

CONVOCATION : State of the College

9.11.2013

Thomas J. Schwarz, President, Purchase College, SUNY:

I would like to take a moment to remember and recall the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

Welcome to the Academic Year 2013-14. A number of years ago, after reading a book on the Reconstructionist Era entitled “The Second Founding”, I referred to the *Second Founding* of Purchase. I believe we have made enormous progress since the beginning of the *Second Founding* and that we all should be very proud of our College.

As most of you know, in the last few years, we have received a clean re-accreditation from Middle States. We have renewed our ranks in the faculty, hiring over 27 new faculty in the last year alone and we continue on our plan to hire faculty to more than replace those who are retiring.

Our financial house is in good shape and I think we came through the recession in better shape than most SUNY and private institutions.

We are rebuilding our physical plant. The renovation of the mall was finished last year, basically on time. We are now working on the pathways between the buildings which will be finished by next fall.

Our fundraising continues to be at the head of the class of SUNY colleges and we are planning for a capital campaign.

I believe we will reach \$6 million in annual giving per year-

one of our overarching goals for the near future.

And although we slipped somewhat in the four year percentage graduation rate for the class of 2013 compared to 2012, I believe we are still on our way to meeting our 60% goal for the class of 2015.

And, last but not least, we are about to publish requests for proposals regarding the Senior Learning Community – a now ten year project that will add to our resources for scholarships and faculty.

Let me get to some of the details and then I will put some larger issues before you before we get to today’s promotions and awards sections.

Welcome of new administrators:

I welcome Barry Pearson who joined the community as VP and Provost on July 7. Barry Pearson joins us from Milliken University where he worked for 17 years; most recently as the University's Vice President for Academic Affairs. Barry began his career at Milliken University in 1996 as the Artistic Director and then Chair and Associate Professor of its Department of Theatre and Dance. From 2005-2008, he served as the Director of the University's Kirkland Fine Arts Center and from

2006-2010, Dean of the College of Fine Arts.

He was the lead facilitator and principal author of Milliken University's strategic plan. During his tenure as Dean and then Vice President, he oversaw several academic building and renovation projects and initiated and managed key capital campaigns. It is clear that Purchase College will benefit from his extensive knowledge and experience in all aspects of management.

Once again, thanks to the Provost search committee, headed by Suzanne Farrin and Michelle Stewart, for a job well done.

Michael Bailey joined us this past June as our new Chief of Police. Mike is a 22 year veteran of the City of Utica, New York police department. He retired in 2012 as the Deputy Chief of the department, a position he held for 4 years. Mike has had extensive teaching experience as both an instructor of criminal justice and the director of police pre-employment training at Mohawk Valley Community College. We already have benefited from his knowledge and experience.

We welcome Steven Lam as our new Director of Art+Design. Steven comes to us from Cooper Union, where he served as the Associate Dean of The School of Art. He has taught performance art, sound theory, and critical theory at the School of Visual Arts and Cooper Union.

Ross Daly will be the new Chair of the Humanities Department, having been the coordinator of the Journalism board of study for the past 5 years.

And welcome to James Undercofler, who will consult to and support the Arts Management Program. Jim has years of experience in arts management, and we hope that this will lead to expanding our offerings in this growing major both on the undergraduate and graduate level.

Over the past year:

{from Academic Affairs}

It is with great pleasure that we welcome 27 full time faculty members this fall, including 10 on the tenure track. These new members of our community are impressive individuals and will contribute a great deal to the lives of our students. We also welcome 35 very impressive, accomplished part time faculty members.

Purchase College was named to both *The Princeton Review's Best 378 Colleges* and its *2013 Best Value Public Colleges* as well as the *2014 Fiske Guide to Colleges*, a tribute to the quality education offered on the campus. *The Hollywood Reporter's* list of the "Top 25 Dramatic Arts Schools and Programs in the World" placed Purchase in the #10 spot and last winter, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* included us on its list of 100 Best Values in Public Colleges for 2012-2013. Once again *US News* named us a top tier school and we're also ranked among the "Top 10 Public Liberal Arts Colleges" in the nation (we're number 9). I will forward to Peggy DeCooke the Princeton Guide student comments for you to enjoy.

Our students were selected as Best of SUNY in its Arts Exhibition, and won significant scholarships to study abroad. They met the Dalai Lama and the Purchase College Dance Company performed over a series of evenings in NYC. Our *Bridges to Baccalaureate Students* presented research at a Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in San Jose, CA.

