Dear Friends,

Policy matters. Your voice matters.

Readers of The ROCK magazine know that for the past several issues I’ve shared with you the challenges Slippery Rock University has faced as a result of the unprecedented economic crisis gripping the nation, and how we have responded to date. I am grateful for the alumni and friends that have responded to our call for help and have made financial gifts so that our students can continue to pursue their dreams at SRU. I am also grateful to those who have asked, how else can I help?

For nearly 125 years, Slippery Rock Normal/State College/University has been a gateway to success for its students. Unfortunately, the affordable, high quality education we provide is not guaranteed. As the competition for dwindling state dollars increases, it is imperative that elected officials and public opinion leaders know that SRU plays a significant role in the state economy and is a sound investment from multiple perspectives. That’s where you come in.

Pennsylvania needs a strong, vibrant Slippery Rock University, and SRU needs strong advocates for that message.

To that end, I am inviting alumni and friends who are interested in promoting the University and advocating for SRU in government, business, and community arenas to join the Rock Nation.

Rock Nation is a grass roots, Facebook-based advocacy group and another important place to find information about issues that affect SRU – and how your voice of support can be effective.

As part of the Rock Nation you will receive regular Facebook updates regarding SRU news and key events. Members will receive timely updates on issues important to the University and periodic calls to action, as well as invitations to strategy briefings.

When you become a member of the Rock Nation you’ll expand your ability as an advocate for SRU and use your voice to support Slippery Rock University and higher education in Pennsylvania. The power of advocacy is significant.

Look for an announcement soon for how you can join the Rock Nation.

It is time for all of us to get involved. Higher education in Pennsylvania is a critical resource that is at risk. And Slippery Rock University is one of the most important parts of that resource. I appreciate your support of Slippery Rock University.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith, president
To our readers

Dear Readers:

When I was a student at Slippery Rock University in the 1980s, I recall two international students on campus, one from Sweden and one from England. In this edition of The ROCK, you’ll see how far the University has progressed in achieving its vision to be a caring community of scholars connecting to the world. The University now draws international students from more than 35 countries, and routinely sends domestic students all over the world for study-abroad, service and research programs.

You will read how students grew as scholars and individuals at an art academy in Poland and by studying the lives of women in Ghana. And, you’ll hear from international graduates that have gone on to successful careers in France and elsewhere.

You’ll also get a first look at the renovated Vincent Science Center. The 43-year-old learning center has been transformed with cutting-edge technology, advanced laboratories and wireless capacity throughout—all aimed at boosting student success.

And, we’ll introduce you to William Boggs, professor of English, who shares his story about how affordable public higher education helped him overcome situational poverty. You will also read about a Rock power couple in command.

I appreciate your letters, e-mails and telephone calls about the magazine. It’s always great to hear from readers.

Gordon Ovenshine, ‘88
Editor, The ROCK
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About the cover

Trevor King, an art major from Slippery Rock, created this photographic illustration of a face during a semester abroad at The Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland. The piece symbolizes people in an ever-expanding world. (Photography by Trevor King.)
Students rate SRU highly, again

Slippery Rock University students have delivered another glowing report on the institution’s academics, research and support programs. Students rated SRU higher than state and national averages in the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement. NSSE, a nationally recognized indicator of student satisfaction, surveys freshmen and seniors about the effectiveness of programs supporting student learning and involvement, said Amanda Yale, SRU associate provost for enrollment services.

“The 2010 report clearly shows SRU students are engaged,” Yale said. “In fact, SRU scored top numbers in all five benchmark categories.”

The categories are academic challenge, active and collaborative research, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experience and supportive campus environment.

SRU not only outpaced the peer and national averages regarding student satisfaction but “the survey response rate was also well above the national and Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education averages and the totals for the full NSSE group,” said Carrie Birckbichler, SRU director of institutional research.

SRU joins President’s Alliance

Slippery Rock University has been elected a founding member of the President’s Alliance, a 70-institution organization that works to improve student learning. Participating universities signed an agreement to expand their efforts at gathering evidence of student learning and expanding programs that boost learning.

“We are truly pleased to be part of this very important initiative,” said Robert Smith, SRU president. “I must also give credit to Cindy Dillon in our Provost’s Office for her extra work in assuring that we were a qualified applicant for alliance membership.”

$313,176 grant expands ‘I Can Do It’ program

SRU has received a $313,176 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand its “I Can Do It, You Can Do It” mentoring program for youth with and without disabilities.

SRU will introduce job and life-skills training, animal care, regular community events focusing on physical activity and a summer camp for adolescents. More than 120 SRU student mentors lead “I Can Do It, You Can Do It” programs currently by providing weekly physical activity sessions for those ages 5 to 21.

“The focus of this grant is to help young people with disabilities achieve greater independence, mobility and social skills,” said Robert Arnhold, professor of physical education and program director.

Student Center construction under way

Construction is under way on a $38-million Student Center to provide students with a state-of-the-art hub for organization meetings, a new bookstore, food court and Wi-Fi technology. The facility is being paid for through student fees.

The center will occupy the site of the former Dodds Hall. A fall ground breaking signaled the start of construction, with the goal of completing it in 2012.

The food court will include a Quaker Steak and Lube and Starbucks.

The 40-year-old University Union, which has served as a student center, will be converted to a Student Success Center. The SGA Bookstore will relocate to the new building. “It is absolutely awesome that it is finally going to happen. SRU has a great support system for all of its students, this center will be a key component for serving students,” said Jeremiah Rosser, president of SGA and a management major from Canonsburg.
Monks bring message of peace to campus

Buddhist monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery of Tibet captivated students, faculty and staff when they visited SRU as part of Tibetan Cultures Week.

As part of their visit, the monks created a sand Mandala in Carruth Rizza Hall. The ancient art form symbolizes the celestial home of a Buddha and the transitory nature of life. After working on the sand art for four days, the Mandala was dissolved in a ceremony of blessing and purification. Those who attended received a bag of sand. The remaining sand was released into Slippery Rock Creek.

December ceremony honors graduates

Four hundred and twenty six undergraduate degrees and 81 master’s degrees were conferred during winter commencement in Morrow Field House. Joshua Young, chair of the SRU Council of Trustees, offered congratulatory remarks. Sam Zyroll, a 1978 graduate and past president of the alumni association, inducted graduates into the association.

Tsuquiashi-Daddesio wins Minority Achievement Award

Eva Tsuquiashi-Daddesio, dean of the College of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts, has received the Minority Achievement Award from Minority Opinion/Talk Magazine.

“This award was surprising and extremely satisfying to me because it is a testimony not only to my accomplishments but also to those of this institution that has supported me, thus making it possible for me to be recognized,” she said.

The award honors minorities who have shown leadership in their professions.

Tsuquiashi-Daddesio joined SRU in 1988. She taught French and Spanish from 1988 to 2005, when she was named chairperson of the department of modern languages and cultures. She served as department chair from 2005-2009 and then became interim dean of the College of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts in 2009. She was named dean in 2010.

Drills improve emergency readiness

Helicopters and emergency crews in full protective gear “invaded” campus recently, but no one was in danger. In fact, the drills improved the University’s readiness for a real emergency.

A series of tactical medical training drills were conducted in the fall. State police and other responders, using fake firearms, learned how to navigate stairwells, improve their drop and roll skills and endure pepper spray attacks.

Participants also completed search-and-rescue drills in the woods behind the Ski Lodge. SRU’s Center for Lifelong and Community Learning offered the program in conjunction with the Center for Emergency Preparedness.
SRU saves $226,329 through energy conservation

Slippery Rock University students, faculty and staff have helped save the University $225,329 by shutting off lights and computers. Combined with other energy-saving measures such as sensor lighting, SRU reduced energy consumption on a BTU per gross square foot basis by 6.74 percent in fiscal 2010 – more than expected.

The goal had been reducing consumption by 1.5 percent, said Scott Albert, director of facilities for facilities and planning.

SRU spent $2,968,795 in fiscal 2010 on coal, electricity and natural gas, compared to $3,195,124 in fiscal 2009, Albert said.

Consumption dropped from 125,497 to 117,044 based on BTU per gross square-foot basis. SRU has undertaken many energy-saving projects over the past several years. These include installing electric meters in a number of campus buildings, consolidating classroom usage in the summer, upgrading the heating, ventilating and air-conditioning controls to allow for the remote control of building heating and air-conditioning systems and installing occupancy sensor lighting controls in most campus buildings. When a classroom is vacant, the lights go out.

80 reasons to celebrate

Wilma Cavill, assistant professor of health and safety who joined the University in 1958, recently passed another milestone: She turned 80.

Tracy Leet, a 2002 health and physical education graduate, gave Cavill a crown and sash, making her queen for a day. Cavill mentored Leet when she was a student, and they have remained close.

Cavill is the longest-serving, active professor in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Computer science professor in Internet limelight

Computer science professor Sam Thangiah’s expertise in bus transportation routing has earned him worldwide, online exposure. He was featured in a “Discovery & Breakthroughs Inside Science” story on the Internet, produced by Ivanhoe Newswire.

Thangiah designs routing algorithms that can save school districts up to 20 percent on their transportation costs through greater efficiency.

“It might be school bus routing, efficient trash collection routing or even the most efficient way to make use of snow plows to remove snow from public streets,” he said.

The SRU professor said he developed an interest in the topic while studying at North Dakota State University.

Alumna bequeaths $50,000

Marie Lower Smith, a 1938 graduate who died in July at 93, clearly loved her alma mater. She bequeathed $50,000 to SRU to support physical education.

After graduating from the then Slippery Rock State Normal School, Smith taught physical education for many years at Edison High School.

“The gift was certainly magnanimous and clearly shows that she thought highly of physical education and its programs,” said Betsy McKinley, chair of physical education. “We will carefully consider ways to use the funds to do service that gives credit to Mrs. Smith.”
Tired of winter? Danielle Peirce, a 2009 community health graduate, is out in the cold all the time and couldn’t be happier. Peirce took her professors’ advice about seeking employment outside Pennsylvania and accepted a job in Antarctica, where the temperature dips to minus 20.

Peirce works for the housing department at McMurdo Station, a U.S. research facility supporting 1,200 residents. Peirce performs a variety of tasks ranging from activities director to human resources to housing maintenance.

“The wind rips right through everything,” she said. “My big red – that’s what we call our parkas – is my new best friend. My hair has frozen down here once or twice. Makes me appreciate Pennsylvania winters.”

Peirce said the wildlife and natural beauty are breathtaking.

“The sea life that the divers bring up looks like aliens from another planet,” she said. “The mountains... surreal. We toured an ice cave and glacier recently, it was absolutely beautiful. The blue of the ice... the size... it’s unreal.”

Her outdoor gear includes the parka, “bunny boots,” long underwear, lots of warm socks, SRU apparel, gloves and sunglasses at all times to prevent snow blindness. Planes deliver food and other supplies from New Zealand, she said.

“I wear SRU gear and even a Bob’s Sub shirt down here, and people comment all the time,” she said, noting her Rock pride.

Late teacher’s memory lives

Candice Berner, the SRU-educated teacher who was killed during an animal attack in Alaska in 2009, has received numerous posthumous awards, honors and contributions in her name to animal causes. The Berner family recently committed $5,000 to establish the SRU Candice D. Berner Adventurous Spirit Award for Graduate Students in Special Education. The initial award will be made in 2011.

Berner, a 2000 special education graduate, was teaching in rural Alaska at the time of her death.

In her memory, more than 200 people donated $3,200 to the Alaskan Village Children’s Fund to support the Lake and Peninsula school districts, where Berner worked. More than 60 people contributed $3,000 by participating in the Candice Berner Memorial Fun Run/Walk in King Salmon, Ala.

Closer to campus, more than 50 people donated $500 to the Butler County Humane Society. A brick was inscribed in her memory as well.

Berner was the daughter of Robert Berner, SRU professor emeritus of special education.

Alumna finds hot job in Antarctica

Lynn Ernes, ’78, chemistry
Chief knowledge officer for Industrie De Nora

Home:
Willoughby, Ohio.

Profession:
Chief knowledge officer for Industrie De Nora, a global manager of research development for a private company in Milan, Italy specializing in electrochemical technology products.

Hobbies:
Traveling, as I need to spend my 500,000 frequent flyer miles earned over the last five years flying back and forth to Milan every two weeks. My husband and I love to cook, and we frequently take cooking classes to hone our technique.

Great accomplishment:
My greatest achievement has been the career challenge I accepted in 2005 to manage the corporate global group of De Nora. The opportunity that I have had to manage these talented scientists and engineers from both the United States and also Italy has been both exciting and challenging at this point in my career.

Why I give:
I launched the Lynne Ernes Women in Science Scholarship to support women science majors at SRU. Naturally, I received an excellent education in my chemistry major, but as a woman I am also proud that the school was supportive of my choice of a career as a scientist. Certainly during the mid 1970s, the role of a woman in a scientific discipline was not as common as it is today, but the teachers and staff at Slippery Rock always encouraged and challenged me to strive for excellence. I would like to give back what I can, and to encourage and challenge another generation of women to achieve their goals and aspirations.
When prospective students and their parents ask William Williams, Slippery Rock University provost and vice president for academic affairs, why SRU has such a fervent belief in internationalism, he answers without hesitation.

