

**Remarks to New Students and Parents
August 27th, 2011**

Introduction

**Greetings to my faculty and staff colleagues,
returning students, and guests, and a very, very warm
welcome to the Colorado College Class of 2015 and their
families!**

**First, I want to take a minute to recognize the CC
staff and our NSO student volunteers who did such a
terrific job in helping you all move in and get settled
today. I walked around this morning and was awed by
their efficiency. Please join me in giving a big thank you
to our staff and student volunteers!**

**Now, to the parents and other family members that
have accompanied our new students to campus – thank
you. Thank you for entrusting us with the education of
your sons and daughters and thank you for the
investment that you are making in their futures. We are**

delighted that you could be here and hope that you enjoy your visit to this beautiful place. I look forward to talking with you later today at the parents' reception. I trust that you understand if I focus my remarks now on our new students as it is my only chance to address the entire first year class.

As you might know, just like you, I am new to Colorado College. I arrived as the 13th President (yes, 13 is now my lucky number) in July – just a few months ago. Like you, I came to Colorado College because of its commitment to the liberal arts, its excellent faculty and staff, its amazing student body, its innovative block plan, and its truly inspiring location. Also, like you, I traveled quite a journey to get here.

Many years ago, back in 19XX, I was a first-year student at a small liberal arts college just like you. I moved into my dorm room (my parents and I actually had to unload our own car), participated in all of the

orientation activities, and listened to a welcoming speech.

And like some of you, I worried that I didn't belong and felt homesick.

I was a farm girl from rural Iowa. The small town that was my home was made up of about 500 people and I swear that over 100 of those folks were Tiefenthalers. My maternal grandparents lived across the road and my paternal grandparents about a mile away. I was surrounded by extended family and lots of love. I was part of a very tight community and leaving it was very hard.

Perhaps you also feel a bit homesick today. Maybe you feel that you don't quite belong in this new place where everyone seems to be from somewhere more glamorous than your home town, went to better schools, and seems to know more about college than you do. Maybe you really miss someone far away. I expect that all of you have left a community of love and support.

What I didn't understand during my first year orientation was that although I was far away from the community that had always been my home, I was part of a new community.

You will come to realize the same things as we today welcome you to several new communities - the Colorado College community, the Colorado Springs community, and our academic community. The CC Community is united by, of course, a connection to Colorado College. It includes more than 28,000 alumni scattered around the world as well as those who work and learn on campus. Geography is the bond that unites the Colorado Springs Community. And the academic community is united around a common devotion to learning and scholarship.

You are now a member of all of these communities – you will forever have a tie to Colorado College, you are a resident of Colorado Springs, and your main focus for the next four years is learning.

It wasn't easy to get here though, was it? There were about 5000 applications for the 500 spots in your entering class! To get here you had to prove to the Admissions Office that you could succeed – they looked at those impressive grades, challenging curricula, test scores, extracurricular activities, and special talents. You all worked long hours to achieve in high school, and some of you also worked long hours at a job, sport, art or club. You have all earned the right to be here and you belong. So take advantage of it! Don't just show up! Be an engaged member of your new communities!

I am sure that you didn't get here alone. There is someone (or more likely, many people) from your hometown community that was critical to your success - your parents, another relative, a teacher, a coach, a pastor or a rabbi. You thrived because of your community, the people around you. Don't forget to thank these people! The fact that your success depended on the

support of your hometown community makes it clear that groups and the individuals that belong to them thrive when each member gives something back. I believe that all of us are obligated to contribute in some way – to enrich the communities to which we belong.

So, in a nutshell, my advice to you today is to fully engage in each of your new communities – to take advantage of the opportunities that each offers you, but to also give something back. Make each community a better place because of you.

Colorado College Community

The Colorado College Community has so much to offer you!

- The liberal arts.**
- A faculty of more than 150 talented and committed teacher/scholars.**
- A staff and administration committed to supporting you inside and outside the classroom**

- **Your peers - 2,000 of the brightest, most talented -and fun- young people in the country.**
- **We also offer you an incredible array of extracurriculars that you can join or even lead – from the CC Farm to the Sewing Club to the Debate Society to “Schlank” – the disc golf group.**
- **Another offering of the CC Community is a network of those 28,000 CC alumni who are ready to help you with advice on career and life.**

Take advantage of these opportunities that are open to you as a member of the Colorado College community!