Our new NSF funded Bio Lab suite opened in the spring. We recognized a prominent scientist with our third annual Science Entrepreneurship Award, and we successfully staged our first Jandon lecture and our annual Durst lecture.

The Neuberger reopened in April after a 10 month HVAC renovation with a blockbuster event attended by over 1000 guests. This year marks its 40th Anniversary, during which the Museum will publish the first catalogue of the *Roy R. Neuberger Collection*, and award its third *Neuberger Prize* to an artist for an early career exhibition and catalogue.

THE PAC began a very successful partnership with Carnegie Hall this summer in hosting a 2-week residency of the newly formed National Youth Orchestra of America. The Orchestra, composed of 16-18 year olds from across the country hosted its world premiere concert at the PAC-- conducted by Valery Gergiev with violinist Joshua Bell-- to a sold out house.

This summer, **LSCE** ran over 50 courses, of which more than half were delivered online. There were over 1000 registrations with more than 50% of the students coming from Purchase College, the remainder were visiting students. Enrollment in non-credit courses increased by over 10% and reached an all-time high.

Research Foundation activity, in the first year of a newly constituted staff resulted in over \$3 million in grant applications. I look forward to an increase in the amount of grant applications this year.

In our *Teaching and Learning Center*, we continue to develop our suite of learning applications built on open tools. The use of these open tools has allowed us to collaborate on shared services with other SUNY campuses in what we hope will be a model for OpenSUNY as it moves forward .

Meanwhile, **CTS** has made great strides in upgrading services, including replacing 159 computers in 14 labs (1/3 of the total) , 40 faculty computers (1/5 of all full-time faculty) It will create 6 new Smart rooms this fall, and is in the process of upgrading Wi-Fi in all academic and administrative buildings.

The Provost may still be climbing the learning curve but nonetheless has identified several initiatives, including elevating and celebrating the presence of the Senior Project as part of the campus identity. I will be addressing this later. Looking forward, plans are in store to introduce two new masters programs, one in Arts Entrepreneurship and one in Film and Cinema Studies. These new programs reflect the growth and popularity of these two areas of study as well as our commitment to better preparing our students for careers after graduation.

(From Enrollment Management)

Admissions received almost 8,400 applications this year, from which we admitted 3,100. 24% are non-New York State residents from 40 states and 16 countries outside of the U.S. Top majors include psychology, theatre and performance, new media, music performance: instrumental, design/tech, dance, playwriting and screenwriting, journalism, graphic design, and liberal studies.

While final data is collected shortly after our census date on September 24, we estimate that the cohort of freshman from fall 2009 that graduated last May had a 50.1% four-year graduation rate, about 7 percentage points lower than last year's highest ever rate of 57.5%. The projected rates for the liberal arts are about 48% and the projected rate for the school of the arts is 65.6%. While this news is somewhat disappointing, in 2003 just under 35% of our students graduated in 4 years and we've been making steady progress for the last 10 years. While progress is never a straight upward line, there will

be many opportunities this academic year for everyone in our community to make a meaningful impact on the students who are here.

Our VP of Enrollment and our Provost have established a Strategic Enrollment Planning Workgroup—a team to ensure we meet our graduation and student success goals, while retaining fiscal health through a data-informed planning process.

Effective marketing and media coverage creates the buzz that's crucial in our effort to attract the right students, engage alumni, and make the case for advancement. We're pleased to report that over the last six months, our main Facebook page saw a 12.5% increase in fans, **recording** beyond 446,000 viewers. We also gained more than 1,200 Twitter followers in the last 12 months—a 41% increase—and our presence grew on *Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Storify*.

From Student Services

Student Services directed its efforts towards increasing retention:

- Once again, the Academic Resource Center provided high quality support, key to retention. Special programs, like the fall Majors fair, helps students and transfers to better understand and meet academic expectations. The Center has done extensive work with academically at-risk students and the outreach has resulted in lower numbers of students on academic probation (152 this spring vs 169 during spring 2012)
- The numbers of students studying abroad on Purchase College summer programs grew considerably to 73 students for 2012 (33 in 2011, 34 in 2009) most notably with the new programs launched in India, Israel and Argentina for summer 2012. I will say more about this in a while.

