A Rising Tide Life all Boats

Frank Shushok, Jr.
Dear Faithful Colleagues,

The older I get, the more I know time is fleeting. When I accepted my appointment as Executive Editor for About Campus, I can now admit that I never asked, “For how long?” Imagine how surprised and overwhelmed I felt when I read in a formal letter that my “term of service” was five years. Math has never been my strong suit, but I could easily calculate that I was now responsible for publishing 30 editions of what my colleagues frequently described as “their favorite higher education publication.” In actuality, these past five years have felt more like a one quick breath.

I hope I have lived up to the expectations of the hundreds of people working in higher education who I admire and who are deeply committed to student learning. I have been given enormous support by my home campus, Virginia Tech, and have been surrounded by a team of unusual talent. While many have made their contribution to our collective work, five people have been with me from beginning to end: Victoria Arthur, Matthew Ebert, Frances Keene, Ennis McCrery, and Vanessa Ruccolo. These are the sort of people who embody words like character and excellence, who are walking definitions of what it is to be an educator and a humanitarian. These friends cannot fully know the impact they have had—individually and collectively—on so many, including me.

For these past five years, I’ve been concluding my editor’s note using the valediction “With hope.” For those of us building each edition of About Campus over the past five years, our abiding aspiration was to remind readers of the importance of their work. In the day-to-day trials and tribulations of working with students, it can be all too easy to forget why we do it. In the end, when a single student finds a calling, becomes compelled by the cause of justice, learns to care for humanity, discovers a talent, hones a skill, or finds the courage to speak up for a value, the world stretches. Potential becomes reality. We all grow larger. I cannot think of a better way to spend a life, and therefore, it is with hope that I trust each of us will greet the next day.

The aphorism, “a rising tide lifts all boats,” implies improvements in the general economy will benefit all participants in that economy. As we hand off About Campus to new Executive Editor, Professor Ryan Evely Gildersleeve at the University of Denver, I hope you’ll remember that your big or small moves in the economy of education—those that strengthen learning, bolster inclusion, and care for the dreams of a student—amplify good and right possibilities for a more just and humane world. This is the rising tide that has lifted me, and it’s why I continue…

With hope,

Frank Shushok, Jr.
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