

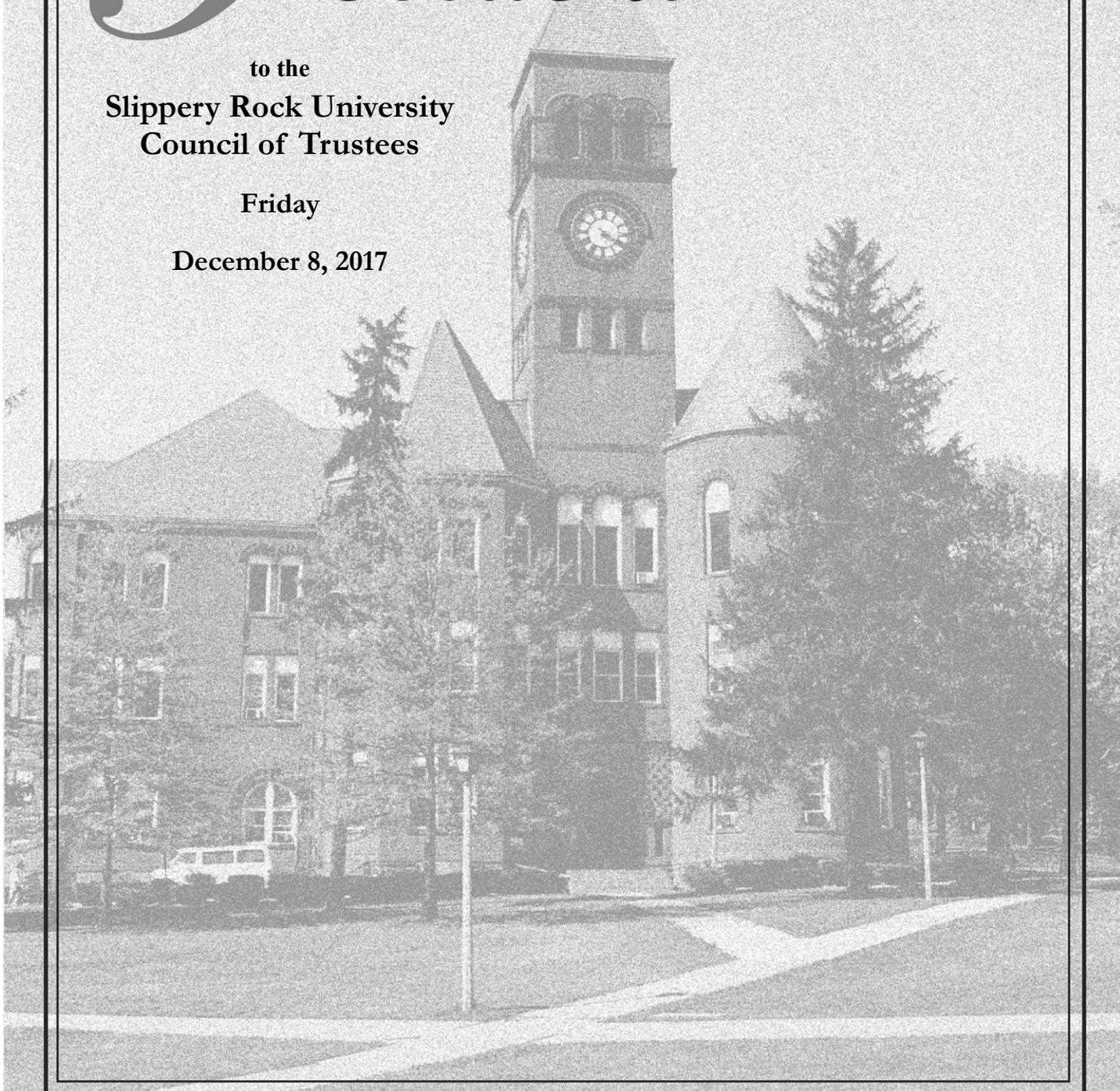
# REPORT OF THE

# *President*

to the  
Slippery Rock University  
Council of Trustees

Friday

December 8, 2017



# Slippery Rock University

## Council of Trustees

### President's Report

Dec. 8, 2017

WOW, our fall semester week of welcome, and commencement bookend the fall semester. WOW provides the opportunity to embrace and challenge our new students, and to reinforce Slippery Rock University's values of leadership, inclusiveness and civic engagement, while commencement provides the opportunity to celebrate our students' successes, and send them into the world to make a positive difference.

In between those two events are the thousands of routine (and sometimes not so routine) meetings, programs and events that are the fabric of daily life at the University.

