November 12, 2016

To the students and members of the Keystone College community:

Thank you for your vital discussions, email exchanges, texts, online posts, and group meetings over the past several days. As members of a community where learning flourishes, we are necessarily influenced by and engaged in the seminal democratic process of regularly electing leaders, resulting in the peaceful transition of leadership and responsibility to promote the common good. Because we are conscientious and care deeply about others and our world, we hold strong convictions about various issues that have the ability to unite or divide us, especially during election days.

At Keystone College, we share a mission of teaching and learning with the goal of providing the skills, sensibilities, contexts, and virtues to be free citizens, fearlessly seeking truth and wisdom, while contributing to society in a productive way. Core convictions of a liberal arts and sciences tradition affirm a healthy critique and respect for tradition, while also supporting the unconditional dignity and worth of every human being. These convictions obligate us to treat each other with respect, honor, and the freedom that is ours by virtue of our humanity and global citizenship. This especially applies to those with different or opposing views.

Keystone College is an academic community that highly values civil discourse, a preference for evidence, and is critical of unsupported assertions in our quest to seek truth and understanding. We have a special role and responsibility to call or "lead out" (educare) the dignity and best talents and gifts in each person in an environment that is civil, respectful, ethical, and inclusive in our search for understanding, truth, beauty, and goodness.

In short, as a College community, we are united in our commitment to promoting constructive dialogue. Dialogue, however, does not have a required goal of complete agreement, because disagreement and contrary perspectives often lead to deeper and wider understanding. To promote understanding, colleges must be places of safe dialogue, discussion, and sharing the discoveries and values of a good society. I am grateful that Keystone College is known to be a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus for all students, faculty, and staff.

In particular, I invite us to continue to dialogue and wrestle with the question, "What does it mean to be a good neighbor in a diverse and inclusive society?" To find the answers to this question, we must seek ways to be constructive and inclusive, and engage all people of good will to be thoughtful in our consideration of others as our neighbors. The world is our home and this country and community is
our unique and distinct place where we have affirmed since the 1782 Continental Congress, that we have strength in our diversity and our unity (e pluribus unum).

I invite us to be untiring in fostering respectful dialogue, now and in the future, so that our College’s motto, “Progress through effort,” will be thoughtfully achieved and realized. This invitation challenges us to refrain from irresponsible or hurtful posts on social media, and calls us to pursue a greater purpose by encouraging constructive dialogue.

Finally, I believe that we can make a real difference where we live, study, and work by getting involved in the community by lending our time to gather food, clothing, and supplies to send to our neighbors in need. Kindly consider volunteering with any of the numerous clubs or activities on campus that seek to make a positive difference in the lives of others. In essence, we have the opportunity to become better people and a stronger community and country through constructive dialogue and positive action not only during election days, but every day.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

David L. Coppola, Ph.D.
President