



August 25, 1998

Elizabethtown
COLLEGE

Dear Alumni:

When I greet graduates from, say, 20 years ago, they tell me of the countless hours they spent in Room 16C (you may have called it the "Reading Room" - students now call it "The Hideaway"). If the walls of that room could speak, they would tell you that students are still spending countless hours and are still growing professionally and intellectually, even as you grew.

And even as you benefitted from Elizabethtown's uniqueness, today's students are still enriched by being in a combined liberal arts/ pre-professional setting: We believe the liberal arts/ pre-professional "mix" creates an environment important to their futures and attractive to prospective employers. Our students are taking advantage of opportunities outside of the classroom: Two of our students have recently been in full time Co-op programs for an entire semester; many of our students have taken advantage of the EXTERN program (one week of exposure to real world science/ engineering in industry); and this year, in addition to several students holding good summer jobs in their career areas, students are employed in summer internships at Hershey Foods, New Holland North America, Book-of-the-Month Club, and General Electric. Our students and graduates are very competitive: In 1996-97, four of our six "3-2" students who were at Penn State were elected to Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honorary society. Recent graduates have been hired by Allen-Bradley, Union-Carbide, Lockheed-Martin, Hershey Foods, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Netscape, and Merck Pharmaceutical, as well as many less-well-known companies.

Twelve years ago, in 1986, the department was at a low ebb: Professor Custer had retired in 1985 and Professor Bowman resigned to take a position at another college. The department - during the summer of 1986 - had no faculty members! Professor John Ranck (Dept. of Chemistry) took the reins as Acting Chair/ Physics. He hired a brilliant physicist (John Cyranski) whose service lasted only two years before he took a position with U.S. Navy Research Labs. In 1988, Professor Ranck hired two physicists, John Gaffney who moved to a position at Lawrenceville School (NJ) in 1992 and Mark Stuckey who is still with us. With Gaffney and Stuckey as fully-participating partners, Professor Ranck formulated a "plan" for the resurgence of the department. There were two principal considerations for the "plan:" (1) Since a good liberal arts college must have a viable physics department, we needed to enhance the department to enhance the college; (2) Since, in the United States, the average number of physics bachelors degrees is only five per degree-granting institution, we would supplement our traditional physics and 3-2 engineering programs with new programs in computer engineering, industrial engineering, and engineering physics. Thus, the department would survive - even thrive - since physics is the bedrock of each of the new programs.

The seeds planted in 1988 have blossomed: Students in the department have quadrupled and the end is not yet in sight. {This year's graduates include two physics majors, five engineering majors, and two physics minors. Four other 3-2 students received Elizabethtown engineering degrees and will finish

their Penn State degrees next year. This spring, the department had eight physics majors and minors, and 36 engineering majors (including six at Penn State). This fall, new incoming students will include 17 intended majors in engineering and four in physics.} To properly support these students, the college administration has recently begun to accelerate its provision of needed resources (equipment and personnel) and has even asked the department to consider how to make the programs grow even further.

As we move into the 1998-1999 academic year, full time faculty members are Professor Mark Stuckey (physicist, here since 1988), Professor David Ferruzza (engineer, here since 1990), and - new this fall - Professor Tom Salem (engineer). Among part time faculty are: Professor John Ranck '58 (physical chemist) and Professor Tom Leap '74 (computer scientist). Adjunct Rob Dixon teaches meteorology and Adjunct Michael Scanlin teaches geology. (Earth Science Professor Glenn Thompson retired in December 1995.)

A unique collaboration, unusual for small colleges, exists in the department: two Ph.D. research scientists are engaged in funded research: physicist Nat Hager and physical chemist Roman Domschy work in a portion of the basic physics lab and are therefore available as resources to our students. In fact, Nat has taught lab courses and has also worked one-on-one with three students in the capstone course, "Senior Project in Engineering."

The college motto, "Educate for Service," is alive and well within the department. Our graduates leave with a sense of having been broadly educated, capable of "living life" to its fullest rather than just "making a living." The continuum of education and growth within the department has been passed through and by you to current students. Thanks for carrying the torch while you were here.

We invite you to visit at any time, and to keep us updated on significant occurrences. Homecoming has traditionally been a time when you are invited back to the College to reminisce with classmates, friends, and members of the campus community. As part of Homecoming activities this year, we invite you to be a part of a special Physics department reunion, in Esbenshade Hall Room 166, on Saturday, October 17, from 12:45 p.m. until 1:45 p.m.. You'll be able to share experiences with your classmates, with graduates from other years, and with students. (Please use the enclosed form and self-addressed envelope to let us know your intentions for Homecoming.)

We look forward to seeing you at Homecoming and hearing about your activities.

Sincerely,

David Ferruzza
Chair

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