REPORT OF THE

President

to the
Slippery Rock University
Council of Trustees

Friday

December 5, 2014
SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Dec. 5. 2014

John D. Rockefeller once said there is no quality so essential to success, as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature.

I’ve often thought of that quote during this past year as we’ve celebrated our 125th anniversary. Imagine the perseverance needed by the group of local citizens, who in the short time span of just 18 months, acquired the land, erected buildings, appointed an administrator and approved a faculty to lay the foundation upon which the future development of Slippery Rock State Normal School would proceed.

Or the perseverance demonstrated by stakeholders throughout the past century who nurtured the institution’s growth from a normal school, to a state teacher’s college, to a college and ultimately, a state university – overcoming natural disasters, naysayers and even several wars along the way.

We’ve had a remarkable quasquicentennial year. It was both a joy and an honor to look back on the University’s history and celebrate all that we have accomplished together in our first 125 years.

Shaped by our normal school heritage, and with dogged perseverance, we’ve created an academic community that connects classroom experiences with transformative engaged learning programs such as global study, internships, undergraduate research, service learning and leadership development.

More importantly, we continue to persevere, to seek ways to serve the commonwealth and deliver on our promise 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.

As you heard earlier, we’ve taken a very bold and deliberative action by integrating the former academic and student affairs divisions into one collaborative unit that recognizes student learning happens both inside and outside the classroom and curricular and co-curricular efforts must support each other. We believe this inventive structure holds great promise for improved student learning. By applying the evolving principles of learning to the practice of teaching, the development of curricula, the design of learning environments and the assessment of learning, students will experience more powerful learning and graduate more fully prepared to face the challenges of 2025 and beyond.

**We continue to persevere in efforts to evaluate our academic offerings to keep pace with market demands:**

- Our new doctoral degree in Special Education will start its first cohort in Jan. 2015 – fully subscribed. In fact, we had to move highly qualified applicants to our next cohort.
- Delivery of the master’s in reading education recently went 100 percent online and doubled its enrollment.
- Our special education masters program continues to be the largest in the state.
- The first cohort of MBA graduates will receive their degrees at the Dec. 13 commencement. This blended program offered both online and in traditional learning environments, was developed to meet the needs of working professionals and exceeded enrollment goals in its first year.
• This past week, Slippery Rock University was designated a 2015 STEM Jobs Approved College as part of the inaugural list created by Victory Media. The list is the first-of-its-kind to rate universities, colleges, community colleges and trade schools on their responsiveness and relevance to high demand, high growth STEM occupations.

• Later in today’s meeting, I hope that you will approve the University’s request to seek Board of Governor approval for a physician assistant master’s degree. This program will build upon our strong foundation in the health sciences and meet a critical unmet need in the commonwealth. Indeed, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the need for physician assistants is projected to grow 38 percent by 2022, much faster than the average for all occupations. Increased demand for healthcare services from the growing and aging population and widespread chronic disease, combined with a shortage of physicians – especially in rural areas, will result in increased demand for physician assistants. We believe we are uniquely positioned to help meet this demand.

We continue to address demands for how, when and where academic services are delivered:

• In 2015 we will implement three-year degree completion options in Business Communications and Criminal Justice.

• We are offering more than 100 winter session classes, the second largest program in the State System.

• We have implemented a preferential registration process for veterans and active duty service men and women.

• We continue to look for opportunities to develop global partnerships. SRU delegations visited Vietnam in Sept. and Turkey in October. As a result, we have MOUs pending at three institutions in Vietnam and six in Turkey. These partnerships will allow students from these countries to study at SRU and students and faculty to undertake studies and teaching opportunities abroad.

• Hosted the 40th annual International Dinner and International Alumni Reunion, which drew nearly 40 international alumni. At the dinner, we awarded the Distinguished International Alumni Award to Eric Wikramanayake of Sri Lanka. Wikramanayake earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biology from SRU and his Ph.D. from UC-Davis. He is currently a Senior Conservation Scientist with the World Wildlife Fund.

• Hosted “Experiment” an exhibit that showcased an international collaboration project between the Fibers Studio at SRU and the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, Poland.

• The Centre for Student Involvement and Leadership will sponsor 11, weeklong service trips (CareBreaks) over spring break to sites in: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and Virginia. Three winter CareBreak trips, involving 40 students, will provide community service in Texas, Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

As always, we judge the test of our effectiveness to be the positive difference we make in the life of the student.

• Slippery Rock University placed first among all State System schools in meeting performance indicators. SRU scored 9.5 out of possible 10 points; earning the University $3,932,270 in performance award funds.

• We were especially pleased when an outside survey firm found Slippery Rock University students rate their SRU experience higher than their peers at other four-year public universities. The Student-Satisfaction Inventory, administered last spring semester at SRU by Noel-Levitz, reported that 88 percent of SRU students said SRU is meeting or exceeding their expectations, and nearly 75 percent responded that if they had to do it over, they would enroll here again.
• Slippery Rock University was again named a College of Distinction and one of "the best places to learn, to grow and to succeed." The rating noted, "The University is distinguished by its commitment to academic excellence, leadership and citizenship."
• Slippery Rock University has been named one of the nation’s “46 cheapest online colleges” by Affordable Colleges Online for, “low tuition, full collection of online programs at multiple levels and years of demonstrated academic excellence and financial support.” The ACO rating noted SRU, “put quality education and student success first.”
• Boozel and Weisenfluh dining halls were named among the nine top favorite sites of Food Management magazine, which covers foodservice operations, events and trends.

