

2017 Middle States Summer Workshop
Remarks to the Steering Committee and Working Group Members
Herbert B. Keller, S.J.
August 10, 2017

Good morning.

Let me start by thanking both Rebecca and Julie for their willingness to take on this important project, and their leadership through the process so far. I have been impressed with their work over the course of this summer as we move forward with the work of the self-study. I should admit that their leadership has provided a sense of relief to me, as I transitioned to the role of interim president. Through my interactions with them, I am sure that this process will be a resounding success. So thank you both for taking the time to lead this process for our University.

Next, I'd like to thank all of you in this room for agreeing to be part of the Middle States Self Study process. Your involvement signals that this process is a broad-based, representative exploration of our University and our commitment to our students. I am grateful for your participation, and know that your involvement improves the quality of this project.

Often times at events throughout the academic year, you will no doubt hear someone quote the speech given in 2000, by the then superior general of the Society of Jesus, Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach, when he famously said, "the real measure of our universities lies in who are students become." We hear these words regularly, and we believe that Scranton graduates are uniquely positioned to be both successful and moral citizens of the world. This self-study process gives us an opportunity to explore what we do here at the University, how we do it, and what we might need to do to improve the student experience.

This type of reflection may seem onerous, and certainly adds to a busy schedule that each of you already keep on campus. However, I might suggest that this type of reflection is inherent to a Catholic and Jesuit institution like our University. St. Ignatius called all Jesuits to practice a daily Examen, in which we reflect on the graces and shortcomings of our day. It is in this reflection that we are able to see God in places that may not have apparent in the moment. The Examen is an important tool for our spiritual lives. At the risk of oversimplifying the process, I see this self-study as an important reflection of who we are as a University. The process asks us to evaluate our work against the things that we claim to be for students. This type of objective review is not always easy, but is necessary for us to improve and serve our students. This process fits our identity as a Catholic and Jesuit school, and I look forward to our work together with the goal of better serving our students moving forward.

Thank you again for your service. May God bless you and your families and may God continue to bless The University of Scranton.