The beginning and ending of this semester, and all the events in between, have had special meaning for me this year since I'm experiencing them for the first time as interim president. It's certainly been an enjoyable and educational semester; one where I have come to more truly appreciate the truth of management guru Peter Drucker's statement, "time is the scarcest of resources and unless it is managed nothing else can be."

Although time precludes me from sharing every story, let me share several items that have shaped the University this past quarter.

I am pleased to report Slippery Rock University once again placed in the top three among State System universities in performance funding. SRU received 7.75 points out of a possible 10 points for which we earned \$4,134,420, an increase of \$94,135 compared to last year. Performance funding earnings are used to support academic program development, and to invest in undergraduate research and other high impact practices that are key to student learning and engagement.

This investment is paying off in a multitude of ways, not the least of which is how students describe their SRU experience.

You should be proud to know, Slippery Rock University students continue to rate their overall experience at the University higher than do students attending peer institutions, according to the 2017 report from the National Survey of Student Engagement.

NSSE, a national survey administered by the Center for Postsecondary Research, obtains information from hundreds of colleges and universities nationwide about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development.

NSSE's 2017 Snapshot Report for SRU compares the University's performance against its peers from within Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education.

First-year SRU students ranked six engagement indicators - learning strategies; collaborative learning; discussions with diverse others; student-faculty interaction; quality of interactions; and supportive environment - "significantly higher" than their counterparts at other State System

institutions, while SRU seniors ranked three indicators - collaborative learning; student-faculty interaction; and supportive environment - "significantly higher" than their State System peers.

Fifty-two percent of first-year SRU students participated in at least one high impact practice, while 14 percent took part in two or more. In addition, 66 percent of SRU seniors took part in two or more HIPs, while 23 percent took advantage of one.

Research has shown that the deliberate engagement of students with a HIP has a direct influence on student success and we see that in our four-year graduation rate. A more engaged student is more than likely a more successful student.

Ninety-four percent of SRU's first-year students ranked their overall experience at the University as "excellent" or "good," compared to 84 percent their respective State System equals, while 88 percent of SRU seniors felt the same way as compared to 85 percent of their PASSHE counterparts.

SRU students also outpaced their State System colleagues among those who would "definitely" or "probably" attend the University again with first-year students boasting a five-percent advantage (88 to 83), while seniors posted a six-point edge (86 to 80).

Results from the NSSE survey are used as part of our continuous improvement program as well as being used for benchmarking purposes and to demonstrate an institutional commitment to improvement and effectiveness.

#### INSTITUTIONAL ACCOLADES

The institution's commitment to excellence and effectiveness continues to be recognized.

During this quarter, Slippery Rock University was:

- Named one of the top ten universities in the state of Pennsylvania for music majors by Zippia.com.
- Ranked among the nation's Top 50 "best online big data" degree programs by bestcomputerscienceschools.net.
- Ranked among the top 20 College and University dance programs in the nation by Dance-College.com. SRU came in at No. 15 nationally, No. 7 regionally and at No. 3 in Pennsylvania.
- Named one of the top ten universities in the state of Pennsylvania for social work majors by Zippia.com
- Named as one of the five best colleges for special education majors in Pennsylvania by career website, Zippia.com.
- Ranked among the top 25 programs in the country for online master's degree in special education by thebestcolleges.org.
- Recognized as a one of the Top 25 best online colleges in Pennsylvania by thebestcolleges.org.
- Ranked No.5 on the list of "Top Online Master's in Elementary Education" by TheBestColleges.org
- Recognized as a one of the Top 25 best online colleges in Pennsylvania by thebestcolleges.org.
- Ranked among the nation's Top 50 "best online big data" degree programs by valuecolleges.com.
- Named one of the top ten universities in the state of Pennsylvania for music majors by Zippia.com.

## SRU ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

In addition to the national accolades SRU earned, two alumni and two SRU student-athletes shone on the national stage this semester.

**Melanie Cole**, who earned her master's degree in special education from SRU in 2012, was awarded the prestigious Milken Educator Award, considered the Oscar for teaching. Melanie, a special education teacher/transition coordinator at Slippery Rock Area High School, provides learning support for approximately 100 students in grades 9-12. Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera, Alfonso Angelucci, SRASD superintendent and a distinguished member of the Council of Trustees, and I were on hand to see her receive the honor, which comes with a \$25,000 unrestricted award.

**Patrick Reagan**, '10, was named the 2017 USA Track and Field Ted Corbitt Memorial Ultra Roadrunner of the Year after posting the fastest 100-mile trail time in the world this year. Patrick won the Javelina Jundred 100-Mile Endurance in 13:01.14. His time averaged out to 7:49 per mile for 100 miles at 7,900 feet of elevation. Incredible.