- In order to increase our offerings, The Athletic department is building a New Turf Baseball/multipurpose Field with Lights
- 232 men and women competed in our varsity athletics program during the 2012-13 year. 390 students participated in our various clubs and varsity teams. Our athletic program finished in sixth place overall in the Skyline Conference for 2012-13.
- We had 39 Scholar Athletes, four of whom received the Chancellor's Scholar Athlete Award for 2013.
- Career Development Center's annual *Life after Purchase* graduate placement survey indicated that 90.3% were either working or were enrolled in graduate or professional school at the time of the survey. Students and Alumni are taking greater advantage of the Career Center's resources—resulting in record number of internships, attendance at events like "Senior Month" and use of our Purchase JobScore website.

Somewhat related to this, this past spring, I convened an Executive Council on the Arts at Purchase, a council of outside successful '*creatives*' in the arts who would work with both the School of the Arts and Liberal Arts and Sciences to increase the visibility and prominence of the Arts programs at Purchase College, and to advise me and our Arts administrators on strategic issues. The goal is to better prepare our students for a competitive market place. We had our kick off meeting that yielded a plan for a web based Alumni mentoring project. The Career Counseling center has partnered with the Integrated marketing and Institutional Advancement areas to design this project and I am happy to announce that it will be launched this fall. Over the next year, plans are in place to expand this Council to include Alumni and other leaders in industries related to the arts and new media.

From Institutional Advancement

With improved efforts over the past few years, we are beginning to see a positive trend emerge among the founding class cohorts of the 70's. Both the class of 1977 and 1979 have surpassed a 10% participation rate, well past the 4.1% average of public campuses. The class of 1985 has the current distinction of having the highest number of donors and gifts. This academic year, Alumni Relations will embark on a coast-to-coast alumni tour that begins in Los Angeles, strategically visiting cities with high concentrations of Purchase alumni.

The office for institutional advancement has expanded this year. We are pleased to welcome 3 new development directors: Danielle Parillo in the School of the Arts, Tracy Calvin in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Roberta Kjeelgard in the Neuberger Museum. With Sarah Recca as Associate Director of Development at the PAC, all our bases are covered. These development personnel are responsible for creating opportunities and building relationships among alumni, friends, foundations and corporations. They also will work closely with the Deans, Directors and Chairs of their schools to ensure that specific faculty and student needs are addressed.

We were honored this past year to be the recipients of a significant gift from our longtime supporters, Emily and Eugene Grant, in support of need based scholarships, music scholarships, production and faculty support. During fiscal year 2012-13, the combined philanthropic activities of the Purchase College Foundation, The Performing Arts Center Foundation and the Friends of the Neuberger Museum resulted in \$5.4 million dollars raised in support of scholarships, programming, exhibitions and faculty support. We are well on our way to the \$6 million goal in annual giving.

According to various studies, giving, and in particular alumni giving to both public and private institutions continues to be under pressure. These findings illustrate the importance of our advancement staff, in partnership with the campus community, in the development of engagement strategies for our alumni, as well as all donors, based on their interests and inclinations.

From Business and Finance

I am pleased to report that we have once again ended last fiscal year in the black.

The FY 2013-14 Executive Budget provides total support for SUNY funded campuses of \$2.544B, an increase of 4.4% over prior year. The budget maintains the same level of state operating support for each of the campuses.

As we are in the 3rd of 5 years of **NY 2020**, the tuition increase accounts for 100% of our net budget increase of \$1.4M.

Of this core support increase, more than 50% was allocated to Academic Affairs.

We have successfully refinanced the debt remaining on the bond issue used to build Alumni Village. The total savings equates to just under \$150,000/year and will contribute to our goal of residence hall expansion, additional maintenance and upgrades, and overall service.

Our traditional dormitory has been undergoing an extensive 3 year facelift including replacement of windows, doors, exterior masonry, and roof. Exterior work is scheduled for completion in spring 2014. Interior projects including bathrooms are planned for to take place over the next several summers.

In order to meet the demand of our students for on campus housing as well as provide swing space for residential areas under renovation, we have decided to build a new residence. We hired a consultant to assist us in developing a concept for a new residence hall. The expected construction completion, assuming that plans move on a timely basis, is fall 2016 and will be on-line for residence beginning spring, 2017. There will be plenty of discussion and opportunities for input as this project moves forward.

The Dining Hall and Visual Arts rehab work was completed over the summer. The Humanities Building renovation is ongoing. There were unanticipated issues with the inner wall structures that required additional remediation and reconstruction that have delayed occupancy until Fall, 2015

We look forward to beginning the construction of the first of two phases of the CITL building. It will contain instructional, rehearsal, and performance spaces and will also serve as Purchase College's new main entrance accessible via W-1 parking lot. The project is scheduled for bid in November 2013 with construction expected to commence spring 2014 with a summer 2016 completion date.