CC is a great place with much to offer but we depend on the members of our community – alumni, faculty, staff, and students – to give back, to support each other and to push for change that will keep CC fresh. Only if we continually question the way that we do things, continue to change Colorado College, and continue to

keep up with the changing world around us will CC continue to be a great place.

Students give so much and do a lot to improve the CC Community! They mentor younger students – for example, by serving as First Year Experience Mentors, New Student Orientation trip leaders. RAs, and Writing Center and Quantitative Reasoning peer tutors.

Students also support each other through groups like: First Generation group, MOSAIC (a support group for international students), Disability Awareness Group, and Students Organized for Sexual Safety.

Some students have gone a step further than joining an existing group and become true campus entrepreneurs. They see something that needs to be done and they figure out how to do it. These students demonstrate that one person can make a difference at CC. A great example is, Andrew Wallace. Andrew has undertaken compiling an LGBT oral history of Colorado

College. This blends both what he has learned about historiography and anthropology with what he identified as a glaring omission in the college's recorded history. He will be organizing and undertaking this effort by getting student volunteers who can interview CC alums and staff about LGBT life at CC over the decades.

I look forward to seeing what the Class of 2015 contributes to the CC community.

The Colorado Springs Community

The Colorado Springs Community and this region also offer you so much! This area is so physically beautiful and invites you to enjoy the outdoors – in all seasons. My family and I love the Monument Park Trail right next to campus for biking. You will be awed by gazing at the Garden of the Gods and inspired to get moving by the countless hikes and climbs in the Pikes Peak region. I expect that many of you look forward to skiing the Colorado slopes.

Our community also has a rich history. Did know that General William Jackson Palmer’s vision for building a new city near Pikes Peak that included one of the country’s finest colleges was realized before Colorado became a state in 1876? Did you realize that the Cripple Creek gold rush in the 1890s helped to build both Colorado Springs and Colorado College? That gold resulted in a population boom and many beautiful homes in Colorado Springs and increased the enrollment and the wealth of the college as the Cripple Creek millionaires because CC’s benefactors. Did you know that a trip up Pike’s Peak while she was teaching a summer class on CC’s campus, inspired Katherine Lee Bates to write “America the Beautiful?” We get to enjoy those “purple mountain majesties” every day.

Despite the rich history and stunning beauty, one of the best things that I have found in the past few months

about the Colorado Springs Community is that it is such a friendly place. The people are great!

If you embrace the Springs as your community, you will reap many benefits. But I hope that you will also give something back.

How can you and your fellow CC students do your part? Buy locally. Shopping in the Springs and socializing downtown not only supports our hometown businesses but also enhances community vitality – that is, it makes Colorado Springs a more fun and happening place.

Get involved with a community organization through The Center for Service and Learning or Partnership for Civic Engagement. There are many inspiring examples of CC students not only giving back but truly making a difference in the local community. For example, Cris Landa, a student who graduated last year, volunteered as a tutor for North Boys Enrichment Program. After

visiting a program in Chicago where she learned a LOT about at-risk youth, she concluded that CC students needed more formal education about at risk youth and hands on preparation about how to make a difference. Her capstone project involved proposing a new “student taught” course on youth empowerment targeted specifically for students interested in volunteering or teaching at risk youth. After her hard work in developing this plan, our Education Department provided an instructor of record to oversee the course, but the course design remained largely student run. That program and course is a lasting legacy of Kris’ time at CC.

Finally, and most importantly, you can do your part by respecting your neighbors who live around our campus and their property and privacy.

Scholarly Community

Above all else, I urge you to fully engage as a member of our academic community while you are here at Colorado College. Doing so during your four years will open doors to so many opportunities, like entrance to the best graduate schools and top jobs in an array of fields.

