

Chris Zappe - Provost

On behalf of the Gettysburg College faculty, I am delighted to receive and to extend a warm welcome to the class of 2014 and, for that matter, to *all* students who are new to Gettysburg. We, who are your faculty - your future professors, advisors, mentors - welcome you with enthusiasm into our community of teacher-scholars. While you will naturally come to know us in our classrooms, our laboratories, and our studios, you will also have conversation with us in our offices. You will share meals and exchange ideas with us in the Dining Center. You will sit next to us at lectures, sporting events, and artistic performances. You will dine with us in our homes. You will join us in our scholarly and creative endeavors. During your four years here, you will grow and mature with us, and, as time passes, our community will come to be one in which you feel at home.

I address you this afternoon in my official capacity as the College's Provost. At this point you might naturally ask, "What is a *Provost*"? As provost, I am the person responsible for overseeing and strengthening the College's academic core. Furthermore, as provost I join my faculty colleagues in honoring the role of the liberal arts as we strive to appreciate and understand the world - past and present - throughout our lives.

What awaits you at this special place is an intellectual experience framed within a structure made of a broad and thoughtful curriculum, opportunity for scholarly and creative work with your professors, an atmosphere of trust, and a life outside the classroom where you are *compelled* to consider your academic work in the context of a being a citizen engaged by your surrounding community.

The curriculum comprises a wide array of courses and is constructed around four broad learning objectives that your faculty has established for you. By the time you depart Gettysburg College, you will be able to consider ideas from multiple disciplinary perspectives in a sophisticated, critical fashion. You will be exercised to think in a manner that permits you to integrate ideas and information. You will continually work on the means by which you write and speak to express yourself. And, again, you will face the concept of citizenship - at local and global levels - and come to ask yourself, if not already, what it means to engage and be engaged by one's community.

Even though thousands of individuals applied to be a part of our community at Gettysburg College beginning this fall, only a select few were invited to join us. And you are among that select group! What you bring to the community is something we members of the faculty, staff and administration are eager to see. Oh, we know of some of your accomplishments and capabilities, yet we are curious about your intrinsic qualities - your sense of exploration, your character, your means of interrogating and contributing to the world around you - and how such qualities will enrich our community. And believe me, much as we will affect and change you, your vibrant presence in this intellectual community will undoubtedly impact us.

One thing on which you can depend during your time at Gettysburg is that we who constitute our community conduct ourselves in an honorable fashion and demonstrate integrity and honesty in our thoughts and behavior. We value differences among us, and, even though we thrive on debate and spirited discussion, we remain tolerant and respectful in those interactions. Your recitation of the Gettysburg Pledge later in this ceremony is a public demonstration of your willingness to assume this responsibility of honor and integrity.

Your time here will be a period of great personal challenge and growth. The courses you choose are designed to present you with ideas and ways of knowing critical to your intellectual maturation - and the process is going to be difficult, sometimes seemingly impossible. The degree of learning we will expect of you here is going to require a tremendous level of commitment on your part! Yet, in four years, you will leave this college as a superbly educated person who can meet challenges, can think deeply and intentionally, and can continually enrich and enliven whatever community in which you live.

As you prepare to commence your formal courses in five short days, I would like to give you some advice for making the most of your liberal arts education here at Gettysburg College. First and foremost, I urge you to work continually in the forthcoming months and years *to move beyond your comfort zone - both intellectually and socially*. Take advantage of the many opportunities here to experience ideas, perspectives, and people which are not familiar or seem comfortable to you. Your best preparation for the life you will live after you graduate from Gettysburg is to embrace the diverse learning experiences that await you throughout the next four years.

Secondly, I strongly recommend that you *work hard* as a member of this learning community. Without a doubt you will gain more from your experiences here if you dedicate yourself to being continually *prepared, engaged, and intellectually curious*. As you may have experienced previously, the best outcomes are often achieved when the level of commitment is strong and enduring. Developing and sustaining commitment to learning and other forms of personal growth at this stage of your life will serve you well as you pursue advanced studies, a professional career, and citizenship in the years after your time here.

Finally, I urge you *not* to hesitate to ask for assistance from members of this wonderful community should you need it. Your professors, academic advisors, mentors, resident assistants, and other members of the Gettysburg staff are dedicated to helping you making the very most

of your learning opportunities here. Part of becoming a mature and self-aware adult is coming to know when you need to ask others, especially those who care about you, for some guidance or assistance. I hope that you will take full advantage of the caring individuals in this community who are committed to helping you learn and develop in productive and healthy ways.

In closing, I welcome you to our community of teacher-scholars, and, at this time, I ask that the faculty and staff stand, if able, and join me in that welcome.

I now have the pleasure of introducing our faculty speaker, Robert Bohrer, Chairperson and Associate Professor of Political Science. Professor Bohrer earned his B.S. degree from the University of Nebraska-Kearney in 1989 and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in 1997. Professor Bohrer began teaching at Gettysburg College in 1998. In addition to the department's Research Methods course, Professor Bohrer teaches Comparative Politics, with specialization in Europe and issues related to democratic governance. His research examines the intersections between democratic institutions and performance in established and transitional democracies, the role of electoral laws in shaping party systems, the development of devolved institutions in the United Kingdom and the role political institutions play in mitigating and channeling societal conflict. His current research focuses on changes occurring in Europe since 1945, especially with the advent of the European Union; the role of women in politics; and the role of civil conflicts on the development in European states.