

October 16, 2013

Dear students, faculty and staff:

Last year, as I was considering a move to Delaware, I read everything I could about UD-about its history and traditions, about its acclaimed faculty, talented students and prominent alumni.

And then I read this: **DARE TO BE FIRST.**

A compact message intended to proclaim publicly who we are, what we stand for and why we matter.

This captured my imagination and resonated with me personally. You see, I was first in my family to go to college. In my career, I've been privileged to work with esteemed colleagues on other firsts-the first environmental engineering program in Argentina and the first engineering program at a U.S. women's college. Now I am looking forward to being part of many new firsts here at UD.

George Bernard Shaw wrote decades ago that some individuals see things as they are and ask why, while others envision things that never were and ask why not.

We are a University that asks why not.

In so many fields and disciplines, we look to the left and right and see no one, because it's we who are leading-with new ideas, new perspectives, new technologies, new solutions to complex problems and, always, with a rigorous dedication to excellence.

Our excellence isn't relative. Our excellence just is. It is for us to lead the way.

Three-quarters of a century ago, Allan Colburn arrived on campus and helped define modern chemical engineering.

Joyce Hill Stoner founded North America's first Ph.D. program in art conservation here at UD, and our faculty and alumni have gone on to conserve the most important art and artifacts across the globe.

I thought about "Dare to be first" two weeks ago, as the University dedicated Louis L. Redding Hall, honoring a man who dared to challenge racial segregation, and whose efforts changed UD forever.

I saw an incarnation of the motto last month in the New York Times feature on UD professor Cole Galloway, whose customized toy cars bring new mobility to infants and toddlers with motor impairment. The prototype car is called "UDare2B."

continued on next page

Tomorrow, we dedicate our Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Lab, a facility that is helping us redefine engaged learning and interdisciplinary research. Again, we “Dare to be first.”

My sincere hope is that each one of us continues to find ways to make this motto our own. Dare to be first in what matters to you. After all, this is a large part of what defines this great University’s character.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Domenico Grasso". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "D".

Domenico Grasso

Provost