



January 6, 2017

Dear UD Community,

Happy New Year and welcome back to UD from the holiday break! We are delighted to continue as a community our journey of learning, exploring and achieving at the University of Delaware in 2017. The momentum and progress that defined our first semester together is inspiring. We had a very productive fall, and all of you – our students, faculty, and staff – demonstrated your commitment to make the UD experience one that is defined by excellence.

Our students continue to display a dedication to intellectual pursuit, service, teamwork, and integrity, both in and out of the classroom. More than 1,000 students are studying in 24 countries on six continents during Winter Session, our most popular time for travel abroad. Others are volunteering in Washington, D.C., and Nicaragua through the UD Alternative Breaks Program. Two students, Micah Peterson and Matthew Rojas, have been recognized as Schwarzman Scholars, to study global leadership for the 21st century in China.

Perhaps the best measure of educational outcomes is the success of our alumni, as exemplified by the unprecedented election of three of our alumni, Dr. Mort Collins, Dr. Teh Ho and Dr. Dave Welch, in the National Academy of Engineering in 2016. Also, two recent UD alumni – Elena Della Donne and Rhodes Scholar Matt Watters – were just named to *Forbes* magazine’s “30 under 30” list of young change-makers and innovators.

And our faculty is truly world class. For example, Professor Andreas Muenchow’s critical research into the devastating effects of climate change on Greenland’s vanishing Petermann Glacier was the focus of prominent coverage in *The Washington Post* last week, illustrating UD’s commitment to exceptional, consequential scholarship. In addition, the exciting team-based Colored Conventions Project — led by Professor P. Gabrielle Foreman — has been awarded a highly coveted grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In athletics, our field hockey players proved their talent and grit by winning the NCAA National Championship, capping an incredible season of Blue Hen pride. Our men’s soccer team won the Colonial Athletic Association championship and played with great spirit in the NCAA tournament. And our volleyball team thrilled the campus with its dramatic run in the Colonial Athletic Association Tournament. We are looking forward to seeing all our teams in action throughout the year and cheering for our Blue Hens.

Our celebration of UD's contributions to the world, in conjunction with the Academic Symposium and the Presidential Inauguration events, showcased our amazing students, faculty, staff and alumni. We were honored to hear from the President of the Association of American Universities, Dr. Mary Sue Coleman, and our very own Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Joe Biden. Their eloquent and heartfelt words reminded us of the lasting power of higher education. It is exciting to consider all that is possible for UD, fueled by the distinguished history of our institution and our passion for the future.

As a university and as a community, we have started to articulate bold shared visions for the future that will lead us to our ultimate goal of creating positive change for society through our values and work. There is so much ahead for us. Growing our academic excellence, we are working diligently to recruit and retain students and faculty from underrepresented groups. In the coming months, we plan to open a multicultural center on campus to continue to foster our core values of diversity and inclusion, so that everyone can learn and work in a safe and healthy environment.

We are also launching a task force to create a graduate college that would build interdisciplinary programs and catalyze the doubling of our graduate enrollment over the next decade. This will be enhanced by development of new programs, resources and faculty expertise in the fields of cybersecurity, material culture, health sciences, public policy and more. In parallel, we are adding services and support to help students graduate on time and pursue meaningful careers. We are exploring new ways to attract world-class talent to our state and enhance our footprint in the region's economy

When it comes to innovation, we are both nimble and rapid in enhancing the competitiveness of Manufacturing USA. Led by Professor Kelvin Lee, a collaborative team at UD secured the largest federal grant in our institutional history — \$70 million from the U.S. Commerce Department — for the new National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals (NIIMBL). Working with 150 partners nationwide, UD will develop new ways to make the next generation of medicines and patient therapies.

In addition, a team led by Professor Dion Vlachos is playing a key role in another newly founded manufacturing institute dedicated to the Rapid Advancement in Process Intensification Deployment (RAPID), an initiative of the U.S. Department of Energy. Our University's expertise in catalysis and reactors will help researchers discover less expensive, more energy-efficient ways to manufacture chemicals. NIIMBL and RAPID reinforce our leadership role as a hub of innovation and an economic engine for our state and country.

On the STAR Campus, our partners will break ground soon on a new train station and a 10-story STAR Tower. The tower will be home to a creative mixture of students, faculty, clinicians and community partners working in laboratories, simulation classrooms and interactive conference spaces. It marks a significant new phase in developing the STAR Campus as a critical intersection of research, innovation and community service.

A new year is a blank canvas, one where we can be daring in imagining our future. Enjoy all that UD has to offer! Eleni and I look forward to seeing you on campus and hearing from you. With our best wishes for a great year filled with health, happiness, inspiration and enlightenment!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Assanis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'D'.

Dennis Assanis  
President