



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

President Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

President's Assembly

|Speech to incoming first-year students and their families, Sept. 1, 2011

Good Afternoon! I am delighted to officially welcome you to Connecticut College.

First off, I want to thank you all for your patience with our weather delay this year. We are extremely fortunate that the College made it through the storm with just some power outages and a messy campus to deal with. It could have been much much worse. It's a very tough call to make before a storm, but I believe we made the right decision in this case to delay. I know many of you were inconvenienced – and I deeply appreciate all that you had to do to rearrange your lives to be here today.

We are very happy to see you and to begin this important year together at Connecticut College. I know that you – our newest students – will find, as I have, that the College is a very welcoming place.

You are an exceptional group of men and women. Your admission materials reveal outstanding accomplishments, academically and personally. You have set the bar very high for yourselves and, frankly, much will be expected of you here.

Your academic strength proves your ability to be independent and self-reliant learners, essential skills. However, as much as you are capable of achieving on your own, today you also become part of a true learning community.

You will build important connections here with people who will help shape your education and, indeed, your adult life.

Faculty and staff will provide you with guidance, and acquaint you with resources to support your learning. You and your peers will play important roles in each other's education. As you look around this auditorium, you see people who will offer their own ideas and insights on a broad range of subjects. Your peers will be your partners in your education and some will become your life-long friends.

In this community, we encourage students to take what you discover and connect it to your own interests. On the playing fields, in the practice rooms, in the studios, at student government sessions or in whatever passion you pursue, look for connections to the

learning that engages you. The College offers numerous programs that expand your learning through research, internships, study abroad or volunteer service – and teams of experts to help you make these connections.

And finally, there will be many opportunities to connect with alumni. Connecticut College alumni are making a difference in the world and they are a great source of knowledge and professional and personal support.

You will be shaped, changed and, more importantly, enriched by the connections you make here at Connecticut College.

You're also here at a great time. Last semester, we began a year-long celebration of Connecticut College's Centennial. Throughout this Centennial year, we have made a point to celebrate this very special liberal arts education and the impact it has on students and the world. There are more opportunities ahead – including at Convocation on Tuesday – to take part in our Centennial celebration. And I hope that all the parents have already marked Fall Weekend on your calendars. It's October 21-23 and we will have our biggest Centennial celebration of the year.

Throughout the coming year, we also will be advancing our new science center construction – a \$20-plus million dollar project we broke ground on last spring. Next fall at this time, in 2012, we will be getting ready to cut the ribbon on this exciting project. This is just one of many advancements in the academic and co-curricular experience at the College.

Connecticut College prides itself on excellence. We are always looking at ways to advance this institution and enhance our students' educational experience. And we will continue to do so – even in this economy.

The College you join today – the education experience you begin today – will only get better during your four years here. Again, a warm welcome to you all. I look forward to meeting you around campus.