I would like to recognize Tom Kelly, our new Senior Energy manager. He will oversee the recently completed Energy Master Plan identifying over 30 energy savings projects equaling approx. \$800,000. Purchase is the first SUNY campus to complete such a plan which will guide our compliance with the Governor's Executive Order which aims to reduce energy consumption by 20% by 2020. We continue to explore potential ways to incorporate renewable energy such as solar to supply some of our energy and offset costs associated with fossil fuels. Such initiatives are of paramount importance to me.

(From our office)

We are in the third year of our current strategic plan and continue to pursue the fulfillment of the directions that we identified in the plan. Clearly we are dealing with student success, sustainability, and are broadening our offerings to our students .

Consistent with our MIDDLE STATES SELF STUDY and goals set forth two Convocations ago, we have drafted our first Institutional Assessment Plan that integrates Purchase College's 2010-15 major strategic planning directions with the institutional goals and 2012 Middle States recommendations.

We now have a new one stop shopping assessment page featuring the College's first key performance indicator dashboard, using the Purchase College Fact Book as the primary data source.

A special thanks to Bill Baskin for his commitment to moving this important project forward.

The Banner+ Project, one of our major initiatives to increase institutional effectiveness, is entering its third year and continues on time and on budget. This past summer, we went fully live with functions related to scheduling and enrollment; next summer we will go live with certain student services. These changes are broad sweeping and will make us a more integrated and efficiently functioning College. Barbara Moore, the Banner Implementation team, and the volunteers who have handled the data transfer should be applauded for their hard work and commitment to this project.

Many of you attended meetings this past spring and summer on the Governors Start UP NY program. We are working on a strategy that will allow us to apply for a SUNY2020 grant to develop a project that we hope will attract entrepreneurs in the arts and new media to Purchase. We also will be working with local business councils to identify companies, particularly in the sciences, interested in pursuing opportunities on our campus that will be beneficial to our faculty and students.

Now I would like to turn to some opportunities that I believe we have for further advancement.

As I noted, we have made progress in many areas, including assessment, student success and philanthropy, the issues I raised last year.

I am also pleased with the progress we have made in developing a new Governance structure in order to make Shared Governance effective. I want to thank Peggy DeCooke and her Committee for all their work and I look forward to seeing the completion of the project with the prompt resolution of remaining issues.

But there are three other issues I want to address for this year:

First, as you may have read in the newspapers, there are fewer first year students in college than at any time since 2007. We are also aware of the changes in technology, questions about the value of a four year degree and the increased focus on job creation that challenge liberal arts institutions and arts institutions even further. At the same time, there has been a shift of students away from the Northeast and toward the south and southwest for many years. And of course the focus on Internationalization also puts pressure on institutions to respond and those who don't will fall behind.

As I noted before, Dennis Craig and Barry Pearson along with the Strategic Enrollment group are focused on these enrollment issues.

I want to broaden our attention to these issues by focusing all of us – the faculty and professional staff in particular – on what I believe are three interrelated issues that can not only improve the quality of the education we provide but increase our attractiveness as an institution.

They are:

1. The diversity of our college across all levels, faculty, staff and students. We need to define what diversity means to us. We need a significant increase in faculty and students coming from and going abroad, exchange programs, as well as short and long faculty led study abroad programs. We need to be more focused on diversity and internationalization not only because it is right but because it will make us a better institution.
2. Second and certainly related, we need to ramp up our focus on the threats and opportunities posed by technology. It is almost impossible to avoid reading of the threat to traditional institutions. As I said to the faculty last year, there is no question that many private institutions will go out of business or merge in the next 10-15 years. Federal and state governments share the President's focus on technological efficiency and student success. The term "shared services" will ultimately give way to "merged services" in the public sector. The old order has changed and we put our heads in the sand at great risk of this rising tide.
3. Third, we need to refocus and perhaps redefine the Senior Project. Is it still distinctive? It needs to be. It needs a re-look and it is an opportunity to enhance its quality and our focus. Too often the papers prepared are borderline at best academically. Too often those presenting do not communicate effectively. I am willing to financially support efforts to improve the writing and speaking skills of our graduates. The Senior Project could be a vehicle to address many issues,

including internationalization. The world has evolved since the creation of our senior project requirement. It is time we look at it again in the context of 2013.

So, I challenge the faculty and staff as well as the administration to focus on these issues in the year ahead and to set up task forces on these three interrelated issues. This will prepare us for our discussions for the Strategic Plan for the years 2015-2020.