

**2009 State of the University**  
**By**  
**Robert A. Scott, President**  
**Adelphi University**  
**September 9, 2009**

Introduction

Good afternoon. Welcome to another academic year, a year in which we will build on recent successes and launch an updated vision for the future, “AU2015.” 2015, Adelphi on the cusp of 120 years in higher education.

This fall we will dedicate the renovated Woodruff Hall, which, along with Blodgett and Levermore, was one of the first three buildings opened on this Garden City campus in September 1929 - - eighty years ago this month. In thinking about the Woodruff re-opening, I was prompted to wonder anew why this iconic building was named after Timothy L. Woodruff; why the Trustees in 1953 decided to honor him in this way.

But before discussing why he was thanked, I want to offer some “thanks” of my own.

This past year was extraordinary, what with a remarkable review by the Middle State Visiting Team; the development of a draft strategic plan, “AU2015”; the inaugural seasons for the Performing Arts Center, the Alice Brown Early Learning Center, and the Recreation and Sports Center; the complete renovation of the Hy Weinberg Center; and continued beautification of our campus.

For these accomplishments, I especially want to thank Professor Jim Mullin and Senior Associate Provost Audrey Blumberg, the Middle States Self-Study Committee and institutional research director extraordinaire, Dr. Nava Lerer; Professor Jennifer Fleischner, Chair, and the Strategic Planning Committee, with special help from Provost Insler and Vice President Duggan Gold; and Vice President Bill Proto and his staff.

While the construction, renovation and grounds planning and progress are the responsibility of Vice President Proto and Executive Director of Facilities Jim Kosloski, and their talented and dedicated staffs, these

facilities were brought to life through extensive help from faculty and staff, with Woodruff the special province of Ron Feingold, Bob Hartwell, Linda Gundrum, Bob Otto, John Wygand and Steve Virgilio.

Each of these undertakings reflects the innovation, dedication, and investment that has shaped Adelphi's past and embodies our commitment for the future. They showcase the depth of talent of the Adelphi community and our tenacity as an institution.

In preparing this talk, I thought in terms of Adelphi's past, present, and future. I believe that history, or memory, and imagination are the two essential ingredients in any education, in solving any puzzle, in considering any challenge. History helps us understand context, precedent, and relationships. Imagination helps us consider questions of "Why" and "How" and "What if?"

For these reasons, I have organized this report into three sections:

**Celebrating the Past,  
Confirming the Present,  
Composing a Plan - CP<sup>3</sup>**

Woodruff inspires us to think about and celebrate the past, who certain people were, and why certain actions were taken. The Middle States Visiting Team report is about confirming our present, the progress we have made, and the principles we have followed. "AU2015," still unfolding this fall, is about composing a plan for the future, the strengths on which we will build, and the principles that will guide our actions.

Celebrating the Past

George Orwell famously said, "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."<sup>1</sup> It is not in this spirit that I organize my remarks, but I agree that Orwell was onto something. If we substitute memory for "past," and think of memory and history as twins, we see the continued relevance of his point. However, we must ensure discipline and objectivity in our reading or writing of history, and ignore neither cues nor clues in our analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Orwell, George. Nineteen Eighty-Four, Part I, Chapter 3, 1949.

With this proviso, let us turn to Adelphi's past and consider some people and themes which I think bear on the present and future. We can start with Timothy L. Woodruff.

As we prepare to dedicate the renovated Woodruff Hall on October 10<sup>th</sup>, we ask, who was he and why was one of the first three buildings on campus named in his honor?

Woodruff was a Yale classmate of founding President Charles Levermore and became the first President of the Adelphi Board of Trustees, serving from 1896 to 1908. During part of this time, he served as Lieutenant Governor of New York State under three Governors. It was Woodruff who used his "vision, interest, and influence" to persuade the New York State Board of Regents to grant a new charter authorizing Adelphi to grant baccalaureate degrees as a supplement to its two-year collegiate curriculum, effective June 24, 1896.<sup>2</sup>

Woodruff had been active in Brooklyn civic and political affairs, and had advocated for a full-fledged university in this city of over one million inhabitants. He joined forces with Levermore to help fulfill this dream.