**Milly Raye**, a redshirt senior wide receiver from Pittsburgh, helped SRU football attract national attention. Through the diligent efforts of Jon Holtz, director of athletic communications, a video clip showing one of Milly's touchdown runs caught the eye of ESPN's Sports Center crew who followed and featured him and SRU for eight consecutive weeks on the national award-winning show. One video showcasing Milly's electric speed and signature spin move captivated social media and drew more than four million views.

SRU student-athlete **Marcus Martin** also shined on the national stage.

Earlier this week Marcus was inducted into the 2017 National Football Foundation's National Scholar-Athlete Class. As such, he was one of only 13 players nationally, at all playing levels, to be a finalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy and be awarded \$18,000 toward his post-graduate studies.

It's been a month of accolades for Marcus.

He was named the 2017 Gene Upshaw Division II Lineman of the Year award winner with a record vote. Marcus received a first place vote on 73 percent of all ballots submitted, setting a record for first place votes in the 14-year history of the award. He became the second Slippery Rock player to win the award, joining 2010 winner Brandon Fusco, who is the current right guard for the San Francisco 49ers.

As the recipient of the Gene Upshaw Award, Marcus will be presented with a trophy and honored at the Manheim Touchdown Club's annual banquet in May. He also receives an automatic invitation to the East/West Shrine Game, marking his second significant senior all-star bowl game invite after he was already invited to the NFLPA Collegiate Bowl.

Wednesday morning Marcus was named a first team All-American by the American Football Coaches Association and was named the national runner-up for the Ted Hendricks Award.

The Hendricks Award is presented annually to the top defensive end in all of college football. Marcus was the first Division II player to ever be named a finalist.

That honor came on the heels of being named one of 10 national finalists for the Harlon Hill Trophy, presented to the Division II College Football Player of the Year.

Marcus, the only defensive player in the country to be named a finalist this year, is just the 10th defensive player in the 32-year history of the award to be named a finalist and is the first defensive finalist for the honor since 2007.

Marcus led the nation in Division II this year in sacks (15.5) and tackles for loss (26.5) and finished his career as the NCAA's all-time, all-division record holder in career sacks (56.0). He also set the Division II all-time record in tackles for loss (92.5). In the classroom, Martin owns a cumulative GPA of 3.56 and will graduate in December with a degree in safety management and a minor in business administration.

Marcus has been named the PSAC West and Super Region One Defensive Player of the Year and a first team All-Conference and All-Region selection for the fourth straight time.

He was named the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Western Division Defensive Player of the Year for the third straight season, becoming the first player in PSAC history to earn four consecutive major awards after also winning Rookie of the Year honors as a freshman. Martin also became just the eighth player in PSAC history to earn four-straight first team All-Conference honors.

His selection to the AFCA All-America team guarantees that Martin will finish his career as an All-American in all four years.

I'm sure Marcus will be keeping SRU's name out front nationally when we watch him play on Sunday's next season.

#### TROOPS TO TEACHERS

In other great news for the University, I am excited to announce a new initiative directed at veterans. Slippery Rock University has received a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to prepare military veterans for teaching jobs in school districts and subjects that are in need of certified teachers.

The state approved SRU's proposal to establish a Troops to Teachers program and awarded a competitive grant of more than \$272,000 that SRU and West Chester University will use to provide accelerated training toward teaching certification for veterans with bachelor's degrees.

As part of the statewide initiative, SRU will place veteran student teachers in one-year residencies in Pittsburgh Public Schools and West Chester will facilitate residencies in the Chester Upland School District.

Although it is impossible to capture everything that has happened this quarter, it's clear SRU is on the move, and the future promises to be even more exciting. What we have achieved, and what we will achieve, is only possible because of the exceptional Slippery Rock University family that instinctively knows what is expected of them, where the bar is, and how to move the bar higher every day.

As is the custom, I'll end the President's Report by sharing with you some of the many individual accolades earned by our students, faculty, staff and alumni.

## STUDENTS

- **Jondavid Longo**, a Slippery Rock University graduate student in secondary education from Slippery Rock, was recently elected mayor of Slippery Rock. Longo, 27, will be the youngest mayor in the borough's history when he takes office in 2018 for a four-year term.
- **Clare Clark**, a junior environmental science major from Brookville, and **Ellie Schiappa**, a junior geography, environmental studies and sustainability major from Grove City, were invited to present their work at the PASSHE Honors Directors meeting.
- **Jennifer Bauer**, a Slippery Rock University senior biology major from Tionesta, will have her research of lichen species published in a peer-reviewed journal. Her research, titled "A preliminary checklist of lichens for Lawrence County, Pennsylvania," will appear in the December issue of *Evansia*, which is published by the American Bryological and Lichenological Society.
- **Julia Rider**, a Slippery Rock University senior nursing major from Hanover, was named a 2017 Nightingale Awards of Pennsylvania scholarship recipient at the 28th Annual Nightingale Awards Gala.
- **Matthew Magliocca**, a Slippery Rock University junior secondary education: English major from New Castle, has self-published his first book, "Overcome and Strive: Part I."
- **Tess Keeley**, a senior tourism, resort, recreation and hospitality management major from Pottsville, Australia, and **Brooke Testra**, a junior biochemistry major from Rochester, New York, were named to the United Soccer Coaches 2017 All-Atlantic Region Team.
- **Courtney Oberlander**, a senior exercise science major from Waterford, was named to the 2017 American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) All-Atlantic Region Team.

## FACULTY / STAFF

- **Sam Thangiah**, professor of computer science at Slippery Rock University, was named a 2017 Talk Magazine Minority Achiever.
- **Molly Mistretta**, **Michael Ignelzi** and **Stacy Jacob**, student affairs in higher education professors, are three of the four coauthors of a book about student affairs case studies, "Complex Cases in Student Affairs."
- **Aiping Chen-Gaffey**, associate professor, library bibliographic services and **Heather Getsay**, assistant professor, library resource acquisitions, have authored the book "Measuring the Validity of Usage Reports Provided by E-Book Vendors: Emerging Research and Opportunities."
- **Andrew Winters**, instructor of philosophy, has released his book, "Natural Processes: Understanding Metaphysics Without Substance."
- **Junko Yamamoto**, associate professor of secondary education/foundations of education, was certified as an oral proficiency tester of Japanese by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language.
- **Joanne Leight**, SRU professor of physical and health education, was named a 2017 Faculty Athletic Representative Honoree by the National Football Foundation. Leight was honored for the significant contributions she plays in the overall educational experience of SRU student-athletes. She received a \$5,000 donation to support academic support services at SRU.
- **Elliott Baker**, retired director of academic records, summer school and graduate studies, was awarded honorary membership in the Middle States Association of Registrars and Officers of Admission during the organization's annual conference.
- **Itzi Meztli**, associate professor of English, was recently elected to a four-year term on the Slippery Rock borough council.

- **Staff Sgt. Ryan Graeves**, military science department Pennsylvania Army National Guard liaison, has been selected as the PAARNG Recruiting and Retention Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.
- **Bret Rogowitz**, assistant professor of military science, has been selected as the 2nd Brigade Army ROTC Recruiting Operations Officer of the Year.

## ALUMNI

- **Steven Smith**, a '94 graduate with a degree in special education, was named Pennsylvania's 2017 Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in Washington, D.C
- **Julie Akerly**, '10, a graduate with a degree in dance, was among three winners of the 2017 Mayor's Arts Awards, presented by Phoenix (Arizona) Mayor Greg Stanton and the Phoenix Center for the Arts.
- **Stephanie Claus**, '16, and **Bryan Robert Deal**, '17, graduates with bachelor's degrees in safety management were part of the SafeYouth@Work Congress, organized through the International Labour Organization as part of the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work.
- **Todd Garzarelli**, '98 sport management major, was named director of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.
- **Troy Fornof**, '91 graduate with a degree in communication, was named vice president of underwriting and marketing, contract division, at Western World Insurance Company, a specialty U.S. commercial insurer, offering insurance products on a surplus lines and admitted basis.
- **Bryen Spriggs**, '10 graduate with a degree in professional studies, was hired by the Community College of Beaver County as sports information and college events administrator and men's basketball coach.
- **Erica Nelson**, '04 graduate with a master's degree in sport management, has been named director of student-athlete development at the University of Arkansas.
- **Erica Aiello**, '16 graduate with a major in Physical Activity and Fitness Management, has signed a professional contract to play basketball with the Ulriken Eagles in Bergen, Norway.

Before I close, I want to take a minute to memorialize the passing of 2015 Slippery Rock alumnus and former football player Brian Shaw, who was killed November 17 in the line of duty while serving as a police officer in New Kensington. He was 25 years old.

Shaw was a four-year member of The Rock football team, helping the squad to a pair of Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Western Division titles in 2011 and 2013 while serving as the team's primary kickoff specialist. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Slippery Rock University's interim president. I look forward to seeing you at commencement, Dec. 16 at 11 a.m. and to working together in 2018.

Respectfully,

Philip Way, interim president

