Committed to Quality Education
By Dr. Tim Summerlin
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We at Schreiner University appreciate the coverage given to university events—recent and in the past—by the Daily Times. Reporting on the “beam signing” of our athletic and event center, our signing of an agreement with Hannam University of South Korea, and, of course, the NCAA national championship secured by our men’s golf team highlighted events of which we are proud.

We think of such accomplishments as successes for the community as well as the university. Local support, from the EIC, foundations and individual donors, enabled us to undertake this project. Our three local golf courses are all generous hosts for our men’s and women’s golf teams for the kind of practice essential to national success. And we regularly receive encouragement from this community on our efforts to realize the goal we affirm in our mission, “to prepare students for meaningful work and purposeful lives in a changing global society.”

Schreiner is fortunate enough to have its home in a part of the state much envied by other regions, and our commitment is to a level of excellence commensurate with that location. The NCAA Division III championship illustrates that commitment. Our team had to smile when some of the California schools said, “Who are you guys? We’ve never heard of Schreiner.” Now they have, and they will continue to! And did you know that this same team claimed the top collective grade point average among Schreiner men’s sports teams last fall? That is what the D III student-athlete concept is all about.

There are many other ways that this association of excellence with Schreiner continues to be communicated. Our terrific Schreiner Shooting Sports Society team was 2014 Division III Runner Up High Overall National Champions and the National Champion in Division III American Trap, accompanied by a host of individual honors, in April. By the way, if you want to watch a great video on that group, check out http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hj3g0x4lw28.

Schreiner has become a model nationally for how smaller colleges can expand their academic offerings through technology. Provost Charlie McCormick took the lead in developing the Texas Language Consortium, a group of five colleges which provide language instruction via two-way videoconferencing. For the last two years, we have welcomed students from these colleges via the Internet into our German instruction, as our students have had the opportunity to study Portuguese or Mandarin Chinese from instructors elsewhere. We have advised other institutions in New York, Pennsylvania, Florida and Virginia on setting up such programs and were recently awarded a Teagle Foundation grant to study the TLC’s success and expand the concept to other academic areas.

These and other accomplishments highlight an exciting academic program. For instance, under Provost McCormick’s leadership, Texas public and private colleges and universities have established a day in Austin featuring undergraduate research at which several of our students have made presentations. And earlier this spring Schreiner hosted other private colleges in an ethics match competition that embodies
the values of our Integrity Ambassadors in Business curriculum. Some great community volunteers helped make that event possible.

Let me conclude by returning to our recent agreement with Hannam University. Just as our commitment to preparing students for “meaningful work” features an expansion of the relevant work and internship opportunities we provide them, and as the “purposeful lives” commitment expands civic engagement, service learning, and reflection on values and calling, so our pledge to prepare students for life and work in a “global society” has implications. Thus, we are investing in greater opportunity for our students to experience the world beyond our regional and national borders as well as for expanding the international dimension of our own campus. This investment includes group travel to New York, Boston, Washington, DC, London and Taize, France, next year.

Thus, as we reclaim use of a renovated Delaney Residence Hall this fall, it will include a new freshman living and learning community, the Global Scholars, among its occupants. A cadre of new students with a special interest in internationalism will live there and share common experiences in and out of the classroom. They will join the other such communities—Honors, Vesalius health careers, Exodus Project spiritual seekers, and ACE career explorers—that have provided strong bonding for first-year students in recent years.

What’s it all about? Well, let me quote our commencement speaker, Dr. Laurie Schreiner (no, not related to our family!), on that point: “Higher education is at a critical juncture. Faced with unprecedented economic hardships, increased demands for accountability, and challenges for students, families, and the public to demonstrate the value of a college education, we must find new ways of helping students succeed not only in college, but in life.”

And that is why Schreiner University is committed to quality and excellence in everything it does, and why you will continue to hear more about us.