



DEPAUW UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 37 • Greencastle, Indiana 46135-0037
765-658-4800 • www.depauw.edu

October 10, 2013

Dear Members of the Washington C. DePauw Society,

As a member of the Washington C. DePauw Society, you are among the University's most generous and loyal supporters. I am grateful for all that you do for DePauw, and I write to you, near the beginning of an academic year, because I believe it is important that you periodically hear directly from me about DePauw. I would like to speak to you, at length, about where we are going, what opportunities we face, and what may be the most pressing challenges before us as a university.

One cannot open a newspaper without seeing commentary on the affordability, relevance, and effectiveness of the nation's colleges and universities. All segments of higher education—from the large public research universities to the community college systems—have come under sharp scrutiny. Our own type of institution—one of a small number of nationally-regarded liberal arts colleges—faces its own particular set of questions. We are in a privileged position; the best of the liberal arts colleges attract some of the leading students in the nation and produce, disproportionately, those who go on to lead our public and private enterprises. But we face our own specific challenges. So, I do not anticipate the level of questioning, about us and about our peer institutions, to lessen anytime soon.

To be frank, what we do at places such as DePauw is expensive. To provide the sort of intensive academic and residential experience we offer takes considerable resources. Further, we will never see at DePauw the type of scale economies that one sees at the large state universities. We have small classes, taught by highly talented teacher-scholars. We invest in our faculty so that they can continue to engage our students in transformative ways. We have state of the art classrooms, studios, and well-equipped laboratories. As we seek to enrich the academic offerings of the campus to make a DePauw education among the very finest in the nation, we will continue to face the resource pressures associated with our kind of education.

We also face a never-ending challenge of explaining exactly what a liberal arts education is and how it benefits students. Without offering specific degrees in, say, accounting, pharmacology, and electrical engineering, we will continue to face the challenge of demonstrating to the world how our form of education prepares students not only for their first job, but for a life of promise. We do, of course, apply considerable University effort into helping students determine their postgraduate careers, and we are unafraid to speak about the need to specifically help students obtain jobs and graduate school admissions. But the effort necessary to communicate the value of our type of education remains challenging. I would, of course, argue that the core elements of a liberal arts education are more relevant today than ever before. But in a world in which data regarding first job placement has come to dominate the public evaluation of a university's value, we must fight through considerable noise to speak about the full nature and value of what we do at DePauw.

I have long believed in the liberal arts form of education. I also believe, quite strongly, in the specific ways in which it happens at DePauw. We combine a rigorous education with a campus culture that prizes sociability, connection, and the development of leadership skills. Our students go into the world able to think critically and write well, to speak clearly and analyze complexity. They also have a type of

confidence that is a direct product of the social life and leadership opportunities present on our campus. We produce educated citizens fully capable of leading lives of accomplishment and purpose. But it remains true that, while we are strong and while we believe in this form of education, we continue to ask what we can do to make DePauw even stronger.

It is essential, therefore, that we at DePauw stay focused on what we do, why we do it, and how we can do it better. The task is to make sure that the University focuses on four core questions:

- Is the faculty strong and the academic program exemplary?
- Are we—through our curriculum and programs—providing an experience for our students that fosters engagement and leadership while preparing them for post-graduate success?
- Are we attracting strong students and providing sufficient financial support to allow them to enroll and remain at DePauw?
- Do we have a campus that not only attracts leading students and faculty but supports our form of education?

We must address these four questions, and we must do so in a way that takes into account the national landscape of higher education today.

The Faculty and the Academic Program

The long-term reputation and strength of any college or university is directly connected to the strength of its faculty and the nature of its educational program. Underneath any sense of a college or university—its strength and its relevance—is an evaluation of its academic quality. Are students educated there?

As you know, we take pride in the excellence of our faculty and the manner in which DePauw professors engage our students. DePauw has invested heavily in the size and quality of its faculty for decades now. We prize smaller, discussion-based classes. We have faculty working directly with students. Our decision to operate in this fashion brings challenges to our financial model, but also obvious advantages to DePauw students.