One of Woodruff's achievements during his term as President of the Board was to obtain a pledge from John D. Rockefeller to commit a \$125,000 challenge grant. Woodruff raised the necessary matching funds in three weeks.<sup>3</sup>

While Woodruff resigned as Board President in 1908, he continued to serve on the Board for another five years, until he died at age 55 while giving a speech at Cooper Union.

The renovation of Woodruff Hall has long been talked about but was not brought to fruition until recently due to the support of alumni, faculty, and friends through the "Campaign for Adelphi." Another often talked about project is the construction of an academic building on the site of Post Hall. I actually have caught myself saying that our plans call for us to "tear

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<sup>2</sup> Neely, Eugene, "A Look Back," Adelphi Magazine, Fall 2005, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Neely, Ibid.

down Post Hall” and use the footprint for a new building. But then a small voice asked, “Who was Post”?

James H. Post succeeded Woodruff as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and served from 1908 until his death in 1938. Post lived the Horatio Alger dream. A graduate of Brooklyn public schools, he started as an office-boy and rose to become head of the National Refining Company of New Jersey. He was indeed a “Sugar Magnate” of the first order. But Adelphi College and its progressive philosophy was his love; he became the essential guide to several Adelphi presidents. When he died, New York Governor Herbert H. Lehman said of him:

He was a man of the kindest spirit and of the broadest vision, whose sympathy and interest knew no limitations of race, color, or creed.<sup>4</sup>

We find strength and vision from stories of our past. Chapman Hall is named for a former Chairman of the College’s Board (1949-1958) who was Chairman of the Beech Nut Life Savers Co. Linen Hall is named for a former Chairman of the College’s Board of Trustees (1858-1964) who was publisher and president of Time Magazine. Swirbul Library is named for a former Adelphi College trustee (1958-1960) who was a co-founder of Grumman Aircraft.

One of Dr. Levermore’s last acts as president was to appoint Anna Harvey, long-time head of the Normal Kindergartners, as dean, an office she held until 1935. And so we have Harvey Hall, the home of the Ruth S. Ammon School of Education.<sup>5</sup>

Today, we meet in the Thomas Dixon Lovely Ballroom, named for an alumnus and successful banker who served as a Trustee from 1968 to 1989.

Two other fascinating namesakes are Genevieve Beaver Earle (Earle Hall) an alumna of the Class of 1907 and former Adelphi Professor of Classics and French, who was the first female member of the New York City Council.

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<sup>4</sup> Barrows, Chester L. Fifty Years of Adelphi College, Garden City: Adelphi College Press, 1946, p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> Barrows, p. 58.

Finally, although many others could be cited, there is Ruth Fanslow Waldo (Waldo Hall), Class of 1909, member of the Adelphi Board of Trustees from 1938-1964, and, as vice president of J. Walter Thompson Advertising, was one of the first women executives in American advertising.

Why recall these lives? The point is not that “this one” or “that one” was a graduate or even that he or she was successful. It is that these highly accomplished alumni and friends devoted a substantial part of their time, talent, and treasure to the values inherent in an institution they came to love. It is on their achievements that we build Adelphi for today and tomorrow.

They followed in a line of suffragists, abolitionists, and freethinkers in matters of religion, spirited and spiritual, respectful of differences of opinion, engaged in public life, believers in the power of education for all, concerned about world affairs. They were committed to the public good as a necessary condition for private gain in a democracy.

They supported an approach to education that respected the classics but added Physical Culture in recognition of the need for good health to support intellectual and artistic pursuits, as well as active lives as citizens.

Because of their approach, we come then to “imagination” -- ideas, values, reflection – as the companion to history and memory.

