



June 7, 2010

Dear Student:

You are about to undertake a new, exciting and challenging adventure. As a WCSU student, your horizons will expand, you will learn to think globally and you will explore many issues of differences. We live in a highly diverse world, a world that requires us to understand what we have in common and how we appreciate our differences.

Each new freshmen class explores a common theme during their first academic year. "Learning Through Differences" is the theme for your class, the Class of 2014. It will require you to examine your personal beliefs as well as those of your classmates. The discussions that will evolve from this theme are designed to generate new ideas and challenge assumptions.

Reading the book "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien, is the first step in your learning process. I am asking you to read this book prior to your arrival in the fall. It is considered one of the finest books about the Vietnam War. Today "The Things They Carried" is one of the things being carried by soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, passed around from soldier to soldier. Why does this novel resonate twenty years after it was written? What things do you carry?

Throughout the academic year, we'll discuss these questions and your professors will incorporate the themes of this book into your classes as part of your course work. You will participate in small discussion groups exploring the issues discussed in the book, meet the author of the book and have an opportunity to write an essay about a personal challenge you've faced.

Your class will participate in the university's third annual community common read. We expect you to set a standard of high excellence that will serve as a guide post and benchmark for future classes who will follow this WCSU tradition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda K. Rinker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Linda K. Rinker
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs