

Welcome to all. Welcome friends, family, students, members of the faculty, and staff. Welcome to members of the academy. Welcome fellow alumni, members of the Board of Managers and the Corporation. Welcome to this beautiful campus on this glorious Saturday, where we use the occasion of the inauguration of a new President to celebrate the history, the values, the ambitions and the promise of Haverford College.

In many ways, an inauguration is an extraordinarily paradoxical event. We look for new directions, but also search for resonance with our shared cultural past. For those of us who come from the world of Colleges and Universities, we listen carefully for comforting visions and missions in common with our own institutions, while expectantly yearning for some elements that are particular, unique and perhaps more urgent. And as we listen and consider all these issues in the tranquil setting of a single academic institution, a small voice within us asks “what can this mean for our larger institutions, for our nation, and for our world?”

I will suggest to you that to understand Haverford’s role in the dialectical unfolding of these paradoxes, we should return not to 1833, the year of the founding of the College, but to 70 years earlier, to the crucible of that new phenomenon, the Enlightenment. This was a time in Europe of the greatest upheavals, when thinkers in Scotland, England and France presented radical new ways of seeing the world, sometimes reductionist,

often deeply skeptical. But these proclamations were made often in sharp contrast against the orthodoxy of the Churches of the day, and intellectual disputes boiled over into repression, imprisonment and revolution.

Against this backdrop, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued for a path that led through this thicket of reason embattled against faith, a path that was embodied in the process of education. In his remarkable essay Emile, Rousseau claimed that the true process of education relies fundamentally on the axiom that there is a small spark of the divine in every individual, and that this spark is shared, isomorphically identical between individuals, no matter what their religious, national or cultural background. Searching for this shared commonality was, in his view, the beginning of the search for reliable knowledge, understanding and wisdom. By reframing the debate of reason versus faith into new, fundamentally universalist terms, Rousseau created a space for dialogue between philosophy, religion, science, art, and politics that allowed the project of the Enlightenment, and modern western civilization, to proceed.

What is perhaps most remarkable about Rousseau's claims, of course, is that they were not new. In fact, in today's academic world, he might be confronted for an Honor Code violation for implicit, if not explicit, plagiarism. Over 100 years earlier, George Fox established the Quaker faith around the very principle that that there is a shared spark of God in every

man. For Fox and his followers, the search for divine revelation was directly identified with the search for truth, the truth that was acknowledged and assented to by all.

I believe that it is, in large part, this fundamental link between this underlying tenet of Quakerism and the core values of the Enlightenment that gives a uniquely poignant power to the intellectual life at Haverford College. The belief that there do exist truths that can be Learned, that wisdom can be gained, by searching for the deepest, most powerful, most axiomatic principles, achieved through seriously struggling and debating with one's colleagues, is truly a Core Value of the College. That is one reason why neither the College, nor any of its Departments or Centers, need be large. The important point is that the members of College as a whole, and each of its units, continuously seeks together to ask the most critical questions through the most penetrating and genuine approaches. Depth, not breadth, dialogue, not isolation.

The process of Learning at Haverford, therefore, has always been extraordinarily active. This search for truth, as I have characterized it here at the College, implies that the most important truths are not known a priori, and that the goal of education is to engage students and faculty in the process of Discovery. Over the decades, the College's faculty and its Presidents have, over and over again, emphasized the dynamic and vital

nature of our educational community. Isaac Sharpless virtually recreated the faculty with eminent scholars in the 1880s. President Gilbert White rebuilt and expanded the College faculty after WWII, seeking out gifted researchers in the Arts and Sciences such as Marcel Gutwirth and Ariel Loewy, each of whom built radically new programs built upon the most serious inquiry and research. And most recently President Tom Tritton led the faculty in organizing three new interdisciplinary academic Centers, in the Humanities, Peace and Global Citizenship and the Integrated Natural Sciences, each of which links students and faculty in the work of research and scholarship, searching for new sparks of truth shared between individuals and disciplines.