These notables in Adelphi’s past guided the development of an institution that started with 57 students and 16 faculty. They fostered an environment in which the values of responsiveness, civic engagement, team work, doing one’s best, multidisciplinary approaches, partnerships, and inclusiveness were prominent.

As a consequence, Adelphi has been a pioneer in responding to societal needs through existing and new programs, even during periods of dramatic change. We have talked before about innovations in dance and education. Imagine, in 1938, “a course in War and Peace was introduced,” with seven faculty co-teaching it.<sup>6</sup> President Eddy proposed a new program in Nursing within 30 days of the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>7</sup> In 1957, Adelphi

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<sup>6</sup> Barrows, p. 175

<sup>7</sup> Barrows, p. 211

hosted the First National Wheelchair Games.<sup>8</sup> In the 1960's, Adelphi was one of the colleges and universities which enrolled students – four of them – from the same African airlift movement which brought Barack Obama Sr. to the U.S.<sup>9</sup>

These and numerous other initiatives, both those contemplated but found out of character (like a medical school, twice), or completed (like those mentioned above) illustrate how innovation and responsiveness are part of our institutional DNA, and should be celebrated. They are the foundations for contemporary programs such as study abroad; “Women, Peace and Justice”; I-CAN; the Levermore Global Scholars Program; the Ambassadorial Lecture Series; the Annual Hagedorn Lecture on Corporate Social Responsibility; and numerous joint initiatives.

### Confirming the Present

These programs and others were recognized by the Middle States Visiting Team in its report this past April. The Team confirmed our present status and strengths from its objective perch. Among the points of progress to which they pointed we can recount:

- Admissions selectivity as measured by SAT scores has increased significantly, with 75% instead of 65% of new accepted students scoring above 1000 since 2000-01.
- The five-year graduation rate has increased to 62% for the most recent cohort of new freshman in 2002, from 48% for the 1996 cohort.
- The number of full-time faculty has increased to 324 from 195 in fall 2001.
- The alumni participation rate in annual giving has increased to over 7% (in 2008) from under 2% (in 1997).
- Capital and endowment fundraising has increased from negligible to over \$40 million in five years.
- The number of million dollar donors has increased from none in early 2003 to eleven by December 2008.
- New construction has added about 220,000 square feet of space in three years.

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<sup>8</sup> Newsday. “It Happened on Long Island.” June 1, 1957.

<sup>9</sup> Schachtman, Tom. Airlift to America. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009.

- Total assets have increased to about \$ .5 billion from \$142 million in six years.
- Endowed funds increased to \$108 million from \$48 million in six years, and are again close to \$95 million.
- The faculty teaching load was reduced to 18 from 21 credit hours in Fall 2005.
- We completed the University's first-ever Kresge Challenge ahead of schedule, and secured \$600,000 from the Kresge Foundation toward the construction of the Center for Recreation and Sports and the renovation of Woodruff Hall.

With this progress, we have secured our footing and can extend our reach.

For the fourth year in a row, Adelphi was recognized as one of two dozen “Best Buys” in American private higher education by The Fiske Guide and is cited as one of the best universities in the Northeast by The Princeton Review.

Our efforts and initiatives are confirmed by such external validations: Middle States; Kresge; Fiske. Other sources of confirmation are the faculty, staff, and students who have accepted our invitation to join our community; both AACSB (Business) and NCATE (Education) accreditation; increasing rates of student retention, graduation and licensure exam results; accreditation for arboretum and museum status; the invitation to join the Northeast 10 Athletic Conference, one of the strongest in the nation; the reviewers we engage to assess our programs and services; and the rating upgrade from Standard and Poor's. In addition, we are planning to seek LEED Certification for the new facilities.

Our progress requires leadership, and the Board of Trustees consists in those who are alumni (about two thirds of them), highly accomplished in their fields of endeavor, and supportive of our vision. We have an extraordinary senior staff of vice presidents; devoted deans, with two searches underway; and exceptional leadership of the Faculty Senate.