“We live in a global community. For us to educate a student who does not understand the implications of the world in which they live in is to not educate the student accurately,” he said.

That simple yet profound reality drives the many facets of internationalism at the University, which has embraced the blending of cultures as a prerequisite for success in a pluralistic world.

Internationalism permeates the campus culture, giving students exposure to foreign-born professors, different cultures, languages, customs, religions and foods. The interaction dispels stereotypes, fosters understanding and plants the seed for a greater openness to multiculturalism and the possibility of an international career, Williams said.

Students are getting the message: SRU has been ranked 10th nationally among masters-degree granting institutions for the number of students participating in short-term study abroad programs. The Institute of International Education, which tracks such activities, noted that SRU placed 402 students into study-abroad programs of eight weeks or less in 2008-09.

Students from 36 foreign countries are currently enrolled at SRU, and domestic students participate in study-abroad, research and spring break programs in Poland, China, the Bahamas, Egypt, Ghana, the Netherlands, England and elsewhere, as well as student-teach in Mexico and Ireland.

Citing companies like Westinghouse Electric, which is headquartered in Cranberry but has a presence in China and elsewhere around the world, educators say the old mentality of American isolationism is as outdated as the “flesh” colored crayon.

“One of the things I have always believed is if people understood each other internationally, we wouldn’t have wars,” Williams said. “Why do we end up with wars? Because either they don’t know who we are and think we’re infringing, or we don’t know who they are and think they are infringing. When people understand each other, we don’t do those things. So we need to educate ourselves about other cultures, people and places. And we need to help people from other cultures understand us.”

**Employment ‘all over the world’**

Not only does internationalism broaden students’ worldview, graduates with foreign language skills and a greater understanding of the world have the edge in finding a job, said Tom Rosswog, director of global staffing and recruiting for MSA, The Safety Company in suburban Pittsburgh. MSA, a manufacturer of safety equipment with more than $1 billion in sales annually, employs 5,000 people, including more than 2,000 people at 40 international locations.

“Technical expertise in the field is paramount, but almost all our people cross function with global teams and have to work with people all over the world,” Rosswog said. “These days there are international employment opportunities in product development, engineering, manufacturing and all segments of the company.”

Connecting SRU students to the world begins with curriculum. Internationalism is stressed even in courses such as “Intro to World Music.” Music faculty member Susan Hadley, an Australian, said she covers systems of power and privilege, gender, race, sexuality, socioeconomic status, nationality and religion.

“It is very important that students at SRU are exposed to people and ideas from around the globe,” Hadley said. “Many of the students have not lived in urban settings and have not experienced the diversity that is within the U.S., let alone been in contact with people outside of the country. Students at SRU learn that the way they have always viewed the U.S. is not necessarily the same as those who are not from the U.S., and that the ways in which the U.S. gets involved in the affairs of other countries is not always viewed in the same ways as it is here. This might not always be easy to take, but it is important in their growth as fellow citizens on this planet.”

About 25 percent of SRU faculty were born, educated or have spent a significant period outside the U.S.

Junko Yamamoto, an assistant professor of secondary education who is from Japan, said SRU has utilized her cultural expertise in many ways. She joined a planning committee that researches teaching English as a foreign language. She sponsors an international honor society for education majors, Kappa Delta Pi, that promotes diversity and advanced scholarship and has participated at research conferences in Vienna, Rome, Singapore and Timisoara in Romania.

“If you are open minded, you will learn a lot from others that are different from you, but if you are close minded, you are likely to criticize them,” Yamamoto said. “The attitude to be open minded is cultivated from experience.”

Jialing Wang, a professor of geography, geology and the environment from China, said she is working to increase interaction with China. She helped established SRU’s Modern China Center to support cross-cultural collaboration and traveled recently with an SRU contingent to China to help establish letters of intent with Hainging and Zhejiang high schools. The schools will send students to SRU for their undergraduate education.

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“SRU has many international professors. It is very important for SRU to allow its students to have access to professors who have different cultural and historical backgrounds to prepare students for globalization.”

-Min Lim, assistant professor of chemistry
“It is important for a university to have international faculty members,” she said. “This will expose students to different cultures and prepare students for a more and more globalizing world in which people from different backgrounds and cultures closely interact with each other.”

**Students understand the stakes**

Pam Frigot, director of international services, said the University is intentional in encouraging students to study abroad because it can turn their lives around.

“We have a very nice student from Zelienople who is studying in France this semester,” she said. “He is going to meet 50 to 100 different people from France and other parts of the world, and the experience is going to have a profound effect on him academically, culturally, socially, personally and professionally.”

Becoming a global citizen boosts students’ resume and credentials, especially for graduates who aspire to multinational careers.

“We have young people who get it,” Frigot added. “They know they can’t stay at home, that the world they are going to live in requires them to embrace, or at the very least be comfortable with, diversity. They must be experienced with different cultures and nations. Their work and lives won’t involve just locals. In a variety of ways and at different times, they will be connected to all corners of the world.”

As part of campus mainstreaming efforts, Frigot said more than 90 percent of international students live with an American student in one of SRU’s residence halls. International Services sponsors a number of programs, such as an international fashion show and dinner, to raise awareness.

“This fosters more interaction and gives all our students the opportunity to discuss and share ideas and find commonalities,” she said.

Like their American counterparts who report they learned to become more open minded and flexible through overseas study, international students said they reap many benefits from their time at SRU. “In the age of globalization, it is not rocket science for one to know that one has to have that crucial skill to know more about people from different backgrounds in order to be successful in business, politics, law and day to day activities,” said Natty Dread, a political science major from Ethiopia. “An international experience helps people understand more about certain situations and enables them to see things from a different frame of reference.”

SRU professors and students are quick to embrace international students and build relationships.

“My main reason for going to Slippery Rock was to gain academic knowledge, but I got more experience than I could ever imagine,” said Mariia Berezina of Ukraine, who received an Open Society Institute scholarship to study economics in 2009-2010.

Berezina said she made “so many awesome friends” at SRU, one of whom recently visited her in the Ukraine.

“The United States is a very diverse country with a lot of nationalities,” she said. “But for a lot of Americans it is a big challenge to communicate with international people. That’s why it is very needed for Americans to learn more about other countries and their traditions. One of the best ways is by traveling, studying abroad or just finding more international friends.”

Robert Smith, University president, said the process of shaping global citizens begins with first-year orientation and continues for the duration of their studies.

“I tell all our first-year students that we expect them to be more than just SRU graduates. We want them to be graduates that are engaged in their professional careers and lives. We are training global citizens. We develop a sense of community and belonging and break down barriers through a variety of international programs, both academic and social. We want our graduates to understand that they can make a difference in the world.”

www.SRU.edu
When Phillippe Belliard, a Slippery Rock University graduate from France, arrived at SRU in the early 1990s, he said it was difficult adjusting to the hours of operation. “Back home, dinner is not eaten until 8:30 p.m., so often I missed Boozel and Weisenfluh’s services and ended up ordering pizza and wings,” he said.

Still, Belliard said, the hospitality of students and staff and the education he received at SRU have had a lasting impact on his life when it comes to embracing cultural differences. Belliard, who has traveled to nearly 40 countries since receiving degrees in modern languages and communication in 1995 and 1997, said he rarely feels at odds with people.

“Thanks to all the things I learned at SRU, there are only two or three countries where I did not feel entirely confident and comfortable,” he said. “The English skills I gained at SRU are simply paramount to my being where I am, because my job is conducted in English.”

Belliard is vice president of development for Europe Assistance - HIS Services in Paris. The company mobilizes medical personnel and helps establish health clinics in remote corners of Asia, the Pacific and North America. Belliard leads the company’s development efforts.

“There is no doubt in my mind that SRU has helped me a great deal,” he said. “Not only do I use a number of lessons and concepts learned in communication classes every day in my job, but more importantly, the exposure I gained to other cultures is helping me be more sensitive to the cultures of the countries where my job takes me.”

He said he chose SRU in part because he wanted to experience a rural campus life, not the urban, commuter approach common to France.

“It was SRU in the early 1990s, so yes, I did my share of partying,” he said. “But I also tried to experience the things that set apart a U.S. university from the ones back home – going to games, playing intramural tournaments and going to Pittsburgh once in a while.”

Belliard said the language barrier made classes tough at first. “I remember struggling to pass classes I would have aced back home simply because of language challenges,” he said. “That’s when I decided I would not leave the U.S. until I was truly fluent.” He also speaks Spanish.

Belliard said American-born students treated him well. “I felt welcome from day one and made lifelong friends during my years at SRU,” he said. “The great thing about going to a University like SRU is people are actually curious about your country and its traditions and ask lots of questions.”

After graduating, he began searching for a public relations job. “I was in New York City staying at my sister’s place, and I sent my resume to a number of PR agencies and to companies, and they all called me for interviews, but I did not have a green card, and none of them wanted to sponsor someone for a green card when there were so many U.S. candidates. I ended up working for a French company in Washington, D.C., and have been working for the same group for the past 12 years.”

He met his wife in Washington, D.C. “She has never set foot in western Pennsylvania, but I hope to remedy this soon,” Belliard said.

It was at SRU that Belliard said he also began to see the direct nature of Americans. He described the American worker as more straightforward and result-oriented than anyone else in the world, although Belliard said he likes Europe’s proximity to other cultures.

“I relate more to the way Americans conduct business than with any other culture,” he said. “I think that is the biggest gift my years at SRU gave me: an open mind and adaptability.”

He and his wife and two children have traveled to Greece, Tunisia and throughout France. “It is very important to expose your kids to other cultures very early on,” he said. “Our children are already very worldly having a Senegalese mother and a French dad. We try as much as possible to show them what else is out there.”

“Frenchman embraces differences”
Imagine: You’re 19 years old and have never seen snow – until you find yourself at Slippery Rock University on a frigid January day. “I still remember how exciting it was to see my first snowfall,” said Rajeev Karmacharya, a 1995 graduate from Kathmandu, Nepal. “While I come from the land of Mount Everest, Kathmandu has fairly mild climate conditions and snowfall is rare – it hasn’t happened in decades.”

The obstacles of adjusting to a foreign culture did not prevent Karmacharya from becoming a campus leader and career success. The computer science major graduated with a 4.0 grade-point average and owns a Virginia-based business transformation firm that advises senior leadership of Fortune 500 companies.

“Slippery Rock is a special place for me, not only because it is where I first started my life in the United States, but more importantly, because it provided me with a strong foundation to build my life on,” he said.

Karmacharya said The Rock provided an ideal learning atmosphere, especially by providing opportunities for involvement in many campus activities.

“I volunteered at the WSRU – called WRSK then – radio station and was a staff writer for The Rocket campus newspaper,” he said. “I was honored to be selected as the Outstanding Senior Man and am also grateful for the many scholarships and awards, including the Marjorie Stephenson and Louis Pappan scholarships. These have inspired me to make my own contributions for future generations of SRU students.”

Karmacharya said SRU provided a well-rounded education “in and out of the classroom.”

“Slippery Rock has an outstanding core of faculty and staff members who genuinely care about their students and inspire them to reach their full potential,” he said. “Many contributed to making me what I am today.” He noted he was particularly grateful to Deborah Whitefield and Frank Hulick, professors of computer science, and Michael Matambanadzo, assistant professor of history, for taking him under their wing.

Karmacharya said he chose SRU because he wanted a semi-urban to rural setting with a smaller faculty-student ratio. “I figured greater interaction with class and faculty would be an ideal environment,” he said. “I had heard horror stories about classrooms with hundreds of students taught by graduate assistants at other schools, and I was certain that’s not what I wanted. Furthermore, Slippery Rock was more affordable with the partial tuition waiver it offered. I am proud to be part of the Slippery Rock community.”

Although small in numbers, the University’s international students stood out and offered events fostering tolerance and companionship. “I remember the international dinner as a way for students to share their culinary skills and native delicacies,” he said. “Cooking for the dinner was always fun, although it did take some planning to figure out what to cook that would be manageable and appetizing for folks who had not tried it before.”

After graduating from SRU, Karmacharya earned a master of business administration from Carnegie Mellon University. He worked for A.T. Kearney, a global management-consulting firm, before launching RK Strategic Advisors.

He met his wife Komal 11 years ago in Nepal. They have two boys, Ayush and Ojas.

The Rock continues to have an influence on his life. His older son attends Pinebrook Elementary School in Northern Virginia, led by principal Dawn Haddock, a 1985 special education graduate.

“Pinebrook is consistently ranked as one of the top schools in the state,” he said. “It is nice but not surprising that Slippery Rock is contributing to my son’s education. Everyone I meet from Slippery Rock mentions the strong foundation it provided.”

“Slippery Rock is a special place for me, not only because it is where I first started my life in the United States, but more importantly, because it provided me with a strong foundation to build my life on.”
“Just being here and experiencing this culture has given me more knowledge of the world than what I had known before. It has definitely been the experience of a lifetime so far.”

For some, studying abroad is about the adventure of experiencing a foreign culture. For others, it is about achieving independence and preparing for work in an increasingly multicultural world. Christopher Becker, a Slippery Rock University accounting major from Mars, Pa., cited these and other benefits to spending the year at Shanghai International University, where he is learning Chinese and interning for PPG Industries office in Pudong.

