



Dear Campus and Community Members,

As I enter the concluding weeks of my service as President of this remarkable University, I do so with a full heart and a deep sense of gratitude. Ten years ago, I accepted this role with a clear understanding of its responsibilities—but what I could not have fully anticipated was the profound impact this community would have on me.

Together, we have navigated noteworthy challenges and celebrated milestones of achievement. We have expanded our academic programs, strengthened our commitment to scholarship and innovation, and deepened our engagement with the wider world. More importantly, we have upheld the values that define this institution—integrity, curiosity, civility, and a steadfast belief in the power of education to transform lives.

To our Faculty: I have appreciated your dedication to scholarship and teaching. Your work has been the foundation of our success. You have inspired generations of students not only to learn, but to think critically and act with purpose. You have prepared them to face the challenges ahead.

To our Staff: Your tireless efforts, often behind the scenes, have ensured that this University runs with excellence and care. Thank you for being the backbone of this institution -- your contributions have never gone unnoticed.

To our Students -- past and present: You are the reason we are here. Your energy, ambition, and resilience give this University its spirit. It has been one of my greatest privileges to witness your journeys and accomplishments, and I am grateful for that opportunity. You are the leaders and model citizens of tomorrow, and our expectations of you are high.

To our Alumni, Community Members, and Legislators: Your continued belief in this University has enabled us to grow and thrive. I am personally thankful for your partnership, which has been essential in shaping the path we have taken. We would not be where we are today without your unwavering support.

To our Board of Governors: You have been the wind beneath our wings – thoughtfully and decisively serving as governing partners and purveyors of sage advice, leadership, and vision. Your commitment to advancing Shepherd’s mission is deeply appreciated.

No presidency is the work of just one individual. It is a shared endeavor, and I have been fortunate to work alongside extraordinary colleagues and leaders who have challenged me, supported me, and believed in our collective vision of ONEShepherd.

As I step away, I do so with immense confidence in the future of this University. The challenges ahead are real, but so are the opportunities. I have no doubt that this community will continue to adapt, innovate, and lead with courage and conviction.

While this chapter of my life comes to a close, my connection to this institution does not. I will always remain one of your most devoted advocates and proudest supporters.

Thank you for the trust you placed in me, for the memories we have created, and for the work we have accomplished together. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as your President.

I wish each of you continued success, fulfillment, and inspiration in the years ahead.

With deepest appreciation and best wishes,

Mary

Mary J.C. Hendrix, Ph.D.

President