In the years ahead, as we look to find ways to ensure that our faculty are among the finest teacher-scholars in the nation, we must consider what resources are required to help in their continued development. We will have to seriously consider how faculty time and effort is arrayed in service of our students' education. And we will have to decide how we can develop new courses and programs as new areas of knowledge are developed. Liberal arts colleges, as with our university peers, must embrace new ways of teaching, new fields of knowledge, new ways of looking at old questions. This calls for continual review of our academic programs and a continual evaluation of the resources required to support the type of academic enterprise we seek.

With the arrival of DePauw's new Vice President for Academic Affairs we will be having conversations on campus about the nature of our academic program and the ways our faculty can best engage with our students. The academic enterprise remains the necessary core of the University. If we are to be among the very best colleges of our kind, we must always consider how to strengthen teaching and learning on this campus. In the months ahead, I hope to speak more directly about this with you.

I also will encourage Mark McCoy, Dean of the School of Music, to apprise our alumni about the significant changes occurring in this prized area of the University. Dean McCoy is leading a series of initiatives, known collectively as the 21st Century Musician Initiative, to reimagine music education for our time. This is a remarkable set of changes, and a remarkably exciting thing for DePauw.

Student Engagement and Preparation

DePauw has undertaken considerable effort, for decades, to connect the liberal arts to the world in which our students will pursue their careers. Our Fellows Programs—Management Fellows, Media Fellows, Science Research Fellows, and (now) Environmental Fellows—are prime examples of this effort. These programs are, in some ways, unusual in the liberal arts college sphere. Many of our peers avoid programs that so directly connect the liberal arts to particular career paths. But these programs are an important part of DePauw's culture.

Today, we are even more committed to forging connections between the classroom and careers. The newly created Hubbard Center for Student Engagement is the surest sign of this effort. The Hubbard Center, located in the Memorial Student Union Building, combines the offices and programs of Career Services, pre-law and pre-med advising, internships, Winter Term and summer programs, off-campus study, and community service-learning. The Center is designed to help students weave together all of their DePauw experiences—from internships to study abroad programs to service work—so that they can fully develop their capacity to engage with the world. The Center will work with all DePauw students to make sure they have a plan for their education and a route for lives of promise once they leave campus.

Our alumni will be asked to play an important role in this. Alongside our Office for Alumni Engagement, the Hubbard Center staff will be working to make it easier for alumni to connect with students in ways that I expect will be valuable and rewarding for both our students and our alumni.

Our students have always had a remarkable penchant for leadership, whether developed as officers in their Greek houses, as captains of varsity or intramural teams, in musical ensembles, student media, or student government. DePauw must dedicate itself to encouraging this tradition of ambition, and to helping our students develop a sense of purpose that will serve them throughout their lives. I hope to report more about the Hubbard Center and the success of our students in moving from their liberal arts education to successful lives as alumni. This center and the programs it houses will remain a key area of focus for DePauw for years to come.

Supporting Students: Access to a DePauw Education

Taken together, the strength of DePauw's academic program and cocurricular offerings are powerful, but they are not without cost. DePauw's commitment to providing students with a high-quality liberal arts education must, therefore, rest alongside another goal: ensuring that a DePauw education is accessible to students regardless of their financial means.

The continuing impact of the global economic downturn has meant that many DePauw families and families of prospective students are increasingly, and rightfully, concerned about their ability to pay for their sons' and daughters' college educations. Colleges that aspire to educate students from all walks of life must be prepared to address these concerns.

Dating back to Washington C. DePauw and then to the Rector Scholar program, DePauw has a long tradition of supporting promising students with the potential to succeed on a campus like ours. We also have an endowment that provides considerable support to the overwhelming majority of our students. The challenge before us is simple, if not easily addressed: Can DePauw continue to assemble the resources necessary to ensure that promising students—the type of students who have always thrived at DePauw—continue to enroll at this institution? If we cannot, we will lose DePauw students, *our students*, to those private institutions that have the resources necessary to offer scholarships equal to the financial needs of students.