“Living and studying in China has helped me grow because it is the first time in my life where I am really responsible for myself,” Becker said. “It also gave me an opportunity to have an internship with a top company that I may not have gotten back home. I am very grateful for it, knowing how much high-quality internships matter to employers and graduate schools.”

“Just being here and experiencing this culture has given me more knowledge of the world than what I had known before,” he added. “It has definitely been the experience of a lifetime so far.”

Like SRU, the Becker family strongly believes in the value of connecting with the world. The family hosted a Chinese student, Tong, three years ago. Becker’s sister Rachael attends a high school in Beijing and studied in China two years ago. She wants to attend college in Singapore.

“We had a good experience with Tong, and he regularly e-mails my dad,” Chris Becker said. “I stayed with him here in China for a few weeks before school started.”

John Becker said he wants his children to understand that China is a land of opportunity and that they will need to look beyond Pennsylvania for their careers.

“We’re comfortable with sending our kids overseas because we inherently believe in the importance of internationalism,” he said. “All you have to do is read the news and see that there is a center of gravity in China. The economy is shifting to Asia, and China is in the lead. It’s a tough, very tough job market here, and the kids need to look for something that will set them up for the ‘Asian century.’”

Chris Becker said he aspires to a career in international relations or business and that Shanghai University, which was founded in 1949 and educates 8,600 students, including 1,200 international students, can help him reach that goal.

“My days are divided between learning, writing, listening and speaking,” he said. “We sometimes learn other things like calligraphy. I really like my classes and the students here in general. About half the students are foreigners, all from every part of the world you can think of. Amazingly, I’ve met fewer than 10 Americans at my school.”

Becker said he has visited The Great Wall and Tiananmen Square, scene of a 1989 pro-Democracy rally. He said Shanghai is the best example of modernization success. He said there is constant construction in Pudong, the financial center of the city. Many top companies, including PPG Industries, maintain offices in Pudong.

“What surprises me is how strict Chinese rules and regulations are enforced,” Becker said. “In the states, as many people know, it’s definitely possible to ‘bargain’ your way out of a speeding ticket or explain your case. Here, I don’t get the feeling you can do any of that. Our laws work better for ordinary people in my opinion, but Chinese people are very big on absolute rules.”

In Nanjing, Becker said he was the first Westerner to get a haircut at one particular place and that the Chinese show much curiosity about him. “The Chinese want to know a lot of things, especially about our religion, holidays, government and entertainment,” he said. “It is interesting to participate with the Chinese in their customs and at the same time be able to tell them about ours. Things like Hollywood movies and music make us interesting to many Chinese.”

Becker said many Chinese and Korean restaurants are within walking distance of his residence hall and that he eats out a lot. “Korean barbeque is really good,” he said. “American Chinese food is different for sure. In China, they have the idea that the fresher the better. When I had dinner at my friend’s place, they bought live crabs and watched them walk around the table before boiling them. Then they ate the brains and unappealing parts of them. You always find the heads of animals in your soup or included in a dish.”

Despite the culture differences, Becker is confident his year abroad will help him down the road. He prepared for the year abroad by enrolling in SRU’s Asia studies minor. “Chinese language skills will help me make connections with others in the business community, and give me a valuable skill in the future I can use in a career if I want to work abroad,” he said.
Whenever art major Trevor King goes to work, visions flow from his soul. Lumps of clay become polished ceramics. Pads of paper transform into human figures or kaleidoscopes of color. King’s art beckons the viewer to see the world through an unorthodox lens – even more so since he spent a semester at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland.

Slippery Rock University has a partnership with the 90-year-old art academy, one of Europe’s most prestigious. “It is impossible for an artist to be in a situation like that and not grow,” King said. “Being in a new country whose main language is not English, surrounded by new experiences, it gives you a better idea of who you are.”

King, of Slippery Rock, studied sculpture, ceramics, photography, multimedia and drawing in Poland. He lived in a residence hall floor reserved for international students that cost him only $60 a month. He completed 50 artworks, gained confidence and independence as an artist and expanded his worldview by befriending students from Spain, England, Slovenia, Croatia, Germany and Romania.

“The experience gave me a lot more confidence, and you see the similarities and differences amongst all human beings,” he said. “You realize that it really is a small world after all.”

King said academy professors pushed students harder than their American counterparts. Professors focused on the creative process, imagination and covered the awareness of art and its role in society.

“(Academy) professors expect much more out of you, both technically and especially conceptually,” King said. “They were very effective in pushing students to create a unique and personal body of work, with a concept that was specific to that student.”

Established in 1919 as the School of Decorative Arts, the academy teaches many disciplines of art, from classical to contemporary. King said the public seems to have a greater interest in art in Poland and that he attended three gallery openings a week.

Of course, King said, college students are college students regardless of where they are studying, so he found many similarities among the group. Students carried cell phones, monitored Facebook and were preoccupied with their accommodations, social lives and food.

“The dorms were actually really nice,” King said. “Every room, which was shared between two students, had its own bathroom, Internet access and a balcony. We had a shared kitchen, which was great because there were people from all over cooking ethnic food.”

Poznan, the fifth largest city in Poland, provided a myriad of interesting attractions. King said there was a tram station in front of his residence hall and a large farm market. There was also a butcher shop and a bakery on the other side of the market.

“I would get a lot of fresh meat and foods from there and cook for myself,” King said.

He also ate at some of the restaurants in town, choosing Kabobs and pasta “because they were tasty, cheap and convenient.” He cited Pyra Bar as his favorite restaurant, because it was a whole restaurant dedicated to potato dishes. The national dish in Poland is potatoes, cabbage and kielbasa.

King said Polish food is hearty but served in smaller portions than in the U.S. “There is also awesome coleslaw all over Poland,” he said.

King said he would recommend a semester abroad for all SRU students. The biggest thing he learned is that artists must put themselves into their work and produce from the heart.

“In previous semesters, I would make artwork concerning things I was studying at the moment, or what I thought art should look like,” King said. “What I realized is I just have to look inside myself, look around, and make work out of what really concerns, bothers or interests me.”

“SRU actually has a pretty small art department, but it offers huge opportunities like this,” King said. “I am grateful.”

No wonder King signs e-mails with dziekuje (jenn-kooyeh, thanks) in Polish.

“Being in a new country whose main language is not English, surrounded by new experiences, it gives you a better idea of who you are.”
If you were to create a world map of happiness, Scandinavia would rank first but Slippery Rock University would win the prize for empowerment, says Tia Molvig. The 1999 political science graduate, originally from Malaysia, has worked in Scandinavia for 10 years and lives her life according to a triple bottom line: people, planet, profit.

Her philosophy mirrors the University’s mission statement: SRU will excel as a caring community of lifelong learners connecting with the world. Molvig does plenty of connecting. She speaks English, Norwegian, Danish, Bengali and Malay and talks to people all over the world. She said SRU played a role in the development of her giving spirit.

“My professors at SRU imbued a sense of ‘agency’ in me that I carried onwards into my academic, professional and personal life,” she said. Agency is a social sciences term for possessing the capacity to act for the greater good of humanity.

Molvig works as a corporate social responsibility adviser for Tryg, Denmark’s largest general insurance company. She overseas the company’s corporate conscience, monitoring its business ethics, sustainability and the company’s United Nations charity work.

“I have also worked as a jurist, researcher and consultant for asylum cases,” Molvig said. She worked and lived in Norway for nine years before moving to Denmark.

Molvig came to SRU to gain access to education and empowerment. She cited George Brown, professor of political science, as a mentor and source of inspiration. “I still keep in touch with him. I definitely mean that he strengthens my sense of agency,” she said.

She said she admired the emphasis many professors placed on empowering the feminist self and promoting gender equality. “I always felt that Slippery Rock understood the importance of gender equality as a foundational ethic,” she said.

Still, being an international student was not without struggles, she said. It was not always easy to keep up with courses, homework, deal with sleep deprivation and work to make ends meet. Molvig said she took five classes a semester and juggled two jobs.

“I remember struggling economically as an international student,” she said. “Even though we were only allowed to work 20 hours a week on campus, I worked almost full time to receive an education. A great deal of my international student friends worked 60 hours or more.”

While she eventually adjusted to a new academic system and a language barrier, Molvig said she “never understood” the culture of fraternities and sororities.

“My outsider impression was that the fraternity and sorority system seemed to idealize a tradition for frivolity that most citizens of the non-western world would not have the luxury to enjoy, appreciate or comprehend,” she said.

Molvig said she enjoyed her years at SRU but feels that Scandinavians live with a greater sense of security. She said the socialist democratic government system provides greater hardship support than capitalist, laissez-faire democracy. If you lose your job in Denmark, the government supports you financially and provides a means for securing further employment; health care is free for everyone, and women get six months of paid maternity leave.

“Scandinavians are much more introverted and homogenous in their demeanor, but I enjoy living in a social Democratic welfare state that provides a security net that enhances community well being,” Molvig said. “This has allowed the Scandinavians – especially Norway – to rank as the best country in the world to live in, in terms of well-being, gender equality and much more.”

Molvig said she would always feel connected to SRU and thankful for its influence.

“While SRU provided me with the foundations for investing in a career, the Scandinavian welfare state has graciously equipped me with the tools to combine that career with a family life that includes three children,” she said.
She’s young, she’s determined and she’s passionate. Ashley Ranck, a Slippery Rock University English major from Lancaster, is a different kind of ambassador. Undaunted by lack of modern conveniences, Ranck and two other SRU students spent two weeks researching the daily lives and economic status of women in Ghana, a trip made possible through their involvement with the University’s Women’s Studies Program.

“I knew it would be the experience of a lifetime and something I would most likely not get the chance to do again,” Ranck said. “I am really passionate about women’s studies and felt the need to help others help themselves. The opportunity to do this in Ghana was perfect.”

Ranck, Kara Cooke Robeson, a 2010 social work graduate from Slippery Rock, and Nita Shippy, an English major from Hyndman, traveled to Ghana with Cindy LaCom, SRU professor of English and coordinator of women’s studies.

Students conducted dozens of interviews with young and older women and read four books about micro financing, including “Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty” by Muhammad Yunus.

Students said the purpose of their research was to learn more about the dynamics of Ghanaian women within their families, villages and country. Students also researched how small loans help women build businesses and, ultimately, improve the national economy.

“We really went over there to see how these women can help themselves, which is the most powerful thing you can do for someone,” Ranck said. “We wanted to see the roles of men versus women and the roles women hold in their society. To give women power that can’t be torn down by a natural disaster or taken by...”

“I knew it would be the experience of a lifetime and something I would most likely not get the chance to do again…”

– Ashley Ranck, English major
the government and that will continue once we step off African soil was very important to us.”

Ghana, in West Africa, has a population of 24 million people and is home to more than 100 ethnic groups with more than 40 languages. The official language is English, but most Ghanaians speak at least one local language.

The students are writing papers about their observations and plan to present their ethnographic findings during SRU’s annual research symposium this spring and at the 2011 National Women’s Studies Association Conference, LaCom said. The Ghana women are clients of Joy 2 the World, a non-profit organization that provides microloans for women entrepreneurs in Ghana. Translators were provided for the interviews.

“We asked what a typical day is like for them, what their financial contribution to the household was, the children’s education and how often they ate,” Ranck said. “We really wanted to make these women real and not just a ‘client’ or simply a far-away story.”

Ranck said they learned Ghanaian women don’t expect anything to be handed to them. Many work 15 hours a day for as little as a $1.

“It surprised me how hard they work,” Ranck said. “They work from sunrise to sunset while taking care of children and the home. It also surprised me how strong these women are and how smart. They know exactly what needs to get done on a daily basis to improve their business and lives. They are extremely smart and face their situation every day with optimism. They have extreme love for their children.”

Cooke Robeson said they asked the women where their husbands work, how many children they have and whether children help their business. The information collected will help students compare published information about microfinance in developing countries to actual borrowers’ stories. They observed social interaction as well.

“Interviewing the women was both challenging and fascinating,” Cooke Robeson said. “I was astounded by their hospitality. In one particular case we met Mary, a loan group leader who knew us only a few minutes before she called for a seamstress to take our measurements. Mary wanted to give us Ghanaian dresses, and that type of overwhelming hospitality became a trend among the women we interviewed.”

Cooke Robeson said she was inclined to decline the gift because she wanted the women to spend the money on their own families. “However, we quickly learned that Ghanaian culture dictates that it is impolite to refuse gifts, and we should instead say ‘thank you.’”

Some of the women operated provision stores, where they sell food staples and other day-to-day goods. Two women cooked and sold rice, beans and eggs at a nearby school and from a wooden stand in their village. Another made and sold scarves, traveling...
a circuit of five villages. One sold a variation of beef jerky and another sewed dresses and scarves.

Cooke Robeson said she was surprised by the women’s positive attitude, despite hardship, and their lack of inhibition.

“On several occasions, while we were interviewing a Ghanaian woman, she would very casually remove her breast from her top and begin breastfeeding her child,” she said. “Unfortunately for American women, breasts are taboo outside the porn industry, and the exposure of a woman’s breasts in public is considered shameful and inappropriate even when breast feeding. I found that women in Ghana were completely comfortable in their skin.”

