

Gateways

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College of Charleston
Inauguration Speech
Friday, October 5, 2007
Sottile Theatre, College of Charleston
Charleston, S.C.**

Introduction

Jane and I have been so warmly welcomed to Charleston and the College. You've been so good to us. We feel privileged to be part of this community.

Quite frankly, I didn't realize when I took this job how special the opportunity would be. Over the past eight months I have learned so much about the College, so much about the city, and about the richness and diversity of relationships between the city and the College.

This job is not just about the College. It's about Charleston and all of the city's economic, social, and educational aspects. The College and the city are inseparable; they're dependent on each other. The success of King Street, for example, is due to many people and institutions, including Mayor Riley. Yet its success could not have been sustained without the College. We truly need each other.

Similarly, this ceremony is not just about the presidency; it's about all of us. It's a celebration of the special qualities and the accomplishments of the College community. It's a celebration of the contributions that all of you have made to the shaping and molding of this beloved institution.

Eight months ago I gave up one of the top jobs in higher education to join the leadership team of the College. I was the dean of the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia. We accomplished much for Terry and UGA over those roughly nine years, but I came away with more. Jane and I developed friendships with Terry alumni across the entire state, from Savannah to Columbus and Thomasville to Toccoa. And many of those friends are here today.

I learned a lot from working with those alumni and the faculty and staff at Terry. I learned about leadership, ethics, openness, trust, and relationship building. It was from these lessons that my own leadership style emerged. I want to describe it briefly, both to give you a sense for how the College can move forward and so that we can get to know each other better. It is also the genesis for the theme of this inauguration: Gateways.

Gateways

Picture a beautiful Charleston wrought-iron gate. There are hundreds of them outside that door. Ask yourself, “What is a gate? What is a gateway?” An entrance? An exit? A work of art? At the simplest level, gateways are openings in boundaries. Moving outward, they lead to new, broader, expanded boundaries. Moving inward, they lead to shelter, security and a more confined or constrained environment. I like to encourage people to think in terms of “no boundaries.” In fact, I’ve encouraged our administrative leadership team to adopt that mindset. You can do it! Go for it! Don’t let anything stop you, intellectually or physically. No boundaries! But, in practice, how do you operationalize that phase? What it really comes down to is looking for *gateways* to get beyond an unwanted or unnecessary boundary or barrier

There are many types of gateways: Books are gateways to knowledge; travel is a gateway to cultural understanding; music is a gateway to emotion. Universities are themselves gateways to careers, happiness, and productive citizenship.

Without question, however, the most important types of gateways are human relationships. They yield dialogue, debate, exchange of ideas, moral support, shared beliefs, and new beliefs. Out of these gateways flow opportunities for boundary expansion for all involved. Here are a few examples:

- Together, the president and the mayor work to strengthen the economic, cultural, and social fabric of Charleston. The city benefits; the College benefits.
- Together the faculty and students of our School of Education, Health, and Human Performance work with the superintendent of Charleston schools to improve the quality of our K through 12 system. The city benefits; the College benefits.
- In and outside of the classroom, the student learns from the professor and the professor is inspired by the student.
- The interdisciplinary exchange between two professors leads to path-breaking research.
- An alumnus mentors a student, each gaining new perspectives from the other.
- Alumni and friends who are stimulated by interaction with faculty and students provide resources for new programs, facilities, and scholarships. Everybody wins.

These relationships, these gateways help us to grow and evolve and expand beyond the status quo.

The College needs a lot of things: a new general education curriculum; more faculty; better salaries for faculty and staff; more residence halls, more parking, more faculty offices; a more

diverse student body; better student retention rates; and a national championship in basketball! No problem! Right, Coach?

How do we accomplish all that? By *building relationships* and *being inclusive*. Don't hesitate to reach out and involve others in your project or program. Do these two things and you won't be stopped by boundaries. The relationships you've built will turn into gateways.

Besides building relationships and being inclusive, there are two other lessons I learned that I won't develop here, but will simply mention: be entrepreneurial and don't be afraid to take risks.