Adelphi continues to be a desirable partner for hospitals, schools, other universities, businesses, and civic organizations; the potential for collaborations on and off-campus is great. Adelphi is known as the “engaged” university not only in promotion but also in reality.

Over the past ten years, we have invested more than \$200 million in new construction, renovation, equipment, and technology, and will start construction on a new and much-needed residence hall this fall. While other universities have curtailed construction, maintenance, and purchasing; instituted lay-offs or furloughs; and canceled salary increases and pension contributions, we have not. For this fall, as many as two-thirds of private colleges planned to freeze salaries and over one-half planned to cut benefits; we did not.<sup>10</sup>

Why are we different? We decided almost eight years ago not to use unrestricted investment income to support the operating budget, but to add it back to invested funds to build for the future. We also instituted rigorous controls on expenses and positions. We delegated authority so that more than a few of us are responsible for the academic and fiscal integrity of the University. We believe in transparency, a belief made manifest in the extensive use of glass and the sight-lines in the Centers for Performing Arts and Recreation and Sports.

We believe in planning, and know that 90% of good luck is good preparation. We know, too, that enrollment is critical, not only recruitment, but also retention of all students, including freshmen, transfers, masters and doctoral candidates, and adult students of all ages. As we have said in the past, “enrollment – student recruitment, satisfaction, and retention – is everyone’s job, if everyone is to have a job.” One way to advance this goal is to attend not only admissions events, but also student meetings, performances, and games.

### Composing a Plan

Enrollment requires planning, and in “Adelphi 2015” we are composing such a plan.

I believe that plans are about principles for decision-making and priorities for action. The principles guide goals and strategies, emphasizing flexibility; the priorities guide execution.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://chronicle.com/article/Private-Colleges-Freeze/47984/>

A strategic plan is not a tome to be set on a table, but a matrix to be monitored. A great planner said,

One does not plan and then try to make the circumstances fit those plans. One tries to make plans fit the circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Another said,

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir (the) blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work...<sup>12</sup>

When President Blodgett spoke at the opening of this Garden City campus in 1929, he called it “the fruition of a hope and the realization of a dream.”<sup>13</sup> But the move to Garden City from Brooklyn required planning: principles, priorities, flexibility, execution. And so it remains today. Hopes and dreams are necessary but not sufficient.

So, what of our future? What are the goals of “AU2015”?

There are four overarching goals proposed:

1. Adelphi will be a recognized center of intellectual and creative work
2. An Adelphi education will offer relevance in a changing and diverse world
3. Adelphi students will achieve a broad range of educational goals
4. Adelphi will sustain affordability and enhance opportunities for students and faculty through diverse and increased revenue streams

These four goals were developed over the course of a year and from numerous interviews, focus groups, and two “town hall” meetings involving all four sites. More than 250 people participated in various ways. We will hold more sessions this fall and spring, exploring your “Big Ideas,” and have launched the “Big Ideas” Web site to solicit your thoughts and keep you informed about opportunities to both share in the plan and help us move

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<sup>11</sup> Patton, General George S., Jr. *War As I Knew It*, 1947, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup> Saylor, Henry H. “Make No Little Plans,” *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, March 1957, pp 95-99.

<sup>13</sup> Barrows, p. 129

from planning to bold action. For each of these major goals, we will have numerous objectives to be monitored publicly, with accountability to the Board of Trustees.

The aim is to make Adelphi the “go to” college in the region, with programs that are nationally recognized. In undergraduate education, this means a General Education and major courses of study that provide breadth, depth, and practical applications of learning in a distinctive manner through excellence in teaching. In graduate education, this means world-class learning even for those who study part-time. Both reinforce our belief that while we cannot teach students everything, we can help them prepare to learn anything.