Cooke Robeson said she did identify parallels with American women. “Some Ghanaian and American women are united in their desires to be both mother and businesswoman, despite the challenges both roles may bring about,” she said.

Despite the lower standard of living, Cooke Robeson said she came to see that many of the Ghanaian women are happier than their American counterparts.

“I remember talking to a young Ghanaian woman about the cultural differences between the U.S. and Ghana, and her reaction when we told her that there are college students with more than 15 pairs of shoes, she thought we were joking. She really could not believe it,” she said. “My time in Ghana has helped me to foster a new perspective on material belongings.”

The venture to Ghana required shots for typhoid, yellow fever and polio. The flight from New York to Accra lasted 11 hours. The weather averaged 80 degrees, with high humidity.

Students said they sampled several meals that they had never heard of before the trip, such as fufu. Fufu is a thick paste of potatoes made by boiling the root vegetable in water and pounding it with a mortar and pestle to the desired consistency.

“Fufu is typically served with a soup, and the idea is that you grab a bit of fufu and dip it into the soup,” Cooke Robeson said. “I tried fufu with a light goat soup, which reminded me of tomato soup plus goat meat. It was not my favorite meal, but I am glad I tried it. My favorite thing to eat was fried plantain. I could have eaten them every day.”

Shippy said her research paper would focus on the issue of “voice” in post-colonial Ghana. “I am interested in the way
language affects Ghanaians’ daily lives,” she said. “In this paper, I’ll discuss the ways in which they recount history via the museums we visited and their oral traditions; some of the generational and modernization issues that go along with some citizens speaking English and others not.”

LaCom said one of the important lessons about experiencing another culture is it helps one eliminate biases against less prosperous nations. Ghana didn’t achieve political independence from England until 1957.

“Despite our best efforts to deconstruct and dismantle our colonizing impulses, I think that being there and letting us vividly see that these are not at all people above whom we should place ourselves,” LaCom said. “In fact, there is much to be envied and admired in Ghanaian culture that we wish we could replicate in the United States.”

The research corresponds with many of the topics the SRU women’s studies curriculum covers. The academic minor examines body image, gender politics, domestic violence, family and community. Students take courses such as “Women in Science,” “Women and Again” and “Studies in U.S. Women’s History.”

“Ghana was life changing because I think we came home with a very different sense of how little could change women and children’s lives,” LaCom said. “It has given our students incredible insights into working with different populations and learning how to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. Even for me, there was an epiphanic quality to this experience. For students, that was more fully felt. Not only will they have research opportunities in terms of publishing and presenting at both local and national levels, it is really useful to do an interdisciplinary project. We pulled from economics. We pulled from business. We pulled from women studies, anthropology and sociology. We studied the history of Ghana at the museums.”

Ranck said the women had little preoccupation with trying to impress other people.

“It was a really good experience because the women in Ghana didn’t understand why we were asking them all these questions about their lives,” Ranck said. “They didn’t see their lives as anything different. Yet for us, their lives were so incredibly different, they didn’t seem to understand. It was awesome to see their hard work, hospitality and good nature in person.”

The student researchers also benefited from the generosity of SRU donors that helped to underwrite their study. Claire Schmieler, retired SRU assistant vice president of student affairs; Georgia Berner, president and chief executive officer of Berner International Corp.; and Francis Hensler, retired SRU software support specialist, contributed to the Ghana trip.
Great expectations

English professor Bill Boggs brings life lessons to classroom

By Amy Clingensmith Mongiovi, ’08

Bill Boggs was not the type of kid anyone thought would go to college. He proved them all wrong. In fact, Slippery Rock University’s longtime professor of English exceeded everyone’s expectations, even his own.

Boggs and many of his students share a common background. They fought “real-world” struggles early on, and public higher education made it possible for them to claw their way out of difficult situations. The majority are not the entitled, partying students portrayed in movies, he said. They are working, going to school and trying to keep up, just like he was 45 years ago.

Boggs grew up amid what he and sociologists call “situational poverty.” Boggs’ father died when he was just four months old and his ‘single mother’ was forced to support the family – long before the term was a part of everyday conversation.

“I got out of high school with no intention of going to college,” Boggs said. Doing so, he said, changed his life.

Because public education has made such a difference in his life, Boggs is an enthusiastic advocate for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, which includes SRU, because it helps students overcome barriers by providing a quality education.
of failing health and economic loss.”

Boggs attributes his family’s survival to his strong-willed, faithful mother, who worked as a short-order cook and a janitor to provide for her family.

After graduating at age 17 from high school in 1968, he lied about his age to get hired at a roofing factory. He stacked 80-pound bundles of shingles as they came off a conveyor for $2.65 per hour.

As the summer drew to a close, Boggs said he looked around at the old-timers in the factory and saw their broken, bent bodies. Boggs knew he was lucky to have the job to help contribute to the family, but asked himself if he wanted to end up like those who spent their life in the factory.

So after saving his money, he told his mother at Thanksgiving that he wanted to go to college. He enrolled at Edinboro in the secondary education/English program.

Through his undergraduate years Boggs worked as a roofer, maintenance man at the Erie Zoo and Glenwood Ice Rink, laborer for Waterford Borough, carpenter and farm hand. He supplemented his income by becoming a delivery driver and stockroom worker at Edinboro University’s supply warehouse.

“When times were lean, I worked for a temporary service in Erie. I spent time in a foundry and once drove a delivery van for a poultry company, hauling cases of chicken carcasses to restaurants,” Boggs said.

Boggs received his bachelor’s degree in education Cum Laude from Edinboro but couldn’t find a teaching job. So he went through the employment office in Erie and found work as a laborer for Continental Grain. He worked in the now demolished grain elevators on Erie Bay.

“An Edinboro professor grabbed me and said I should be getting a master’s degree, so I signed on as a graduate assistant and

“In higher education, if there’s a student who has the ability and the desire, there’s a way.”

– Bill Boggs
finished the MA,” he said. “There was still no high school teaching job, so I caught odd jobs but was going nowhere.”

Boggs said a friend who worked maintenance at Erie County Vocational-Technical School suggested he take an eight-week welding class. Six weeks into the class, Erie General Electric hired Boggs and placed him in the motor and generator division.

“I worked in that division until I was transferred out, and I was moved to ‘Old Smoky,’ Building 5, the locomotive frame shop,” Boggs said.

The building lived up to its name, with black soot hanging thick in the air. While Boggs earned twice the salary of high school teachers at the time, it was a tough job. “It had the reputation of being the hardest, hottest and dirtiest work in the whole plant,” he said. “I survived and saved my money to fund my way to Carnegie Mellon.”

As a doctoral student at Carnegie Mellon, Boggs kept his odd jobs during summer and worked as a teaching assistant during the school year. His tenacity finally paid off. After graduating from CMU, Boggs accepted his first full-time teaching position at Frostburg State University. While on the tenure track at Frostburg, Boggs was offered a temporary position at West Virginia University. He’d always wanted to teach at a large university, so he took another risk and headed to WVU. While at WVU, he also worked as an adjunct professor at Waynesburg College, teaching African-American literature.

“As a doctoral student at Carnegie Mellon, Boggs kept his odd jobs during summer and worked as a teaching assistant during the school year. His tenacity finally paid off. After graduating from CMU, Boggs accepted his first full-time teaching position at Frostburg State University. While on the tenure track at Frostburg, Boggs was offered a temporary position at West Virginia University. He’d always wanted to teach at a large university, so he took another risk and headed to WVU. While at WVU, he also worked as an adjunct professor at Waynesburg College, teaching African-American literature.”

“From 1982-89, I taught at Robert Morris College where I taught composition, “Intro to Literature,” “Journalism, “Literature of the Women's Movement,” “Studio Radio Production,” and “Writing for Electronic Media and Film,” he said. “I also served as Asst. Department Chair, coached the women’s softball team, and advised the student newspaper.”

 Eventually, however, Boggs said he wanted to return to the public higher education roots that had enabled his academic success. When a position opened at SRU, he applied, was hired and has remained since 1989.

Boggs has made an impact on countless students through his years at SRU, teaching courses such as “College Writing,” “Introduction to Fiction,” “Interpreting Literature,” and several graduate courses, including “Creative Writing,” “Advertising Writing and Production,” “Film Analysis,” “Composition and Rhetoric” and a slew of literature and poetry classes.


But Boggs said he remembers his origins and often reads a poem to his classes that he wrote about cutting cabbage for $1.25 an hour in the summer to earn money to buy school clothes.

Boggs lives a simple life, surrounded by students and faculty, and maintains a love for language. His greatest accomplishment, he said, has been making a difference in the lives of students in his classes and his greatest treasures are the letters, notes and e-mails from former students sharing their success.

“When we get to the end of our life, the kings and the paupers all meet the same end,” he said. “And there’s nothing you can take with you. It’s only the amount of good you did and the people you helped. Even if I had planned it, I couldn’t have made things work out any better.”

The Immigrant’s Dream

By William Boggs

Tonight, two days after Christmas, Old John Marterello sits in his kitchen in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Thinking of his son-in-law long Out of work. He looks at the smooth Formica counter and watches time Pass on the digital oven clock. A last cup of coffee, and he checks His old Westclox Bullseye pocket watch. Whether he thinks that time circles Back on itself as he winds or whether He sees time as something we pass once Like a dark roadhouse on a rain-slick Highway does not matter. He looks At the thermometer hung on the back Porch, at the Crucifix over the table, Worries for the child in his Granddaughter’s belly, worries For the immigrant’s dream.
Viva la Vincent ‘NEW’ Vincent Science Center

(by the numbers)
- 101,185 square feet
- 16 classrooms
- 16 laboratories
- 2 lecture halls
- 29 whiteboards
- 29 Prometheus units
- 12 document cameras
- New planetarium dome
- New Greenguard certified furniture
“Take your seat” was never so well received than when Slippery Rock University students started classes this semester in the University’s renovated Vincent Science Center. A $14-million renovation transformed the former classroom building into a modern learning center with new furniture, technology, 16 advanced laboratories with prep rooms, and wireless throughout to allow for real-time data acquisition between labs, equipment and individuals.

The state-of-the-art facility houses the departments of nursing, biology, mathematics, physics and psychology. SRU closed Vincent three years ago and temporarily relocated the departments to Patterson Hall.

Professors praised the savvy design as more conducive to topic-specific learning.

“Cell biology was taught in the micro lab, as was molecular, but now we are taking genetics, cell and molecular and offering them in the same room – likes with likes,” said Jerry Chmielewski, professor of biology. “The micro lab only has micro taught in it — medical micro, general micro, environmental micro and pathogenic micro. The anatomy and physiology lab only has anatomy and physiology taught in it. The zoology lab has all animal-related courses taught in it. The first floor lab attached to the greenhouse has botanical courses and ecology courses taught in it.”

Students are thrilled. James Bichler, a mathematics major from Pittsburgh, said he sees the future of higher education in SRU’s smart building design.

“The overall impression I get from the newly improved Vincent Science Center is that it is absolutely astonishing,” he said. “Throughout the SRU campus you see numerous construction projects, and you can’t help but have a tendency to see things as they are, not as they will be. When I toured the new building, it was like a glimpse into the future; it was a preview of the newly remodeled Slippery Rock campus.”
Bichler said Vincent provides important logistical advantages for students. “As a mathematics major, we were often crammed inside a temporary math department in the basement of the Patterson classroom building,” he said. “The new building gives us an up-to-date facility to study in. Plus, it is the first time since I started here that the majority of all math classes will be located in the same proximity.”

More than meets the eye
The adapted reuse of the 43-year-old building saved SRU more than $15 million in new construction costs and has redefined how learning occurs. New construction would have cost at least $30 million, said Herb Carlson, assistant vice president for construction and design and the University’s sustainability officer.

Historically, the renovation or reuse of older buildings has been seen as the second best solution over new construction, he said. But SRU pursued the optimum and most sustainable strategy in renovating Vincent, especially in an era of economic distress, taxpayer advocacy and shrinking state and federal support.

By renovating Vincent, SRU was able to recycle the building’s sturdy shell, and maintain its distinctive circular design while updating the infrastructure. Workers replaced the mechanical and electrical systems and reconfigured the interior to provide “a building that reflects the changes that have taken place in science” and offer more opportunities for collaboration between faculty, said William Williams, SRU provost and vice president for academic affairs.

New to Vincent are department-specific student study areas adjacent to faculty offices. The design “enables students to be in the process of studying while working very closely with faculty,” Williams said. “If they have a problem, faculty are right there so that students can get direct input when they need it. That is an amazing advantage.”

New level of learning
Each of the departments benefited from the renovation, Williams said. The planetarium, used by physics, received a new dome and lighting. Psychology students will now conduct research in a neurocognition laboratory, while nursing received a media room with Wimba technology. Wimba is a real-time collaboration tool that allows groups to meet online for lectures. Wimba sends voice through the Internet instead of phone lines, enabling students to communicate face-to-face on computers from anywhere in the world.

“This is taking us to a new level of learning,” said Debra Wolf, associate professor of nursing. “The building sets a standard for all academic buildings, and the classrooms are beautiful. We have microphones, people on two-way video cameras and switches for live class discussions. We are blending traditional learning with distance learning.”

The technology supports the teaching of evidence-based practice, where nurses pay attention to the whole global picture surrounding a patient, as opposed to the task-oriented approach of getting specific things done, Wolf said.

