

October 7, 2014

Dear Faculty, Students and Staff,

I was recently asked what my biggest surprise was during my first year at UD. I would have to say it is discovering the hidden gem that is Delaware. Of course being an engineer, I knew about the strength in our College of Engineering. But on almost a daily basis, I find similar world-class strengths throughout this campus. Delaware has been hiding its light under a basket much too long. It is time to remove the basket and **Delaware Will Shine**.

Our Strategic Planning Initiative is intended to help us do just that-and we are making significant progress. I want to thank you and encourage you to keep sharing your thoughts and ideas on the Delaware Will Shine website and in the meetings and special events being hosted across campus.

President Harker recently kicked off UD's Thought Leader Speaker Series with a talk on the pressing issues confronting higher education and how UD can respond using the experimentation, ingenuity and creativity that we apply everyday in our classrooms, labs, studios and community projects.

Last week, our Board of Trustees spent the better part of a two-day retreat deeply engaged in discussing our progress on, and contributing to, the strategic planning effort.

Also, recently I outlined the various challenges and opportunities that we face in the rapidly changing landscape of higher education and why we need transformational change. That essay, entitled "*Delaware Will Shine: Planning Tomorrow's University Today*," can be found on the website, along with other helpful resources for your background.

Many voices are needed to write the next chapter for this distinguished university. Our three working groups, involving faculty, staff and students from across UD, are busy developing concept papers and refining plans, taking into consideration your input and feedback.

Please support their hard work by continuing to share your ideas. You also can stay actively engaged in this important process by attending the next Thought Leader Speaker Series featuring Professor Richard Tapia of Rice University. Dr. Tapia will present "The Diversity Crisis in Higher Education: The Need for New Understanding and Leadership" on Monday, Oct. 13.

The stakes are high, but with your participation, we can set a bold course that continues to position UD for inspirational, attainable and sustainable success.

With a Daring Spirit Bold, Delaware Will Shine!



Domenico Grasso
Provost