The strategies to achieve these goals will be related to four themes: health, leadership and ethics, experiential learning – community engagement, and technology. The metrics to monitor progress are being refined, but will include the following items, each of which is related to the fulfillment of the goals:

1. Number of applications for degrees and programs (Enrollment by Design)
2. The percentage of applicants offered admission - - especially important for regular admission undergraduates
3. The yield rate on offers of admission, especially for regular admission undergraduates
4. The percentage of students who choose to matriculate at AU for academic reasons and not just the financial aid offer
5. The diversity of students, faculty, staff, and trustees
6. The retention rate for students at all levels
7. The graduation rate at all levels
8. Licensure and professional examination results for graduates at all levels
9. The percentage of undergraduate students who participate in an organized internship/fellowship as part of their education at AU
10. Career and graduate school placement of Adelphi students
11. A measure (or two) to be determined of faculty accomplishment
12. Alumni participation in the Annual Fund

These measures of progress are not the sum of our plan, but are important indicators of how well we are achieving the major goals related to

Adelphi as a cultural force, as a place for student growth and preparation for a challenging world, and as an affordable, fiscally stable institution.

The four overarching goals are related to our heritage, our history, and will be built on strong foundations. While a number of initiatives are likely, two are especially exciting to me:

1. Major new programs in Community Health/Health Sciences, building on the strengths of our various programs, and
2. Community Service fellowships awarded competitively to students to work with selected non-profit organizations

The foundations in health are well-known, and there are numerous opportunities for new and stronger connections both on and off-campus. We have health programming either directly or indirectly in all divisions of the academy, and many offer the opportunity for collaboration with other units. In each case, we want our programs to “look outward,” considering and shaping the regional, national, and global policy environment, as well as “inward,” preparing practitioners.

In addition to degree programs, Vital Signs, the Center for Social Innovation, the Parenting Institute, the Breast Cancer Hotline, and the Center for Non-Profit Leadership all intersect with issues of health, leadership, ethics, community engagement, and technology.

Each of the units, and especially the graduate programs, prepares graduates for positions of leadership. I recall a meeting a few years ago of non-profit organization executives asked to evaluate nominations for a foundation’s prize. Each of us was asked to introduce ourselves and to summarize our institution’s mission. I was glad I was next to last because, after hearing a third of the others say they attended Adelphi, I could say, with conviction: “I’m from Adelphi; we prepare leaders.”

And so we do, both in class and out. We offer students the opportunity to develop leadership skills through their work in clubs, organizations, and athletic teams. Our academic programs, through classes and required practical experiences, teach and hone such skills, including organizational leadership, policy leadership, and intellectual leadership. We want our graduates prepared to be authors of their lives, not just actors in a script by another’s hand.

And every program emphasizes ethics and an understanding of fairness, equitable treatment, the rule of law, and transparency.

In addition to health, leadership and ethics, and technology, AU2015 will focus on student engagement in the larger community. We have been building our internship program and opportunities for students. We now want to create a program for students who will work for a stipend and assist at non-profit organizations in order to learn about this sector and help select groups fulfill their missions even more effectively in these trying times.

Throughout AU2015 we will emphasize assessment and accountability, knowing and showing what we do and why we do it. In this way we will continue to compose our plan, honoring the past, holding steady to our principles, remaining flexible in our execution, and committed to our progress.

### Conclusion

Adelphi has a rich history, with trustees, presidents, faculty, and staff who exhibited imagination in the development of programs, even during periods of rapid change, and engagement with the broader community to advance the common good. Among them is Timothy Woodruff, still prominent in our thoughts.

Woodruff Hall has served our community in many ways, as gym, chapel, residence hall, dance studio, music classroom, rec center, and auditorium. It has been the indispensable site just as the one honored by its naming was an indispensable guide to the College's growth.

Therefore, I ask today that the spirit of Woodruff the facility and Woodruff the person inspire us to be re-dedicated to a vision, agile in executing our plans, and committed to the advancement of Adelphi. All together. All at once.

Thank you.