“The technology expands and explodes cultural diversity, because we have students in Iowa and Kansas and California taking part in discussions. We are able to expand our students’ knowledge of nursing practices to Wyoming, California and elsewhere. They will gain a different perspective than what we see in the eastern United States.”

Students say the new environment enhances their learning. “I truly enjoy listening to my classmates’ presentations via Wimba,” said Loretta Britton, a student in the Web-based nursing program. “We talk via the discussion boards, but hearing their voices while reviewing their PowerPoint enhances their work. Learning and utilizing new technology in the classroom helps me to build confidence in myself to further expand my learning capabilities in the workforce.”

Ben Shaevitz, professor of physics, said the novelty and newness of Vincent has boosted interaction and collegiality among departments and that the excitement of the new environment “will take a long time to wear off.”

“There is nothing we’re not happy with. The office suites for faculty are great. We have nice rooms, including a dark room and a light room for experiments. Liquid crystals are back in Vincent. Everything is state-of-the art construction with a lighting system from 2010, not 1968,” he said.

Williams said architects designed the function of the building around the requests of faculty, who sought renovations that would improve student success. “The way it was done is we interviewed every person in the sciences who was going to have a space in that building to find out what he or she needed and how it should look,” he said.
Williams noted that one of the former weaknesses, the auditorium-style classrooms, has been eliminated. Workers flattened out the auditoriums to create lecture halls seating 103. The lecture halls are equipped with new projectors, document cameras and symposiums, a digital-information sharing device that uses a pen tethered to the LCD screen.

The provost, who oversees curriculum, instruction and research, said he expects Vincent to bolster interest in the sciences, which offer promising career opportunities.

“When you give a group of people a very nice facility, they take a lot more pride in what they’re doing,” he said. “Engineering and the STEM disciplines – science, technology, engineering and math – are the areas that are most in demand, both nationally and internationally. And they are the areas that are driving innovation, technology and computers – everything that is changing and moving forward at an amazing pace. So we need more people to enter these fields.”

If the proof of excellence rests in peer review, Williams said the facility won accolades recently from visiting academics from Hawaii and other top institutions.

“One of the advantages at an institution like Slippery Rock are the facilities for computer science and the new areas in Vincent for biology, physics and the other fields – they are way better than a lot of really big schools,” Williams said. “When we went through ABET [Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology] accreditation, we had people here from Research 1 institutions on the review team. All three were envious of our facilities.”

Brian Danielson, director of SRU’s Center of Excellence in Teaching and Educational Technology, said the distance-education technology in Vincent empowers professors with teaching options that were inconceivable just a few years ago. “The technology itself is no longer the barrier,” he said.

Eco friendly

Vincent incorporates ecologically sound practices, in keeping with SRU’s emphasis on green building innovation, said Mary Ann King, director of academic resources for the College of Health, Environment and Science. The new canopy entrance resists wind and water infiltration. The “white roof” reflects solar rays, reducing the required energy for air conditioning and minimizing the effects of global warming.

Inside, the linoleum flooring was made with 100 percent natural ingredients. The majority of the $1.4 million of new furniture is Greenguard certified, she said. Greenguard means the furniture controls mold, moisture and indoor pollutants. The old furniture went to Construction Junction, which promotes conservation through the reuse of building materials. “We minimized what went to the landfill,” King said.

While confident that the professors are more than satisfied with the “new” Vincent Science Center, King said that the most important advances benefit students, including the study cells.

“There is nothing wrong with going to the library or going somewhere else, but the design actually gives students study space in Vincent,” she said. “If they’re doing homework or doing a problem in math, they can go and knock on the door of a faculty member if they need help. I was in the faculty meeting when faculty said they wanted space for students to be nearby.”

Viva la Vincent.
Being married as college students is not out of the ordinary, but then again, Paul and Mary-Lynn Kebker are no ordinary couple. As Slippery Rock University’s “first couple in command,” the cadets occupy two of the top three leadership positions in Slippery Rock’s respected Army ROTC program — something that has never happened before at SRU — and will graduate together in August. “She’s actually my boss — she outranks me,” said Paul Kebker, a cadet captain to his wife’s rank of cadet major.

The two met their junior year at their high school in Toledo, Ohio, when Mary-Lynn decided to put her soccer skills to work on the varsity football team. As kicker, she kicked four field goals her senior year — the same year she was named homecoming queen. “I was crowned at halftime wearing my pads,” she said. Toward the season’s end, Paul, a receiver, broke his arm, and Mary-Lynn paid him a visit. Soon, the two were dating.

Fast-forward to graduation. Paul, a math whiz who had earned an ROTC scholarship, decided to follow Mary-Lynn east to Slippery Rock, where she had scored a soccer scholarship and planned to study education. “I could go pretty much anywhere that had Army ROTC,” Paul Kebker said, “but Slippery Rock has one of the top education programs and like Mary-Lynn, I wanted to teach, so it seemed like a good fit for me.”

At SRU, the two settled into a comfortable routine, with Paul immersed in his military science courses and ranger challenges and Mary-Lynn competing in collegiate soccer. But as much as Mary-Lynn loved the game, she worried about her mounting loans. Her athletic scholarship covered only a portion of her tuition. “I didn’t want to graduate with a lot of debt, which made ROTC seem that much more appealing,” Mary-Lynn Kebker said. “Still, I never considered myself an Army girl.”

Paul Kebker thought differently. “She thrives in challenging situations — that’s what made her so good at soccer,” he said. He also reminded her of a real-life experience similar to what she would undergo in the Army.

“When she was a freshman, her family house caught fire and she was the only one to wake up,” he said. “After roasting her parents, she ran downstairs and punched out the windows in the basement where her brother was sleeping. With her mother, she pulled him out of the window and saved his life.”
With Paul’s encouragement, Mary-Lynn joined ROTC. A year later, they were engaged. They married in May 2009. Paul’s parents were excited for the couple from the start; Mary-Lynn’s parents were hesitant.

“They were like, ‘You’re only 20,’” Mary-Lynn Kebker said. “I think the engagement was a definite shock. But after they thought about it, they got excited — they knew we would end up married at some point, so why not now?”

**Package deal**

Being married has had its advantages in both the classroom and in their ROTC program — as evidenced by their 3.8 grade point averages and impressive ROTC ranks. “We help each other out — it’s great to have someone to work with who knows what you are going through,” Mary-Lynn Kebker said. “For example, Paul had gone to airborne school before me, so he helped me prepare — and I had a blast jumping out of airplanes.”

Mary-Lynn serves as the ROTC battalion’s executive officer, making her second in command. Paul Kebker is Bravo company commander and trains juniors for summer camp.

As for their fellow students, “we’re pretty much known as the ‘married Army couple’ in our education classes,” Paul Kebker said. “Sometimes, we’ll show up at our 8 a.m. class in our PT uniforms and they’ll ask, ‘What time did you wake up?’”

When the two socialize, they’re known as a package deal — if one is invited, expect the other one to come along. “We’re really tight with our ROTC friends — they’re like family,” Mary-Lynn Kebker said. “We’re also content with being together. Being married is actually a blessing because we don’t have to deal with the drama of dating and breakups.”

**Double deployment**

It is no surprise that the couple has thrived in the award-winning ROTC program at SRU. The program has twice received the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Award for excellence in training officers and has won the Governor’s Trophy for the Best ROTC Unit in Pennsylvania three times.

With more than 120 students enrolled, students take courses such as “American Military Experience,” “Basic Military Skill,” “Fundamental Tactical Operations” and “Leadership Dimensions and Concepts.”

The Kebkers have taken classes together, completed repelling drills on the University’s leadership tower and passed the national Leader Development and Assessment Course on their first attempt. The 28-day course in Fort Lewis, Wash., the Army’s most important officer commissioning training, incorporates intelligence, navigation and leadership testing.

“We were tested in our physical fitness, land navigation abilities, first aid training, leadership reaction courses and on a water confidence course,” Paul Kebker said.

Mary-Lynn Kebker said, “SRU ROTC prepared me very well. We conducted countless marches, land navigation, operational orders and obstacle courses to be sure we were fully prepared for the materials. Faculty even took extra time out of their days to conduct one-on-one training for extra help and went out of their way to provide us with the materials and supplies we needed for us to succeed.”

Their success is also the result of the couple’s discipline and drive. “They push each other,” said Lt. Colonel Patrick Callahan, commander of the ROTC program at SRU. “Mary-Lynn is quite physically fit and the guys razz Paul when he doesn’t score as well as she does — but then, few of the guys score as well as she does. With their leadership abilities, academic prowess and attention to detail, being a couple is a positive — not a distraction. I can’t think of two people I would rather have teaching and influencing my own children.”

ROTC cadet Merle McConnell, a criminology major from Aliquippa, said some single cadets joke with the couple about their married status, but “they take it well, and we’re all good friends.”

“Paul and Mary-Lynn are at the top of the class,” he said. “We all work together, and they always interact in a professional manner. A lot of times you wouldn’t even know they are married. When they’re not in uniform, you can tell they’re married. But when they are in uniform you really don’t know the difference. They take the joking very well.”

Given the couple’s proactive approach to life, it’s no surprise that the Kebkers have a well-thought-out plan for their future. Both are majoring in elementary education and plan to serve six years in the Army National Guard, an ideal fit for teachers since they will serve one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer. With a year of active duty in the mix, they figure that when one is called up, the other will volunteer to go as well.

“We didn’t want to run the risk of deploying at different times,” Paul Kebker said. “This way, we’ll still get to be together, and we’ll finish our commitment at the same time so it will be easier on us when we start a family.”

The couple’s double-team approach makes balancing school and ROTC seem pretty easy — so easy, in fact, that perhaps they have created a precedent: Following in their footsteps are ROTC cadets and SRU juniors Andrew Redfoot and Shanon Loringer, who just announced their engagement. They plan to marry in September.
David Valentine, the interim dean of the College of Business, Information and Social sciences, strolls the hallways of campus and greets students by name. It is his work and world – and it’s never been more critical than now as he pursues his agenda for the college of 2,000 students.

Valentine is quick to point out that the departments in the college are all pursuing goals that will enhance the student-learning environment at SRU. Communication is looking at ways to incorporate social media into the curriculum. Computer science will offer more parallel and cluster computing. Criminology will attempt to grow its new master’s program. Professional studies will enhance its pre-law program. Safety management is planning building renovations and the School of Business will add more green business and entrepreneurship classes to the curriculum, Valentine said.

“I have been impressed with the departments and their ongoing efforts to improve student education,” he said. “My goal and priority is to continue the forward momentum to provide the best possible career preparation for our students.”

Valentine, who joined SRU as a computer science professor in 2001, was appointed interim dean following Bruce Russell’s retirement. William Williams, SRU provost and vice president for academic affairs, named Valentine to lead the college as the University conducts a national search for a permanent dean.

“I selected Dr. Valentine for his leadership abilities and his work within the computer science department,” Williams said. “I am certain he will continue the excellent academic programs offered by the college and continue to lead progress and growth being made by our School of Business.”

Valentine’s academic interest focuses on cluster computing, the process of linking multiple computers via high-speed Ethernet. Like mathematicians working together on a proof, a cluster computer leverages greater problem-solving capabilities.

Valentine obtained a Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education grant in 2010 to build the first cluster computer for student use at SRU. “That means we have more than 20 computers harnessed together as a single entity so our students can tackle larger computational projects,” he said.

Valentine received his doctorate from the State University of New York-Buffalo, his master of divinity degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and his bachelor’s degree from Clarkson University.

From the Dean:

The College of Business, Information and Social Sciences is committed to enhancing our programs to provide the best education possible for our students. The job market is changing, and we will continue to adapt our curriculum to be ahead of the curve.

– David Valentine
Physical education majors are gaining valuable aquatics experience by using new underwater cameras to videotape each other’s swimming. Since most of the students in the “Aquatics Fundamentals” class plan to become physical education teachers, stroke analysis teaches them lessons that they will be able to share with their future students. “We’re working on their swimming performance, but we also need to start developing their eyes as far as becoming future teachers,” said Robert Ogoreuc, assistant professor of physical education. “The digital camera is helping them to develop their eyes, so that they can transfer to other students in a few years what they are learning here.”

SRU purchased eight SeaLife digital cameras through the University’s Technology Fee. The cameras work like conventional digital cameras but come with a waterproof casing.

Working in the Morrow Field House pool, students videotape and take pictures of each other’s freestyle, butterfly, breaststroke and backstroke. Students then receive videotape and digital photos on a portable drive so that they can analyze their own stroke and make improvements. They research proper swimming techniques, watch videos of Olympians such as Michael Phelps, and then write a technique reflection paper summarizing their findings.

Underwater observation of swimming strokes is not new. The field house pool has an underground observation deck since the pool opened in 1960. The underwater cameras, though, enable students to easily videotape one another for the first time and learn from what they see.

“I can stand on the deck and tell someone what is wrong with their stroke until I am blue in face. Letting the swimmer see it for themselves can lead to a better understanding of skills and a better-looking stroke,” said Adam Katchmarchi, a physical education major from Falls Creek. “You have to watch from a multitude of different angles and levels to find out what is really going on with a swimmer’s stroke and skills, including from under the water.”

