

Tribute to Mary

September 22, 2011

The most fundamental tribute to a leader is to consider and recognize what their leadership has accomplished. The story of Mary Spilde's decade-long leadership is well told by describing the results of that leadership; by describing Lane. So, let us consider together this place called Lane:

“This place called Lane” is beautiful—as many have commented on cresting 30th with the campus coming suddenly into view. To loosely paraphrase Hemingway's *On Paris*:

If you are lucky enough to have lived at Lane ...,
then wherever you go for the rest of your life it stays
with you, for Lane is a moveable feast.

This “moveable feast” of the senses is alive with art created by our staff and students, with landscaping that is overwhelming in its variety of design and aesthetic appeal, that unites and blends together our old and new learning spaces, and that expresses our commitment to nature and ecology. Mary this is a tribute to your leadership and vision of what an oasis of learning can do qualitatively for the students and staff who call Lane

home, and to your constancy of effort in bringing this vision into reality.

Lane is a feast of structures and sensibility, a blend of older buildings that reaffirm the spirit that created them even as they are remodeled and renewed, and new buildings that are expressions of that same spirit that we describe today as a dedication to transforming lives through learning. The beauty of our emerging campus is testimony to your commitment to place, and so many aspects of your vision for the campus have been ahead of their time. We are one of the very few colleges nationally to have a longhouse to serve our Native American students.

The Lane community is itself a part of the “moveable feast” that stays with those lucky enough to attend or work here, and the character of this community is a living testimony to the clarity of values and inclusiveness that has helped define this community and helped it thrive. This includes an ever evolving commitment to a wealth of diversity, to the sensibilities of the minority experience and intentionally countering subtle oppressions. It is with sustained direction that our Diversity Core Value is maintained: “Cultivating a respectful, inclusive and

accessible working and learning environment.” It is sustained clarity of leadership that creates a culture that helps us all be aware of the extra effort needed by minorities to just be a participant, even at Lane.

Lane is also a feast of “can do” attitude that you have personified, particularly during extremely stark budget times, and that has been infectious for our college community. Our problem solving is extraordinary, as is the engaged, committed and passionate way in which we go about our work. We may joke that we have a tendency to talk excessively about any issue at hand. But results speak volumes, so perhaps the time we take to arrive at a solution is justified – the people of Lane seem to be able to solve any problem. Discussions of issues are deep, involve multiple perspectives, and give birth to solutions that evolve elegantly, are effective, and gain wide acceptance.

Our moveable feast has extra servings of resilience, as educational institutions have found it necessary to deliberate and address challenges to educational ideals and practices, many of which are centuries old. You have set the tone for the college community to persist in the face of challenges and to arrive at solutions. This

resilience is the very essence of the Lane spirit; we hold our standards high and will achieve our goals through maintaining our indomitable spirit!

And all who are fortunate enough to have “lived” at Lane take with them the moveable feast of values, evident everywhere, and made manifest in our Core Values, as in our commitment to Innovation through: “Acting courageously, deliberately and systematically in relation to change”, or in our commitment to Sustainability through “... building a socially diverse, just, and sustainable society, while cultivating connections to local, regional, and global communities”. You have and continue to exemplify these core values in your leadership.

And of course this “place called Lane” is at its heart about learning –about the students, about a deep respect for the learning process, the power of collective and shared learning. Your resolute focus on “transforming lives through learning” and your evident passion for supporting a learning environment has been foundational, and has made possible much of what continues to make Lane.

Mary, we are lucky to have “lived at Lane” at the same time as you. Under your leadership Lane is indisputably a

feast of the senses, of community, of “can do” attitude, of resilience, of values and of learning. Under your leadership, this “moveable feast” has become a special learning campus with the spirit of its inhabitants inspired to engage in fulfilling work that literally transforms lives – our lives as well as our students’ lives.

Thank you for the ten years of dedicated, unwavering commitment and leaderships.