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To promote learning through teaching, research, scholarship, creative accomplishment, and service.

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To be the leading student-centered research university with faculty, students, and staff sharing responsibility and working together for academic, professional, and personal growth.

Opening Remarks

Welcoming Real-World Adventures

As you page through various issues of this magazine, one catch phrase you will come across is “real-world experience.” If you’re like me, you may have asked, “As opposed to what—a surreal-world experience?” At one time I tried to expunge the phrase from these pages, but that became an exercise in futility. I’d zap the words “real world” in one story and they’d pop up modifying “experience” in another and another, until I was nearly buried in an avalanche of them as they appeared in writers’ narratives, professors’ quotes, students’ anecdotes, and alumni’s reflections. It was like shoveling the driveway in a Syracuse snowstorm: By the time you reached the road and turned around, the driveway was buried again.

It seems as if there is no escaping real-world experiences—and that must be a good thing for SU students, because familiarity with the Real World is important. After all, remember when you were a sheltered student and some wisdom-oozing person warned, “Just wait until you get out into the Real World.” And you just shrugged it off, thinking: What could possibly be worse than pulling all-nighters, sharing a room with a slob, and subsisting on macaroni and cheese for months on end?

To be fair, the phrase “real-world experience” is most often used around here to draw a distinction between scholarly activities and life beyond the borders of academia—where students mix it up with, well, real-world folks. They step outside the classroom and find themselves working with people in the corporate sector, social service agencies, and other places. Such experience, of course, is an important part of college nowadays, especially if post-graduation employment is a goal. The University’s Academic Plan, for instance, notes the value of experiential learning. Not only does this kind of learning provide students the opportunity to explore professions and gain valuable experience, but it also gives them a good idea about whether they’re suited for their current career choice. In this issue, for example, you’ll learn about



Timothy Cook

students performing with professional actors in a Syracuse Stage production of *West Side Story*. You’ll also read about law students who represent real clients in real courts in the Real World (but, thankfully, not on Reality TV).

And if there’s ever a real-world experience to savor, trust me, court is a good place to find it. I discovered this a long time ago in one of my own real-world experiences for a college journalism class. The professor sent us to city court in Boston to observe the proceedings. I learned a lot that day—perhaps more than I should have—about snitches, thieves, and the Real World’s oldest profession. For another class assignment I was instructed to wander out into the Real World and interview someone interesting. I came back with a story about a tea-leaf reader who set up shop in a flea market and claimed to have a Ph.D. in medieval literature. This made me wonder if understanding *Beowulf* was necessary to launch a career as a soothsayer using one of those Magic Eight Balls. “Trouble Ahead,” I envisioned it saying.

Seriously, though, for many students the beauty of getting off campus, out into the community, engaging in a professional pursuit, and experiencing life—as glorious or unvarnished as it may be—is unmatched. And I hope that, more often than not, these out-of-class adventures inspire the students to say, “I can’t wait to get out into the Real World.” They’ll be welcomed too—because we need all the help out here we can get.

JAY COX
Editor