“Being part of the aquatics program at Slippery Rock University has prepared me to be a better teacher,” said Jason Johnson, a physical education major from Titusville. “I was uncomfortable in the water before beginning this program, but I am now just as comfortable teaching in the water as I am teaching in the gym. The program has provided me with knowledge that will make me much more marketable in the future.”

“Aquatics Fundamentals” is one of the classes in SRU’s aquatics minor. The program, led by Ogoreuc, has been named “one of the most vibrant in the nation” by International Aquatics magazine.

**From the Dean:**

Technology is an important part of all programs in the College of Education. Students in our programs graduate with knowledge of how technology enhances learning in their discipline, and they are provided with experiences in which this technology is used. When SRU College of Education students enter the workforce, they bring this knowledge and experience to their chosen careers.

– Kathleen Strickland

**UNDERWATER LEARNING:** Jayme Ryan, a Slippery Rock University physical education major from Clearfield, has her swimming stroke videotaped in the Morrow Field House pool. The research is part of the “Aquatics Fundamentals” class.
SRU powers ‘exercise is medicine’ movement

Hardly a day goes by that you don’t hear about the importance of exercise. This spring, Slippery Rock University will go a step further, launching its version of a national health initiative known as “exercise is medicine.” The program builds on the University’s long tradition of physical fitness and health-education leadership.

“People don’t think of exercise as being essential just for health,” said Jeff Lynn, SRU associate professor of exercise and rehabilitative sciences. “A lot of people come from a different paradigm where they think it’s all about looks, or fat or weight loss. We want people to realize that being inactive carries the same health risk as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day.”

The “exercise is medicine” initiative argues that physical activity is integral in the prevention and treatment of diseases and should be regularly assessed by primary care providers, like screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol and heart rate. SRU’s program will encourage physicians and other health-care providers to evaluate a patient’s level of activity at office visits and prescribe exercise when devising treatment plans. SRU students will be available as exercise counselors, Lynn said.

SRU’s Exercise is Medicine Committee will formally launch the initiative in April but conducted several activities during the fall to raise awareness. Long-term, the goal is to help the greater health community, including the American Medical Association, realize that exercise is medicine, Lynn said. Greater awareness is the first step to improving the public’s overall health and reducing health-care costs, he said.

“Getting those that aren’t active to be more active is the goal. We know a lot of people are aware of health risk factors such as smoking, hypertension and coronary artery disease, but what people don’t realize is physical inactivity is in itself an independent risk factor,” said Carena Winters, SRU assistant professor of exercise and rehabilitative sciences.

One of the obstacles the initiative faces is countering a western Pennsylvania culture that is not quick to embrace physical activity. The American College of Sports Medicine said Pittsburgh ranks 23rd on its American Fitness Index of America’s 50 largest cities.

“It’s very exciting that Slippery Rock University as an institution wants to be part of exercise is medicine,” said Dan Henkel, senior director of communication for the American College of Sports Medicine. “It will go a long way toward spreading the message to the public.

EXERCISE IS MEDICINE: (From left) Ryan Spiardi, a Slippery Rock University exercise science major from Indiana, Pa., helps Slippery Rock resident Phil Lenko with a physical activity session. Jeff Lynn, SRU associate professor of exercise and rehabilitative sciences, supervises.

From the Dean:

SRU’s Exercise Science Program has gained national status as a program of excellence. It is fitting that we have strong connections with the American College of Sports Medicine in helping to pioneer the “exercise is medicine” initiative.

— Susan Hannam
Like science and religion, it’s easy to assume that art and science are opposites that don’t attract. Art majors at Slippery Rock University, however, have found the intersection between the two fields by participating in a University interdisciplinary research program in Badlands National Park, South Dakota.

Art majors are teaching geology majors how to improve their notebook illustrations of the rugged landscape—not for the sake of becoming quasi artists, but to improve their ability to analyze and understand geologic processes.

In return, the art students pick up basic geology knowledge and find inspiration for sketches, paintings, sculptures, fibers and prints by camping with the geology students. Katherine Mickle, associate professor of art, and Patrick Burkhart, professor of geology, co-direct the program.

Mickle said the collaboration shows that science is not all about logic and facts, but also beauty and creativity. Her goal is to help geology students improve their technical drawing skills so that they can better interpret the landscape, improve observation and see something different in the rock, such as the outline of a face.

“I talk to them about drawings and impressions and point out, that as artists, we can go in so many different directions,” she said. “It’s not just a scientific illustration. It’s fine art.”

Mickle, Burkhart, and Eli Blasko, an art major from Mercer, wrote a paper that was the basis for Mickle’s recent presentation about integrating art and science at the Geological Society of America’s National Conference in Denver. Art majors have also presented Badlands-inspired art at conferences, symposia and exhibitions.

Kelly Wood, a recent fine art graduate, said the trip to the badlands was one of her most memorable SRU experiences. “I know I would look at the soil formation and think to myself, ‘yellow ochre, burnt sienna, raw umber.’ The geology students would look at the same formation and think, ‘Oligocene Epoch, 30 million years ago.’”

Both groups shared the experience of being covered with greasy sunscreen, dirt and grime and wondering about their next shower, Wood said. She said she would never forget the experience of having a wild bison “looking right back as it grunted and stomped about seven feet away from me.”

Wood said the fieldwork improved her skills. “The trip changed the way I create art and think about the world,” she said. “I learned about history, geography, teamwork, art, survival and life. There are so many memories I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”
1950s
Jim Balogh, ’50, received the French Legion of Honor medal at a recent military awards gathering for his participation in the Battle of the Colmar Pocketed in 1945.

Earl Birdy, ’51, was honored at Carnegie Mellon University Oct. 2, 2010 for being one of the architects of Carnegie Mellon University’s intramural program. Birdy was honored during the halftime ceremonies at Gesling Stadium at Carnegie Mellon University. Birdy worked in the athletics department at CMU from 1951-1994.

1960s
Patricia Galbraith Hill, ’68, and Ronald “Carrot” Hill, ’67, have been married 42 years and live in Stow, Ohio. Pat Hill is a retired, licensed Ohio attorney, and Ron Hill is retired after working for the Public Broadcasting System, ATARI, Inc., and IBM. The couple is relocating to Portland, Ore. in 2011 where both their sons reside. Ron Hill can be contacted at ronhill3@att.net.

R. David Farley, ’71, ’74 (M), retired after spending a career in public education as a kindergarten teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, executive director, professor, assistant superintendent and superintendent in South Carolina, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. He can be contacted at r davidfarley@hotmail.com.

Ann Rodgers Farley, ’72, is in her 37th year teaching health, physical education and driver education in South Carolina, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. She can be contacted at annfarley@hotmail.com.

Mark Previte, ’75, received tenure and promotion to associate professor of secondary education at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. He is completing a two-year term as President of the Pennsylvania Council of Social Studies.

Susan Leining, ’79, has been chosen to receive the Major League Soccer W.O.R.K.S. Community Award. Launched in April 2007, MLS W.O.R.K.S. is Major League Soccer’s community outreach initiative dedicated to addressing important social issues affecting young people and serves as a platform for both League and club philanthropic programs. MLS W.O.R.K.S. seeks to establish Major League Soccer as a leader for improving the lives of people through sport. Susan was recognized at a Houston Dynamo soccer game and the MLS Cup in Toronto.

Gail Siragusa Yamnitzky, ’79, earned her doctorate in education from the University of Pittsburgh. She serves as the principal with the Plum Borough School District and is married to Jim Yamnitzky, ’78. The couple has three children, Jessica (27), Alexa (24) and J.J. (22).

1980s
Michael DeStefano, ’80, received the FBI Director’s Community Leadership Award in Pittsburgh in November. DeStefano is a contracting officer for the Department of Energy in Pittsburgh.

Sharon Godfrey Kuczynski, ’84, and John Kuczynski, ’82, of Cheswick, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary Sept. 14, 2010 with a 12-day trip touring the Kenai Peninsula of Alaska. The couple met while students at SRU and have two children, Alex and Jacob. John Kuczynski is a retail sales manager for McKesson Corporation, and Sharon Kuczynski is an administrator with the Plum Borough School District and is married to Jim Kuczynski. The couple has three children, Jessica (27), Alexa (24) and J.J. (22).

Sue Whelpley Greaves, ’80
Walt Patterson, ’81
David Haddad, ’88

Expires 2011
Don Huddart, ’87
Chris Hunter, ’94
Thomas Perry, ’92
Linda Gordon Williamson, ’73
Lynette Crago Beattie, ’03

Expires 2012
Jason Wagner, ’93
Lorraine Troiano Barron, ’57

SRU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS:

Executive Committee
• Bonnie McElhaney Lukasik, ’63, president
• Richard Manning, ’75, immediate past president
• Patrick Mooney, ’61, president-elect
• Kimberly Hudak Jones, ’96, treasurer
• Christine Cunningham Miller, ’86, secretary

Expires 2011
Don Huddart, ’87
Chris Hunter, ’94
Thomas Perry, ’92
Linda Gordon Williamson, ’73
Lynette Crago Beattie, ’03

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Jason Wagner, ’93
Lorraine Troiano Barron, ’57

Sue Whelpley Greaves, ’80
Walt Patterson, ’91
David Haddad, ’88

Expires 2013
Lisa McCullough Holmes, ’88
Kenneth Hanby, ’63
L. Michael Ross, ’77
Dominic Williams, ’88
Larry Young, ’66

Additional Board Members
Sam Zyroll, ’78, honorary board member
Ben Addison, ’87, past presidents’ representative

Ex-Officio
Robert Smith, president
Michael Saraka, ’89 (M), alumni director
Chelsea Nugent, student ambassador representative

 também você pode fazer isso
Births and Adoptions

1990s

Christy Weise Miller, ’97, and Christopher Miller, ’96, announce the birth of their daughter, Meghan, 1990s.


2000s
Jami Gudenburr Klingensmith, ’98, ’01 (M), and Shannon Klingensmith, ’05, announce the birth of their son, Liam James, July 27.

Weddings

1990s
Andrew Klimas, ’95, and Caitlin Stevens were married Aug. 10, 2010 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Andrew received his Doctorate of Arts in Mathematics from Idaho State University and is a full time lecturer at Xavier University of Louisiana.

2000s
Jessica Knopp, ’06, and Shaun McRoberts, ’06, were married Aug. 29, 2009 in Portersville. The couple resides in Enon Valley where Jessica McRoberts is director of college counseling at John F. Kennedy Catholic High School in Warren, Ohio and Shaun McRoberts is a pilot in the Air National Guard with the Pittsburgh 171st Air Refueling Wing.

Jennifer Sherman, ’06, and Justin Navickas were married July 17, 2010 in Darville.

Rose Trenk, ’07, and Greg Null, ’05, were married Sept. 4, 2010 in Latrobe. Rose Trenk is a Westinghouse engineer and Greg Null is a Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics administrator.

In Memory

Elizabeth Remaley Aker, ’27
Edward Jeroski, ’49
Elizabeth Mihaly Musser, ’52
Dora Boyer Tosh, ’52
Ivan Jirak, ’53
Marjorie Banks McKissick, ’61
John Seaburn, ’62
Lorex Buzzelli Clark, ’64
Austin R. Anderson, ’69
Bette Riggans Hilton, ’70
Glenn Giese, ’71
Sylvia McFeaters, ’72
Patrick Allen Risha, ’73
Deborah Kissinger, ’74
Carol Dietrich, ’78
Patricia Kaup, ’78
Steven W. Russo, ’88
Dianne Caputo Rockenstein, ’90
Adelle Bittler, ’05
Ed Walsh, professor emeritus of English
Pearl Steward, R.O.T.C. Secretary

SRU’s Josh Young earns Rising Star political honors

Josh Young, a 2004 Slippery Rock University graduate and the University’s youngest Council of Trustees chair in history, has been named one of 30 Pennsylvania Rising Stars under the age of 30 by Politics Pa. The online resource for Pennsylvania politics received 300 nominations.

Young, who received a degree in political science from SRU and served on student government, has become a fixture in Philadelphia suburban politics. A Pennsylvania Democratic State Committee member, he is serving his second term as a Caln Township supervisor in Chester County and serves on the board of the Chester County Young Democrats.

He has worked to save taxpayer dollars by bringing the township into the 21st century with computer and digital-based communication and record storage as well as cutting wasteful and unnecessary spending.

In 2007, Young helped facilitate Caln Township’s acquisition of Ingleside Golf Course, which preserved 177 acres and provides a new recreational activity for the township. In 2009, he helped create Caln Township’s conservation and renewable energy task-force that has hosted a green expo and a shredding event.

Young was elected the youngest chair of the Council of Trustees in Slippery Rock history at the age of 28. Upon his election Young said, “I represent a new generation of leadership for Slippery Rock University. I am the first of the millennial generation.”

Young hopes to bring an era of accessibility and accountability. “The world has shifted and the council should too. The council needs to be more flexible to meet the needs of all Slippery Rock University’s stakeholders in this new world,” he said.

As a leader and advocate for higher education and Slippery Rock University, Young has said his role is to, “Continue the high quality of education principles and leadership preparation for current and future students that have guided me so well.”