The notion of a common spark of light shared between individuals has additional power, beyond the purely intellectual. The search for truth in and among others only makes sense in the context of a community of mutual seekers who fundamentally trust, and respect each other. Taking this notion just a bit further, it suggests that the real student seeks not only to understand the world's truths, but to care for the world of individuals who share these truths. If the key, deepest concerns are fundamentally shared between individuals, then we are ineluctably drawn to "Tikkun Olam" the healing and Renewal of an oft-broken world. Moreover, if we are, in the languages of Indiana Hoosiers "all the same, just different," then it is incumbent upon each of us to reach out to learn from members of other

cultures, with other histories and perspectives, so that we can find real common ground upon which to grow and heal. Although Rousseau's pleas were made in the context of 18th Century Europe, these same issues and claims make equal sense today, when the need for mutual and cultural self-recognition urgently connects diverse cultures and religions throughout the world.

That is why for Haverford College and its Community, preparation for lives of service is fundamental. Over the past fifty years, the College has earned a reputation for training educators, statesmen, journalists, public health professionals and physician scientists who ask really new questions, opening up new fields of knowledge and establishing new paradigms of care around the world. Through the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship, students travel around the globe to communities struggling for reconciliation after war and revolution, struggling to develop economically and educationally. And then these students return to the College, informed to ask new questions and acquire new skills that they can then take back out again, into their lives' work after graduation.

As you can well imagine, the life of a Haverford College student today is deeply challenging. We ask them, in every setting and in every way, to ask the deepest questions at the borders of their understanding, beyond their comfort zone. We ask them to be heroic. In experiencing

these multiple approaches and experiences, trying on new academic personae, the students are constantly experimenting in the most creative ways, truly experiencing their education as an act of performance art. And perhaps what is most interesting of all, the students and faculty recognize this active, artistic nature of their enterprise and see the arts as a prime driver, going forward. Coordinated through the interdisciplinary activities of the Humanities Center, students and faculty now engage with visiting scholars in the visual and theatrical arts to explore the ways in which artistic expression connects and expands on the intellectual while linking individuals at their most fundamental levels. At Haverford, every student is an artist.

On a personal note, I would like to express my deepest thanks for the opportunity to serve Haverford College and the larger world of higher education as the College's new President. For an alumni who hopes that he has led his professional life by the principles of shared inquiry and service that he sought to learn here nearly 40 years ago, there could be no higher honor. Of course, one might legitimately ask, what possible connection does stem cell biology have with the life and mission of a place like Haverford? But, ah, I think the answer is... everything. As a cell and molecular biologist and hematologist, I have purified, observed, studied and stimulated stem cells for many years, and I must tell you that they are quite remarkable. Stem cells are rare cells, maybe one in a million in any

organ or tissue, but they are precious and potent. Each stem cell has the ability to both give rise to daughter cells that can build and repair surrounding tissues, while also growing, developing and renewing itself. These educated stem cells can travel, and they can learn to do different tasks, in different sites, depending on the needs of their world. Stem cells need to be nurtured in particular microenvironments, where they are educated by their surrounding cells in the niche. Stem cells educate their surrounding cells that provide their own education, and they work best when they sense and learn from other stem cells.

So without even much of a metaphorical stretch, I believe that Haverford College is, indeed, a source of the most important stem cells for our world, the students whom we have the privilege of learning from and training. Our students, through their lives in a Community with deeply engaged faculty and staff, are steeped in the most radical Learning, they take continuing joy in the adventures of Discovery, through which they engage in and prepare for lives of Renewal for the world, and of themselves. Founded on shared principles of Quakerism and the Enlightenment, the Haverford College community will continue to explore, experiment and mold new approaches to attract, sustain and educate students whose lives will shine with the inner light that we all share. I ask you now to join me in celebrating this faculty, this staff, these students, and this mission of Haverford College.