Athletics had a commendable fall performance:
• Women’s field hockey and men and women’s soccer all participated in PSAC post-season tournaments. Rock Football won the PSAC football championship and earned a berth in the NCAA field of 24 for the football national championship playoffs.
• Marcus Martin, a Slippery Rock University a safety management major from West Mifflin and a defensive lineman on the football squad, was named Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Western Division Freshman of the Year.
• Slippery Rock University junior offensive lineman Cory Tucker (South Park, PA/South Park was named one of eight national finalists for the 2014 Gene Upshaw Division II Lineman of the Year award. The award will be announced next week.

As is my fashion, I will end my report by sharing a sampling of the accolades earned by our students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Student kudos:
• The Rocket, the student newspaper at SRU, received a Best of Show Award at the National College Media Convention. The Rocket also captured four Gold Circle Awards from the nearly 11,500 college and secondary school newspaper entries in the annual Columbia Scholastic Press Association contest.
• Dorothy Stromdahl, a Slippery Rock University resort, recreation and hospitality management major from Titusville, received the Bill Swan Memorial Award from the Pennsylvania Intramural Recreational Sports Association.
• LeAnn Penn, Slippery Rock University biology major from Cortland, Ohio, was named one of the Tribune Chronicle’s Top 20 Under 20 Student nominees. Penn was selected for her exemplary leadership, community volunteerism and academic success.
• Slippery Rock University education majors Lindsay Gahr from DuBois; Katelyn Hill from Stow, Ohio; and Sara Werwie from Clarks Mills, won the student poster competition at the National Collegiate Honors Council convention. The three took top honors in the education and pedagogy category for their research study “Student Teachers’ Selection of Read Alouds in Early Childhood and Special Education Classrooms.”
• Alex Tabor and Shelby Heisler, from Penn and Moon, earned first prize in the Pennsylvania Historical Association’s undergraduate poster research competition for their study of the 1970 death of Ronald Mitchell and its impact on the civil rights movement in New Castle.

Faculty kudos:
• Christine Pease-Hernandez, communication, received a “Minority Achievers Award” from Minority Opinion/Talk Magazine. She also received the YMCA “Volunteer-of-the-Year” award from the Grove City YMCA for her efforts in promoting healthy-living.
• Wenhao Liu, a Slippery Rock University associate professor of physical and health education, was inducted as a fellow in the American College and Sports Medicine. ACSM is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world.

• Keith Dils, dean of Slippery Rock University's College of Education, received the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators' Service Award. Dils donated the monetary portion of the service award to SRU's Storm Harbor Equestrian Center. PAC-TE is a nonprofit professional association for Pennsylvanians engaged in the preparation and development of professional educators.

Alumni kudos:

• Deanna Ferrari Tomaselli, a 2006 Slippery Rock University communication graduate and now a social marketing specialist at rue21, has been honored as a 2014 “40 Under 40 Award” winner by Pittsburgh Magazine and PUMP.

• Jennifer Lastik, a 2004 Slippery Rock University sport management graduate, received a “40 Under 40 Award” from the Orlando Business Journal. Lastik is vice president of events for the Central Florida Sports Commission.

• Robert Stevens, a 1976 Slippery Rock University graduate and recently retired executive chairman of Lockheed Martin Corp., the world's largest defense contractor, was elected to the board of directors of U.S. Steel Corp., effective Jan. 1.

• Diane Melby, a 1979 Slippery Rock University recreation graduate, was named president of Our Lady of the Lake University. She will assume the top post in July.

• Adam Forgie, a 2000 Slippery Rock University secondary education graduate, received the Human and Civil Rights Awards Educational Leadership Award from the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

• Kara Petro Montgomery, a 2006 Slippery Rock University secondary education graduate, has been named director of alumni relations at Westminster College.

• U.S. Navy Capt. Kathlene Contres, a 1977 Slippery Rock University graduate, formerly the Navy's highest ranking female Hispanic officer on active duty until her 2010 retirement, received the President's Title IX Champion Award at the SRU Alumni Association's annual Distinguished Alumni Dinner. Also honored were: Diane Kerr, a 1976 health and physical education graduate; Mario Moreira, a 1984 communication graduate; David Morlock, a 1987 finance graduate and Major Gen. James Williams, a 1975 SRU allied health graduate.

• Patricia Kardambiks, a 1990 Slippery Rock University secondary guidance and counseling master's degree graduate, was named assistant superintendent at the Slippery Rock School District joining Superintendent Alfonso “Butch” Angelucci, a 1992 SRU elementary education graduate.

• Adam Katchmarchi, a 2012 Slippery Rock University health and physical education graduate, received the $2,000 National Swimming Pool Foundation Fellowship Award from the National Swimming Pool Foundation Fellowship. The fellowship goes to an individual seeking an advanced degree with a research focus related to safety around the water.

• Joyce Ainsworth, a 1977 Slippery Rock University secondary education graduate, has been appointed the new Butler County human services director.

• Ronald Hunt, a 1973 Slippery Rock University physical education graduate and a 1976 physical education master's degree recipient, has been named senior vice president, commercial banker, at S&T Bank headquartered in Indiana, Pa.

• Kristopher Hupp, a 1999 Slippery Rock University secondary education graduate, received one of 17 national “Busting Boundaries Awards,” which celebrate teachers, administrators and educational technology organizations that make exemplary use of technology to support learning.
Although you have already recognized the honorary and tri-chairs of our 125th anniversary committee, I would like to personally acknowledge and thank Bob Watson and Wilma Cavill for serving as our honorary chairs, and Laurel Dagnon, George Mihalik and Judy Silva for providing great, sustained leadership throughout our yearlong celebration, and all the committee chairs and committee members who worked diligently to take us “Through the Looking Glass,” lead us in marches, throw a magnificent birthday party, honor our founders, celebrate the community, read the thousands of names of our graduates and treat us to “An Evening of the Arts.” It was a memorable year. Thank you.

And now...may our continued perseverance lead us to even greater success. The tradition continues.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Norton, president