While a student at SRU, he served as a Student Government Association Senator and Speaker of the Senate. He continues to be a presence on campus. Most recently, Young spoke at The Rock’s winter commencement, telling graduates to never take no for an answer.

Politics Pa., www.politicspa.com launched in 2001, is intended as a one-stop shop for political followers. It updates headlines several times a day.
Take it from Mike O’Hare, a 1974 Slippery Rock University graduate, you were on your own when you graduated from college and began a job search in his day.

“I wish I had known more about how to get a job,” said O’Hare, who has worked in the consumer products industry for more than 30 years. “The trial and error process could have been easier with advice from a professional.”

O’Hare and more than 20 other SRU alumni – representing the upper echelons of business, education, health care, safety management, athletic training and higher education – were on hand to provide that professional advice when they participated in the alumni association’s recent “Backpacks to Briefcases” mentoring program for students.

“My message is this: With the education you get from Slippery Rock University, you can do anything you want to – I am living proof of that,” said O’Hare, vice president of the north central region for Snyder’s of Hanover, the snack food company. “With the right preparation, hard work and enthusiasm, you can get your career started with a job to build on.”

The evening, designed to help students make the transition from college to career, began with a brief program at SRU’s Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center where students heard from John Snyder, SRU director of career services. Participants then boarded a bus to the Regional Learning Alliance workforce development facility in Cranberry for a reception and networking opportunity with alumni. Alumni focused their advice on the importance of networking – in person and online.

“Don’t think that employers are going to come to your house looking for you,” O’Hare said. “You have got to go to them. And stay away from anybody who bemoans that, ‘There are no jobs out there.’ Somebody is getting the jobs.”

O’Hare said students should network throughout their college years, develop their skill sets and put their best foot forward during an interview. And they should get involved at SRU.

“The best plan is to do something in addition to class work while in school that puts you above other candidates,” he said.
“Students need to know this early on, so they can get a summer job, work in a campus organization or seek an internship. This gives substance to the interview and can help the person stand out.”

Snyder said students should join LinkedIn, the Internet networking site, attend conferences and job fairs and befriend SRU faculty for their connections. “Networking helps you develop contacts in the field, which can lead to employment,” he said.

Chelsea Nugent, an SRU marketing and finance major from Wexford who participated in the program, said she realizes she’s not going to have it all by age 25.

“Students are figuring out that you have to go into entry level positions – everything’s not going to happen for you right away, including a $100,000 a year salary,” Nugent said. “Students also know that they have to make themselves unique and stand out.”

Nugent said you stand out by building relationships with prospective employers. “I participated in the Backpacks to Briefcases program not just to build my resume but to build my connections,” she said. “If my resume comes across a person’s desk, he or she will remember meeting me. It is all about who you know, not what you know.”

Jesse Townsend, ‘97, manager of athletic training and development at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said students should broaden their social horizons to gain a greater awareness of people who are different from them. Impressing prospective employers is not always about having the right credentials. Personality and verbal skills matter, he said.

“An obstacle we see a lot is the lack of refined interpersonal skills,” Townsend said. “Communication is so essential in our field. We have to deal with such a wide variety of people and often new graduates don’t have the interpersonal skills to effectively handle different personality types. This is not learned in the classroom, but is acquired through experience.”

Troy Fornof, a ’91 communication graduate and executive vice president for United General Title Insurance Company, said he landed a job in a week through perseverance.

“I did every interview I could possibly do,” he said. “I wanted
to work. I grew up in a single parent house, so for me working was always the priority.”

Fornof said many new graduates should expect to compete with seasoned professionals for ground-level opportunities. Recent graduates should demonstrate a commitment to working hard and not make demands about salary or time off, he said.

“Success requires time, and truly successful people do not adhere to a time clock but make opportunities to learn, build and grow,” he said.

Nicole Stout, a ‘94 health graduate who works as a researcher and physical therapist for the Breast Care Center at the National Naval Medical Center, said she participated in the event out of gratitude for the difference her alma mater made in her own life.

“My education and experiences at Slippery Rock gave me an exceptional foundation from which I was able to grow as a health care professional and researcher,” she said. “As students transition into young professionals, they face challenges regarding career advancement, choices regarding advanced degrees and dilemmas about work and life balance. Mentoring is a small way that I can pay forward the benefits of my SRU education and encourage a younger generation to step forward.”

Kimberly Morris, a ’87 English graduate and language arts teacher, said graduates must believe in themselves, go to as many interviews as possible and demonstrate reliability. She said school principles remember job candidates and substitute teachers who accept direction, show enthusiasm and adapt to the unexpected.

“What I want to convey to students is to believe in themselves and in their ability to achieve,” Morris said. “The pathway in life to the ideal job is rarely a straight one. Be open to twists and turns. Persevere and keep an open mind; you will be successful.”

Other alumni who participated in the program were Robert Kirchner, ’76, a risk control consultant with The PMA Insurance Group; Don Huddart, ’87, vice president/senior relationship manager for PNC Bank; Marcie Popek, ’96, business manager for Cigna Healthcare; Anna Pomichal, ’92, editor for BBC World News Service; Allan Druschel, ’87, sales manager for Snyder’s of Hanover; David Haddad, ’88, global sales support manager for Computer Associates International; Anthony Legge, ’08, trust associate for Bank of New York/Mellon; Charles Brashaar, ’10, Bank of New York/Mellon; Joe Professori, ’95, director of business development for Desmone & Associates Architects; Michael Saraka, ’89, SRU director of alumni relations; Brad Kovaleski, ’01, SRU director of student involvement; Nick Barcio, ’10, consumer loan support specialist PNC Bank; Dean Trent, ’91, executive vice president for United General Title Insurance Co.; Hannah Glass, ’10, a graduate student at Chatham College; Melissa Yoest, ’97, a special education teacher; Jeremy Mock, ’04, an account executive for Maxim Government Services; Kari Zovlota, ’00, Regional Learning Alliance director of sales and marketing; and Tawnya Curatola, ’99, Regional Learning Alliance director of event services.

“...to believe in themselves and in their ability to achieve. The pathway in life to the ideal job is rarely a straight one. Be open to twists and turns. Persevere and keep an open mind; you will be successful.”

— Kimberly Morris, ’87 English graduate and language arts teacher
After Roch Furguiele died in 2004, friends of the late Slippery Rock University distance runner told his parents they wanted to do something in his honor. The result is Run for Roch, an annual 5K through the streets of scenic Mount Washington in Pittsburgh, where Furguiele grew up.

“Rochy’s exceptional ability to touch other people established this race,” said Donna DiRenna, his mother. “They came to me to ask me if we could have this race in his honor, they being teammates, runners of the Pittsburgh running community, coaches, friends and family. Everyone promised their support, and more importantly, came through. They did it, and still do it, out of love for a guy who evidently touched their lives with his contagious way of making one feel a sense of importance.”

His parents honored the memory of their son by creating the Roch Furguiele Scholarship at SRU. The full-tuition scholarship goes to one Pittsburgh high school student annually who enrolls at SRU. The family, Pittsburgh area coaches and John Papa, SRU track and cross-country coach, select the recipients. The group is in the processing of selecting the third student.

“The scholarship is for young people who may not have thought it could be possible to go to college,” DiRenna said. “My husband and I started out with nothing. We were not sure that we could send our kids to college. With encouragement from others, we found it was possible. We are reaching out to encourage our inner city youths, and to educate them and their parents to understand that college is within their reach, that there are people who care.” Roch Furguiele attended SRU from 1999-2001 and earned his degree in safety and environmental management. He distinguished himself on the track and cross country teams, earning all-conference honors and qualifying for the national cross-country championship.

“He was a great kid and had lots of friends,” Papa said. “He was one of our captains, a great leader and friendly. The younger guys related to him well.”

DiRenna said Papa, called ‘Pap,’ encouraged and guided her son. “His teammates told me Rochy was a true leader; that he gave everything he had to running,” she said. “Rochy loved the whole college experience. Maybe it was the time of his life. He was a very cheerful young man. He had such a wonderful and optimistic outlook on life.”

Furguiele died July 31, 2004. He and friends were camping by Cheat River in West Virginia. “Rochy jumped from a bridge with one of his friends. He didn’t surface,” his mother said. “Literally, hundreds of friends, family and many volunteers spent the night and day combing that river.” Authorities recovered his body six days later.

The 7th annual Run for Roch will be summer 2011. Hundreds of runners will race along Grandview Avenue to benefit the scholarship. The USA Track and Field, a national organization that governs running, has certified the race. Interested runners can visit http://run4roch.wordpress.com to learn more about the run.

“We are fortunate to have been able to accomplish having this race,” Donna DiRenna said. “Imagine a woman who has absolutely no running experience asking the City of Pittsburgh to cut off a major artery to have a race in her son’s name. Grandview Avenue is one of the most scenic roads on earth, however, it directly attaches to the Liberty tubes and bridge. Mount Washington was where Rochy learned to run, where all of our friends and family were ready to make it happen. His race had to be there.”

The Furguiele family lives in the house where Donna and her son grew up. “At first the city said no, and offered us the North Shore, but it just would not have been the same experience,” she said. “A memorial event should take place where the person lived his life. Rochy was called ‘Pittsburgh personified’ by some of his friends at school.”

“Rochy loved the whole college experience. Maybe it was the time of his life… He had such a wonderful and optimistic outlook on life.”

– Donna DiRenna, Roch’s mother
Few groups on campus embody the Slippery Rock University vision of "excelling as a caring community of lifelong learners connecting with the world" more than Rock student athletes and coaches.

In addition to representing the University with class and dignity on the fields and courts in competition, Rock athletes and coaches spend countless hours on projects that range from raising awareness and funding for disease and illness research to sponsoring youth sports clinics.

"We are very proud of the impact SRU student athletes make to improve the world we live in through the many community service outreach programs."

— Paul Lueken, director of athletics

Forgotten Angels spread their wings

One of Slippery Rock athletics bigger undertakings is the Forgotten Angels program. Each year, the group, which is in its third year of existence and made up of Rock student athletes and coaches, chooses a different location in which to do a community service project.

Noreen Herlihy, head women’s soccer coach, now oversees the group after sharing the reins with Matt Thompson, former men’s head soccer coach.

“Matt and I were chatting and he asked me if I would get on board with it. Right away, I jumped at the opportunity. I thought it would be a great idea, especially since it came from our student athletes thinking outside the box about how they could be proactive.”

After raising the necessary funds by hosting spaghetti dinners, holding car washes, accepting donations and running a charity auction, the Forgotten Angels were able to travel to Haiti in 2008 to deliver school supplies and conduct athletic clinics. In 2009 the group travelled to New Orleans, where they helped with rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Katrina and also conducted several sports clinics. In 2010, they headed to St. Lucia, where the group taught sports clinics, worked at a soup kitchen and took part in a beach cleanup.

“I think it’s nice to be nice,” Herlihy said. “It’s a simple thing to give your time. It’s always been something I’ve been passionate about and it’s something we like to do. It’s definitely very rewarding.”

In addition to Herlihy, members of the 2010 trip included softball players Jess Kortz, Kendra Kutz, Sam Pfister and Shauna Walker; volleyball players Izzy Kelbley and Sarah Cadwallader; men’s soccer players Mike Formento and Tom Pool; women’s soccer player Alison Hindley; former soccer player/graduate assistant Pat Cormac and men’s basketball team manager John Powell.

“The whole idea behind it is that we wanted to work with disadvantaged children all over the world,” Herlihy said. “It was a lot of work, but we knew the rewards would be well worth it. We were a bunch of athletes going and trying to touch the lives of kids through sports. It was a real nice idea.”

Herlihy said she hopes those who participate in the Forgotten Angels grasp just what they are doing.

“I think what you hope for is they truly understand just what they are doing,” she said.
The beauty of athletes in general is they understand teamwork and the commitment to be better. “It’s a simple thing to give back,” Herlihy added, “and every one of the student athletes on the three trips we have made have said it has changed them in some way. That’s all you can ask for.”

Fighting breast cancer one project at a time

One of the causes which Rock student athletes have wrapped their collective arms around is breast cancer awareness. Each academic year several Rock teams step forward to raise money to fight the disease and help to raise awareness by wearing pink as part of their uniforms.

The Rock women’s volleyball team has hosted a “Dig for the Cure” match the past five seasons. To date, the team has raised $18,727.43 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation for the Cure, the world’s largest breast cancer awareness organization. “The volleyball team’s Dig for the Cure event is always an exciting time,” senior volleyball standout Anna Bixler said. “We look forward to that match because it’s such a rewarding experience to give back to those women who are battling breast cancer.”

“I think it always brings us closer together as a team,” Bixler added. “This year, in particular, the severity of breast cancer hit close to home. A junior on our team, Alee Kromer, has an aunt who is currently battling breast cancer.”

“Speaking for myself, and everyone with Slippery Rock Volleyball, I say it’s an honor to pay tribute to all of the women who have lost their battle with cancer, those who are battling it now and may in the future, and for those who have fought through and won. It seems like such a simple gesture to participate in the Dig for the Cure when so many women are working a whole lot harder to battle breast cancer.”