Still, the most important benefits are not these outcomes but the process. Learning and loving it for its own sake is an amazing opportunity that you have over the next four years! While the outcomes of living as a scholar at CC will help you to achieve personal success—something we wish for all of our students—embracing the process of learning will help you to achieve personal fulfillment.

Over the years, I have talked with many liberal arts college grads – doctors, teachers, lawyers, those in business and finance - and the things that they often say confirm my own personal experience that engaging in an intellectual community, living the life of the mind while in

college, is life changing. Most alums' fondest memories of CC are academic – a close relationship with a faculty member, a study group, a summer research experience, a seminar. Many other alumni express regret that they didn't appreciate the academic options available to them – they wish that they had sampled more broadly from the liberal arts curriculum and taken the process of learning more seriously. They wish that they had appreciated the only opportunity in their lives to be fully absorbed in learning.

I hope that all of you will have fond memories rather than regrets! So take advantage of the academic opportunities – study abroad, take a class that is a stretch, invite a faculty member (or a President) to have coffee, apply for a Venture Grant, initiate those political late night debates with your roommates. Do it all and enjoy it!

Take advantage of all that CC offers in the classroom – take a class in Art History, German, Southwest studies, Astronomy, Math, Geology, Classics, or Film. Try it all!

Colorado College has some of the finest teacher-scholars – extremely talented faculty members who are truly dedicated to your learning. They are one of the reasons that we came to CC so take advantage of what they offer you. Go to their office hours, ask for their advice, get to know them as people.

And, don't forget about one of the best things about attending a highly selective residential liberal arts college like CC – your peers. You are surrounded by some of the most talented and interesting young people anywhere. Collectively, you speak 30 languages, have visited 75 different countries, and have committed thousands of hours to community service. Your class includes: 180 presidents or community leaders, 46 student publication

editors, 195 varsity team captains, numerous published authors, 2 nationally ranked rock climbers, 2 professionally recorded musicians, a second place finisher at the World Series of Birding and a music blogger who gets over 250,000 hits a month. The list goes on and on. Because of what each of you brings to CC, these next four years will be more enriching for all of us.

You will likely easily form friendships with those with whom you have lots in common – you are from the same state or country, you share a sport or music interest, you have the same racial or socioeconomic background – and that’s OK, it’s human nature to search for those connections (especially when confronting a new environment). But I challenge you to also form friendships with those whom you don’t seem to have so much in common. We can learn so much from those with different backgrounds and experiences who might see things differently. For me, the Iowa farm girl, it was a

friendship with a young woman from Chicago – not the suburbs, the city. Truthfully, I remember being kind of scared of her at first. I expect that her visit to the farm was as eye-opening as my trip to her neighborhood.

However, I also remember thinking over this magnificent Italian meal with lots of her relatives, that the evening wasn't so different from the dinner of meat and potatoes that all those Iowa Tiefenthalers had treated her to at my house. I learned that what we shared was more important than how we differed.

These four years of learning offer so many opportunities. But, remember, that being a member of our scholarly community also comes with significant responsibilities – you will need to contribute a lot. You will need to work hard –to read, to write, to reread and to rewrite. You will also need to engage with your faculty and your peers. Be a part of discussions and the debates both inside and outside the classroom but do it civilly.

Finally, and very importantly, you will need to be an honorable student. Give credit to the work of others and only take credit for your own work.

Closing

While I was pretty homesick those first days, I also remember the excitement of starting college and I know that you all feel it today. You sense the opportunity. Grab the ones ahead of you but also give back, invest in your new communities. If you do, I expect that in four years – when I talk to you at Commencement - you will start to feel a little homesick. You will move on to a job or graduate school and you will be homesick again but this time for CC, those mountains, and the enjoyable freedom of the life of the mind.

However, just as you moved away from home this past week but remain a part of your hometown community, you will always be a part of our communities. You will have a lifelong attraction to and affection for this

place and the relationships you've cultivated with faculty, students and staff, and you will equate CC and this time in your life with a warm embrace. In addition, your time here and the knowledge and skills that you learn, and what you learn about yourself, will help you to take advantage of the many opportunities ahead of you and to build new communities – to make a difference - wherever life takes you.

Thank you! And, again, welcome to Colorado College!