Those are my lessons from our successes at the Terry College. Those are principles I will follow as president of the College.

The College

I get asked one question very frequently: "What attracted you to the College?" Many things. The impressive history of the College; the exceptional strength of the student-faculty relationships; the significant role of the College within the city of Charleston; and the persuasive powers of the alumni and community leaders who were involved with the presidential search.

Jane and I feel like we're living and working on a movie set: the live oaks, the Spanish moss, the 18th and 19th century architecture, the horse-drawn carriages. And my commute to the office...just over 100 yards!

The College of Charleston is not a typical campus, it's a neighborhood. And it's not just any neighborhood.

As you walk the streets you literally walk in the footsteps of historic figures, from John and Edward Rutledge and the Pinckneys, to Lafayette, and Andrew Jackson.

The President's House, 6 Glebe Street, was built in 1770 by one of the founding fathers of the College, and its first president, Bishop Robert Smith. It's also the home where John Rutledge spent his last days.

I have become fascinated by Rutledge. He was a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress of 1765 and a delegate to the first and second Continental Congress. He was governor of South Carolina, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, a signer of the United States Constitution, and was appointed by George Washington to the U.S. Supreme Court. Nice résumé!

He was the older brother of Edward Rutledge, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and also one of the College's founding fathers. John Rutledge died in our President's House in 1800.

That's quite a legacy for this little neighborhood!

By the way, this little neighborhood also is the first place in America where the game of golf was played, about three blocks west of here.

The College has always been the centerpiece for revolutionary thought in the city of Charleston. Many pioneering Americans studied at the College and formed their dreams on this campus. I'll mention just three:

- Robert Mills is considered by many to be the first American-born architect. He designed the Department of Treasury building, the U.S. Patent Office and, most significantly, the Washington Monument.
- John Charles Fremont, who received his degree in 1836, was known as the Great Pathfinder. He was an explorer, a general, an opponent of slavery, one of California's first two United State senators, and the first Republican presidential candidate.
- Arlinda Locklear, Class of 1973, a nationally recognized legal expert on tribal land claims and treaty-rights issues, was the first Native American woman to appear before the U.S. Supreme Court. And she won her case!

These are people who expanded the boundaries of our knowledge, our imagination, our sense of place, our vision. The College was their gateway to productive, enlightened citizenship.

These are people our students can look to for inspiration. And like all of our students and alumni, these are people whose roots, whose foundations, whose beliefs were nurtured and strengthened by the College of Charleston.

Today, the College's students directly benefit from the more than 200 years that this institution has been educating young minds. Only a few institutions in the United States have embraced and developed the traditions and curricula of the liberal arts and sciences longer than the College.

This is a place where students learn to stretch their intellectual boundaries, led by exceptional faculty who question yesterday's theories and develop tomorrow's ideas. Faculty who know their student's names, call on them frequently, and involve them in class. Faculty who, in many cases, have met students' parents, and even their sisters and brothers.

And this is a place where students learn from each other. They learn how their personal identities help to create true multicultural understanding. They learn how to work together to effect change. And they learn what it means to be a responsible member of a community.

Each student comes into the College of Charleston in his or her own way. Each graduate leaves enriched, transformed, and connected to the world. This is the legacy of learning at the College. You change. You grow. You learn how to build a life.

Much of this I saw or heard about during the interview process last fall or through the due diligence I performed before accepting the job. Jane and I are thrilled to be part of this unique institution!

The Fourth Century Initiative

The College's very first classes were delivered in the basement of the President's House. Later, military barracks on what is today the Cistern yard, were used as classrooms. Then, in 1828, Randolph Hall was constructed. It housed everything and everybody! It is still the center of campus, 179 years later. But today's campus has about 125 buildings spread across 42 acres in downtown Charleston. Physically, the College has come a long way.

We are all standing on the shoulders of those who came before. Not the least of whom are a remarkable collection of presidents, particularly those during the College's rapid evolution since 1970: Ted Stern, Harry Lightsey, Alex Sanders and Lee Higdon. I particularly want to thank Lee Higdon, who's here with us today. He and our Board of Trustees are responsible for the tremendous recent progress that has been made in campus buildings and facilities.