As part of the Dig for the Cure event, The Rock volleyball team honored six breast cancer survivors that attended the game, as well as the memory of Ann Lueken, the late wife of SRU’s athletic director who lost a 13-year battle with breast cancer in August. The Rock football team also honored breast cancer survivors during its Oct. 23 home game against Lock Haven. Taking part in the pregame coin toss as honorary Rock team captains were four breast cancer survivors who are mothers of football players.

The Rock field hockey team honored breast cancer awareness month by “Playing for the Cure” during the month of October. The team hosted various fundraising programs during its five home games and ultimately raised $600 for the Komen Foundation. “A lot of schools choose one home game as a breast cancer awareness date,” said Rock Head Field Hockey Coach Julie Zoolkoski. “We decided we would dedicate the whole month to raising money for this great cause.”

Slippery Rock’s nationally ranked women’s soccer team got involved through its “Coins for Cancer” game Oct. 27 against the University of Charleston. The team raised $150 by encouraging spectators to clean out their spare change and bring it to the game to donate to the Komen Foundation.

“It was a simple concept, Herlihy said. “The beauty of doing those types of things is that a lot of them do not take a lot of effort. The whole concept is small change makes a big difference.”

Despite their season not being in action during breast cancer awareness month, The Rock women’s basketball team still found a way to contribute. The Rock has routinely taken part in the Women’s Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) “Pink Zone™” initiative. The “Pink Zone™” event benefits “a global, unified effort for raising breast cancer awareness on the court, across campuses, in communities and beyond,” according to the WBCA.
The Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer Fund assists with support for breast cancer research and is named in honor of the late North Carolina State University head women’s basketball coach.

Last season, Slippery Rock hosted Edinboro for its “Pink Zone” game and raised $600 for their efforts. This year’s “Pink Zone” game will be played Feb. 12 against Indiana (Pa.).

Athletes step forward

The Forgotten Angels and breast cancer awareness projects are examples of the many projects undertaken by Rock student athletes and coaches to help charities throughout the year.

“As SAAC (Student Athlete Advisory Council) President, I have been able to be a part of many projects,” Bixler said. “Mainly, we put together fundraisers and events to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. These little fundraisers make an impact and help to add to our grand total at the end of the year. “SAAC also sponsors two big fundraisers each year,” she added, “one in the fall and one in the spring. We are going to make sure to get involved with the Slippery Rock community for the fundraiser next spring and hopefully we can raise some more money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.”

Vashion Johnson, women’s softball head coach, had his softball team split into two groups Oct. 17 to lend their time and support to two separate programs at once.

While part of the team was busy volunteering at the Special Olympics Western Fall Sectional hosted by SRU, the other half of the team was at the Canfield, Ohio, Fairgrounds taking part in a “Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes” event. The Rock finished in first place in the Team and Organizations division and raised $870 for the American Diabetes Association.

“I’m very proud of our student athletes,” Johnson said. “To have your entire team spending their Sunday volunteering to help others says a lot about the type of young women we have on this squad.”

The Slippery Rock track and field and cross country teams not only work with the Special Olympic competition that is held on the SRU campus every year, but also helps with the beautification of the Slippery Rock area annually through the Adopt a Highway program. Each fall, a two-mile section of route 79 at the Slippery Rock exit is cleaned by coach John Papa’s teams.

In 2009, Rock runners donated $200 to the Slippery Rock Fire Department and $500 to Project Elf, a program run by Slippery Rock University AmeriCorps and the Butler County Salvation Army that provides Christmas presents for needy children in the area.

Last spring, the women’s lacrosse team did its part to raise awareness for the problem of adolescent suicide by taking part in the NCAA Division II-sanctioned “Lax-4-Life” project. The Rock event benefitted Allyson’s Fund, an organization that generates money and awareness to assist in the identification of adolescents at risk for suicide. Slippery Rock raised $400 for Allyson’s Fund through t-shirt sales.

Last May, the women’s soccer team jointly co-sponsored a 5K race with the Slippery Rock Area Parks & Recreation Department to raise money for Legacy for Life. The race raised $2,000 for the Visiting Nurses Association’s inpatient hospice facility in Butler.

The idea for the 5K race was a collaborative effort between Herlihy, who is an active supporter of hospice care, Slippery Rock Elementary School teacher Jill Takach, who wanted her students to get involved in community outreach and Mary Messer from the Slippery Rock Area Parks & Recreation office.

The SRU baseball team helps to ensure that everyone has a happy Halloween each year by volunteering at the annual Slippery Rock Parks and Recreation Haunted House. The team provides security, parking, concessions, setup and take down of the event, and performs a skit for the SRPC. Annually, 250-350 families attend the community event.

Other ways that Rock athletes give back to their community is through participating in reading programs at Slippery Rock Area Elementary and by hosting various sports clinics that each team conducts throughout the year for area youth. The clinics, which also serve as a way for each program to raise much needed funds for their respective sports, give attendees a chance to be coached and observed by college student athletes and coaches who can help the visitors improve upon their skill set.

Coaches join efforts

In addition to helping out Rock student athletes with their charitable efforts, SRU coaches often donate their time to organizations as well.

The SRU football staff wore patches on their sleeves for the Sept. 25 game at Indiana (Pa.) as part of the nationwide “Coach To Cure MD” initiative sponsored by the American Football Coaches Association to help raise awareness of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

In June, Rock football defensive backs coach Jason Makrinos volunteered his time for the third consecutive year at Lauren’s First and Goal Foundation Football Camp, which helps raise money for pediatric brain tumor research, cancer services and family support. This year’s camp generated more than $67,000.

“At the end of the day, there are far greater problems in the world than losing a game here or there,” Herlihy said. “You want to win every game, but there are more important things. You want your student athletes to experience it all.”

“As much as I can effect them to be better, I become a better coach and a better person when I watch with pride the student athletes that represent Slippery Rock so well.”

Bixler echoes Herlihy’s thoughts.

“It’s always a great opportunity to gain more knowledge and skills through experiences like WOW (Weekend of Welcome) and the Special Olympics.”

Bixler said. “You learn more about yourself as a player and an individual. I know that’s how all of Slippery Rock University’s student athletes feel.”
America’s favorite small-college football program, from the school with the funny name, got some big-time, “Big House” exposure this fall. And the best may be yet to come.

As part of his on-going effort to revive the once-vibrant relationship between his alma mater and Slippery Rock University, University of Michigan Director of Athletics Dave Brandon invited representatives of The Rock football program to be his guests November 20 for a nationally televised Big Ten Conference game against nationally ranked Wisconsin.

The sellout crowd of 112,276 fans packed into “The Big House,” a.k.a. Michigan Stadium, that day gave The Rock contingent a rousing ovation when they were introduced following a video board tribute during a first-quarter timeout.

“It was overwhelming,” said Aaron Nall, senior nose guard from Independence, Ohio, and one of The Rock’s 2010 team captains. “Not very many people get to stand on the field at Michigan Stadium and have 110,000 fans cheer for you. It was a tremendous honor for me personally and for The Rock football program.”

“It was an unbelievable experience and great honor,” added Brandon Fusco, an All-America senior center from Cranberry Township and the other 2010 Rock co-captain. “It was a great atmosphere.”

The connection between SRU and the UM goes back to 1959 when public address announcer Steve Filipiak reported the scores to the Big House crowd. The Rock became so popular with Michigan fans that they would chant ‘Slippery Rock, Slippery Rock’ if the score was bypassed. The tradition dropped off in recent years but Brandon used the opportunity of the re dedication of Michigan Stadium to revive the tradition – much to the delight of the fans.

An Ann Arbor-based vendor, Underground Printing, was even licensed to produce a “maize and blue” SRU shirt. (http://www.ugpmichiganapparel.com/products/view/1370/49)

“The fact so many people up there were so excited to have us there shows we are the little school everyone loves to cheer for,” said Paul Lueken, director of athletics. “It was an awesome experience to be there and be recognized like we were.”

A by-product of the visit and the renewed interest in Slippery Rock, Lueken said, is the start of discussions to have The Rock return to The Big House to play another game in Ann Arbor.

The Rock and Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference rival Shippensburg University battled in front of an NCAA Division II-record crowd of 61,142 fans in 1979. Two years latter, an estimated crowd of 35,000 fans were on hand when The Rock made an encore appearance in Ann Arbor and played Wayne State University, which is based in Detroit.

“We would love to go back and Dave Brandon indicated he’s interested in having us back,” Lueken said. “So it may very well happen.” And that is cause for big-time anticipation.


Rock Defensive Coordinator Shawn Lutz, 2010 team co-captains Brandon Fusco, Aaron Nall and Rock Head Football Coach George Mihalik acknowledge cheers from fans at “The Big House”
A CONVERSATION WITH ...

Pam Frigot

Pam Frigot is director of international services at Slippery Rock University. She joined the University in 1979 as an admissions counselor. In 1986-87, Frigot worked in London, England, where she met her husband Barry. Upon her return to the U.S., she moved from admissions to international services. Their son Tim attends SRU and is majoring in athletic training.

Q: What is the mission of Slippery Rock University’s International Services Office?
A: The mission is providing international experiences for SRU students and staff to pursue academic and cultural exploration and growth. This includes bringing students from other parts of the world to receive an education at SRU as well as providing opportunities for our students and staff to experience international settings.

Q: What services does your office provide to help international students?
A: We assist them from their inquiry through their years as alumni so in many ways it is a never-ending relationship, but it’s also enjoyable and rewarding. We support students academically, socially, culturally and legally. We assist them with visas and work permission, adapting to the American academic culture, roommate concerns, making friends, what to do over University breaks, time-management and homesickness. Many issues are the same as for domestic students, but the learning curve and resolution may be different.

Q: How many foreign students does the University have on campus, where do they come from, and what are some of the remote countries?
A: We currently have 80 students from 36 different countries enrolled and in 2010 we had students from Argentina to Ukraine on our campus. In recent years, we’ve seen significant numbers from South Korea, Canada, United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Ireland. Remote countries included Suriname, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso and Gabon.

Q: How does the presence of international students enrich the University culture?
A: International students enrich our culture, our lives and our classrooms in so many different ways. The obvious ways are in helping us learn about other parts of the world, whether by new knowledge or correcting our misconceptions. This is accomplished when American students share housing with an international student, participate in classroom discussions, attend campus events, join organizational meetings and chat with students or staff in dining halls or offices. We get a visible and celebratory experience during the annual Internations Week, especially at the International Dinner, which by the way was our 36th annual event. We often overlook how much we learn about our own culture and ourselves by opening up to other cultures.

Q: What surprises international students about SRU and America? What do students ask you about before coming here? What are their concerns?
A: Most international students are disappointed by the lack of public transportation in Slippery Rock, but come to appreciate life in a small rural area, especially as so many of them come from an urban environment. They generally love how approachable and friendly Americans are, including faculty who tend to be more formal and distant in many other countries. The size of the U.S. and the distance from SRU to major cities is often a surprise. Of course, those from warmer climates are in awe at their first snowfall with some even acclimating so well over the years that they prefer the four seasons. In general, their questions relate to basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, as well as how will they fit in and make friends here. History shows that the information we provide prior to their arrival and orientation sets them at ease and gives them confidence that their SRU experience will be all and more than they may have expected.

Q: If you could live in another country, where would you go and why?
A: Well, England would be an obvious option since my husband’s family is still there, and we enjoy it so much. My travels for SRU and on my own have taken me to so many interesting places, many of which I would like to return to. There are also places I’ve never been to that I would like to explore. But living permanently elsewhere, I’m not sure where I’d pick, but I would consider almost anywhere.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?
A: Still at SRU and loving what I do. While I’m not the quickest to get my feet out of bed and on to the floor in the morning, I love to come to work each day. I hope we will continue to grow our programs, both for international students studying here, as well as for getting our students and staff to study in other countries.
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Friday, March 18, 2011

Starring Dublin-born tenor, Ciarán Sheehan (star of “Phantom of the Opera,” “Les Miserables” and multiple PBS Irish specials) and Gay Willis (star of “Showboat” and “Phantom of the Opera”) in a magical performance from the Broadway stage to the Emerald Isle.

Featuring Irish harpist, Eily O’Grady and the Slippery Rock University Chamber Singers.

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Christopher Cuff, ’82, Ph.D.
medical technology
Morgantown, West Va.

DAY JOB: Associate professor in the department of microbiology, immunology and cell biology at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. I teach immunology to medical, dental and graduate students and mentor doctoral students in biomedical research.

BACKGROUND: I grew up outside Philadelphia and wanted to go away to college. After graduating from Slippery Rock University, I worked in a clinical microbiology laboratory in an inner city hospital in Philadelphia, then went to graduate school at Temple University and did a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania. I ended up at WVU because my wife is from West Virginia.

INFLUENCE OF SRU: SRU offered me the opportunity of a new environment, at a time in life when I was looking to understand who and what I was destined to become. Since I have stayed in academics, I can confidently say that my experience at SRU played a major part in shaping my life. I remember spending a lot of time visiting my professors during their office hours, and they gave of their time freely, even when they probably had better things to do. Of equal importance were the friends I made at SRU. My friends taught me to be myself, and to respect and embrace differences in the ways other people thought and lived. I support SRU primarily because of the effect SRU had on my personal growth. As an educator in a publicly-funded university, I see firsthand how important alumni support is to institutional advancement. It really makes the difference between ‘very good’ and ‘outstanding.’

PHOTO BY BOB BEVERLY