

**Excerpts from Remarks to the Board of Trustees
Special-Called Meeting
July 23, 2018**

President John A. Roush

Principle #1 – Stay the course with our Statement of Community. We begin with an affirmation of Centre’s very own statement of community wherein: “We pledge continuing efforts to build and strengthen a community enriched by our differences and founded upon our common humanity. Centre respects the right of all members of the community to express their individuality in a manner that is consistent with the dignity and welfare of others. Centre strives to create an environment where differences are celebrated rather than discouraged, where individuals have the opportunity to exchange ideas and share in the richness of mutual experience. By valuing the individual’s total character over any single characteristic, Centre will maintain its unique community.” This statement has served us well, allowing for our students to express different points of view—liberal and conservative and in-between—and has created a place known for its honesty, spirit of adventure, hard work, kindness, fairness, respect, accountability, forgiveness, and joy.

Principle #2 – “Be Better & Do Better” with those things that are distinctly Centre. We are committed to maintain a community that is known for its honesty, spirit of adventure, hard work, kindness, fairness, respect, accountability, forgiveness, and joy. Or, as I mentioned earlier, affords an educational experience that “is safe, supportive, and inclusive, as well as joyful, challenging, rigorous, adventurous, and collegial.” Sustaining such a community will require us to “be better” and “do better” with regard to addressing the needs of a more diverse community, and that is our clear intent. The Work Plan associated with the May 2-4 Old Centre Conversations represents a start for important efforts that will educate all students, serve all students, and benefit all students. With this new beginning, it is understood that maintaining a community that honors and serves all students is a dynamic, ever-changing process—one that requires each of us to be even more intentional about communication, follow-through, transparency, education and training, and being more mindful of our differences as we value each other’s “total character over any one individual characteristic.”

Principle #3 – Guidelines for Engagement: Encouraging free speech and expression within the College’s stated policies. We must be committed to sustaining Centre’s longstanding traditions for how we engage each other in open, determined conversation. To this point, I believe that the College must be prepared to redouble its effort, as I intend to do, to be available to students—with a special effort to engage in dialogue with those students who may have different points of view or are feeling that they are “not being included” in the College’s processes. In this same spirit, I believe we need to be clear that while our students reserve the right to express their points of view within the guidelines set forward, we are not prepared to have them do so outside the policies associated with Centre’s regular operation. It will fall to me to work with others and develop a set of standards—ones that make sense, are easily understood, and would be judged by others to be fair and reasonable—that articulate the ways in which we will handle such matters going forward. And, to be clear, it is understood that these standards would not excuse the breaking of laws or College policies.