Lee was instrumental in developing the College's Fourth Century Initiative, the current strategic plan, and a master plan for campus facilities.

Last month we held the grand opening of the George Street Project, a mixed-use residence hall with 638 beds in apartments and suites for upper classmen and freshmen, a parking deck, and retail shops on the first floor. It's right across the street. It also contains a new dining hall that specializes in fresh food that is prepared at various stations right in front of your eyes. There is no back-of-the-house kitchen. It's open to the public, so go in and try it out. I think you'll be surprised by how much university dining has changed.

Other recently completed building projects include the new School of Education, Health, and Human Performance complex that opened last spring, the Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library and the Business School's Beatty Center, both of which opened in 2005.

Other projects in various stages of development include the Carolina First Center, our new basketball and volleyball arena scheduled to open next fall; the Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts, scheduled to open in January 2009; and later this month we break ground on a \$58 million Science Center.

Building a Collective Vision

Most of the College's Fourth Century Initiative has been achieved and everyone involved deserves our thanks and congratulations. But this is not the time to rest on our laurels. We know how special the College is, but most of the world doesn't. We must continue to move aggressively forward, both strengthening our academic programs and proactively reaching out to the world with our students, our ideas, and our creations.

It is time to revisit and revise the College's vision and strategic plan. We will do that over the next 12 months using a version of a process I have implemented before at Minnesota, Rutgers, and the Terry College.

It is a bottom-up process that begins with brainstorming sessions and focus groups both on and off campus, in Charleston, Columbia, Greenville, Charlotte, Atlanta, Washington, New York and elsewhere. All of our constituents will be invited to participate.

Those we don't speak to personally will be asked to participate electronically. Led by a committee of faculty, staff, and students, we will undertake a competitive analysis, an environmental analysis, and SWOT analyses by all departments and schools. We will build an umbrella plan for the College by next fall, then ask the departments and schools to build plans that align with the umbrella plan. Finally we'll revise the umbrella plan based on the department and school plans.

As we develop this plan over the next year or so, we must squarely face and address the College's need for additional financial resources.

Going Beyond State Support

For more than 100 years, the College of Charleston depended on the City of Charleston for support. In fact, the College was the first municipal college in the United States. Since 1970, the College has been part of the state system, relying on the legislature for support of its mission. As recently as 2001, the state provided 31% of our budget. Today, it's about 21%. When I got to Georgia in 1992, state support accounted for about 45% of UGA's budget. When I left UGA, it was about 31%. At Penn State, it's only 11% and at Virginia it's 8%.

Many factors are contributing to the relative decline in state support across the United States, including the ups and downs of the economy, inflation, and other important competing needs within each state. Nevertheless, the general support trend is downward.

This changing pattern of support has implications for student access to higher education, particularly as tuition continues to climb, and eventually will have implications for the governance of higher education.

We're moving in this downward-support direction with very little debate and very little vetting. A public dialogue, both locally and nationally, is long overdue.

But, more to the point, what does this mean for the College of Charleston today? It means we must develop a strategic plan that accounts for potential declines in state support in the years ahead. It means we must be more entrepreneurial, finding new programmatic ways to generate revenue to buffer ourselves from possible state short falls. It means strengthening our culture of giving, encouraging both our alumni and the parents of our students to give back to this remarkable institution.

But none of this can be accomplished without building significantly stronger and more numerous relationships with the organizations and people of the Lowcountry, whether they have ever been connected to the College or not. Many of them need us and/or want to be involved, and we certainly need them on our team.

Closing

The road forward requires a collective vision and significant new financial resources. Both of these require collaboration and commitment from all of us. You can join our collaborative effort by participating in one of our strategic planning focus groups on campus or off. We need your input. No idea is too big or too small.

Remember: we're looking for gateways. Without them, we're confined and constrained. With them, we can grow and evolve and change.

Our challenge - - yours and mine - - is to discover or create the series of gateways that will both draw the world to Charleston and take the College of Charleston to the world.