.

STUDENTS

Michelle Russ, a Slippery Rock University dance major from Frostburg, Md., and Erica Burke, a secondary education major from Wellsboro, were awarded the only two out-of-state scholarships from the Asia Pacific Dance Festival to attend its three-week festival in Honolulu in July.

Katie Saluga, a Slippery Rock University sport management major from Warren, Ohio, and softball team catcher, and Jenna Geibel, an SRU athletic training major from Butler and third baseman, were named to the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference All-PSAC Western Division squad. Saluga earned top honor as the PSAC West Player of the Year. Geibel earned her fourth consecutive All-PSAC selection.

The Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference named Lauren Laubach, a Slippery Rock University exercise science major from New Park and a standout lacrosse player, to the All-Conference team. Laubach, a midfielder, earned her first career postseason honor as a member of the All-PSAC third team.

Six members of the Slippery Rock University baseball team earned All-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference-Western Division honors this spring. Named to the first team were: Will Kengor, an undeclared major from Pittsburgh and shortstop, and John Shaffer, a criminal justice major from Tyrone, who plays first base. Selected for the second team were: Kevin Jovanovich, an undeclared major from Stow, Ohio, a utility player; John Kovalik, a marketing major from Aurora, Ohio, relief pitcher; Lou Trivino, a business management major from Greenlane, starting pitcher; and Jake Weibley, a criminal justice major from Duncansville, center field.

Kara Styles, a senior from Windbar, Stephanie Case, a senior from Columbiana, Ohio, and Kevin Jewel, senior from North Versailles, were named to the Capital One Academic All-District team.

Both the American Baseball Coaches Association and the national Collegiate Baseball Writers Association named junior shortstop Will Kengor, Pittsburgh, a third-team All-American.

Lexi Arnold, a senior javelin thrower from Newberg, who placed third at the NCAA Division II Track and Field National Championships, earned All-America honors for her efforts.

Seniors Kevin Jewel and Cameron Daugherty both broke their own school records and recorded top-three finishes in their events at the NCAA Division II Track and Field National Championship. Both earned All-America honors for their efforts. Daugherty finished third in the pole vault. Jewel earned All-America honors for his second-place finish in the 800-meter race.

Junior pole-vaulter Julia Cain, from Magnolia, Ohio, earned her first All-America honor by placing eighth at the NCAA Division II Track and Field National Championships.