

REMARKS WELCOMING PARTICIPANTS AND GUESTS TO THE 2018 ETHICS BOWL SPONSORED BY THE VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

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Welcome to Hampden-Sydney College. Our namesakes, John Hampden and Algernon Sydney were British parliamentarians who believed in representative government and limits on the monarch's rule. They both gave their lives for their beliefs, and at the time of the revolution, patriots in this country had formed Hampden and Sydney Societies to honor these martyrs and support the cause of freedom. So, in choosing Hampden-Sydney as the name of this college, our founders were signaling that they were creating a college that would be an alternative to the "royalist" college in Williamsburg. As the College opened its doors to the sons of patriots in 1775, our president published what has to be one of the very first pieces of college marketing material, noting that the mission of Hampden-Sydney College is "to form good men and good citizens," and that is exactly what we have been doing here for 243 years.

A very special thank you to the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges for sponsoring this wonderful event. The independent colleges in Virginia are blessed to have the support of the VFIC, which does so much to advance and enhance the educational missions of the member colleges. The leadership and staff of the VFIC are extraordinarily dedicated, and we are all very grateful for their efforts. Just as important is the loyalty of the many leaders from across the state of Virginia who support the work of the VFIC, so I offer a warm welcome to VFIC board members and the guests of the VFIC and our member colleges who have traveled to be here to show your support and enthusiasm for this great event.

I also extend a special welcome and thank you to all of the student participants and your faculty coaches and mentors. As talented students, you have many opportunities to apply your energies, and I commend you for participating in an ethics bowl at a time when our society so desperately needs sound ethical reasoning and decision making. And, no doubt our team advisors also feel tugged in many directions, but you know that our students benefit richly from opportunities like the VFIC Ethics Bowl to apply their critical reasoning and communication skills, especially to issues of ethics and morality. A special thank you to you for your mentoring and support of your students.

A former president of Swarthmore once noted: "It is not enough to develop intellect, for intellect by itself is essentially amoral, capable of evil as well as good. We must develop the character which makes intellect constructive, and the personality which makes it effective." Our work of developing intellect, character, and personality is well captured in a piece of writing a current Hampden-Sydney senior shared with me recently. He writes:

The most profound lesson Hampden-Sydney has gifted me is that it is ... not necessary to identify with the majority. Knowledge and truth may not be where the majority says it is. Popular opinions and actions deserve to be analyzed and critiqued. Rather than feeling a pressure to conform and remain within the safety of the majority, I have been equipped with a freedom to search and discover truth for myself. I have been taught the importance of honor and integrity and uphold these values at all times.

While this was written by a Hampden-Sydney student, I think it is safe to say that through the teaching and mentoring of dedicated faculty and staff, the important transformational work this Hampden-Sydney student describes is occurring on all of our VFIC college campuses. My special wish for all of the student participants is that the two days you spend here contribute to the development of your intellect, character, and personality in rich and meaningful ways.