I often remind our faculty and staff that our form of private education has always been subsidized, first by the church, and now by the alumni-built endowment. No student pays the full cost associated with being educated in this manner. This is true even for those students who are paying the “list” price for DePauw. This reality underscores the role played by our endowment and by alumni gifts.

As of this writing, though, DePauw does not have sufficient endowment to meet the full needs of the students who apply to the University and seek to enroll. Quite simply (and to use an insider’s term) we are forced to “gap” students. Once we can determine a student’s true financial needs, we do all we can to provide scholarships and other support to meet those needs. We fall short, however, for many of the students who want to come to DePauw. This is the “gap.” These admitted students, students we want to come to Greencastle and students who want to be at DePauw, face a choice: they can either take out private loans to attend DePauw or they can choose to enroll at institutions with sufficient endowment to meet their needs or lower-priced public institutions whose costs are publicly subsidized.

I have called on the administrators in our Financial Aid Office to specifically understand the true level of this “gap” and have directed them to do all they can to spread our available resources to meet the needs of as many students as possible. I have also directed our Development and Alumni Engagement Office to make the support of our students among the highest of our priorities. And, in the months and years ahead, I will be calling on our alumni and other friends to address this institutional priority. If we are to remain a leading institution, and an institution that helps students in all ways possible, we must continue to find the resources to raise our endowment to levels seen at peer institutions.

The Campus

The fourth element of a leading college or university is its campus. The great colleges and universities are also great *places*. Great campuses foster a sense of community and connection. They draw people together. With these goals in mind, the University’s Board of Trustees approved a comprehensive *Campus Master Plan* in October of 2010. This plan has been the guide for an array of current and planned enhancements to the DePauw campus.

If you come to campus this year, you will notice quite a bit of construction and a number of newly completed projects. We have created a new entrance to the University along Anderson Street. We have moved our Admission Office to the core of campus. Our athletics facilities are undergoing major enhancements, including the expansion of the fitness and recreation facilities with the Welch Fitness Center, the installation of new synthetic turf and a new track at Blackstock Stadium, and the construction of a new multisport stadium for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey and intramurals. In the months ahead we will break ground on Hoover Dining Hall and we will finalize plans for renovations to the Union Building to better accommodate the Hubbard Center. Finally, we continue to work with the City of Greencastle to improve the downtown experience.

The point of these projects is not just to make the campus more attractive and appealing. These projects are part and parcel with our other efforts to strengthen DePauw and make it a place that attracts strong students and educates them well. The University environs is one of our most powerful “tools” in the education of students and the creation of a strong campus environment. Keeping the campus up-to-date will remain a focus for the University for years to come.

In Conclusion

DePauw and other leading liberal arts colleges across the nation represent something quite remarkable in the realm of higher education, something that must be preserved. In the decades ahead, these schools will face enormous pressures to adapt to changes in the national and world economic context and to the

evolving needs of industry and commerce. This is a good thing, in that engaging with real-world challenges can strengthen a college.

On the other hand, external pressures and financial realities will compel many liberal arts colleges to consider a move away from their traditional mission towards a less resource-intensive, and hence less personalized and interactive, model of education. Despite the clear advantages to students of their current programs, only those institutions that are solidly supported by endowment and annual giving can be confident in their capacity to continue the tradition of leadership and success as liberal arts colleges through the 21st century.

I expect DePauw to be one of the schools that will continue to lead in this way. We are moving forward on many fronts, from improving the campus to strengthening our academic program, to enriching the overall student experience. Your support has made this possible. Your belief in the value and power of the kind of education that DePauw provides is an encouragement and an inspiration to those of us here on campus who are working to keep DePauw vital and strong.

It is good work in which to be engaged, and I am grateful to be doing it with you.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian W. Casey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian W. Casey
President