A Letter from the President

From my days as State Budget Director, I remember when Kentucky legislators would arrive in Frankfort for the beginning of a legislative session. They were exciting times and were a lot of fun as I got to renew old friendships, and had the pleasure of talking to state lawmakers about policy and the economic future of our state. As always, I looked forward to walking the hallways and talking with members of the General Assembly.

However, in recent sessions of the legislature, the discussions haven’t been nearly as much fun, for me or for our state lawmakers. The state of Kentucky, like many other states, has faced tough financial times — the worst economic downturn since World War II. While we are beginning to see an economic turnaround, it will be several years before Kentucky is able to replace the 100,000 jobs lost in the state since December 2007. As a result, state universities, along with other state agencies, have experienced budget cuts to balance the state budget. As a matter of fact, the University of Louisville is in the midst of its 11th budget cut in 11 years.

We understand the Commonwealth’s financial situation. In response, our faculty, staff and administrators have rolled up our sleeves and recommitted ourselves to building on the incredible progress that’s been made over the past decade. We’ve kicked off our largest fundraising campaign EVER. We’ve led all state universities in virtually every significant academic measure of progress over the past ten years. Among those measures — increase in graduation rate, number of baccalaureate and doctoral degrees and increase in ACT scores of incoming freshmen — all while squeezing our own budget. We know that lawmakers recognize the value of higher education and the importance it has on economic development for the entire Commonwealth. Given this, I am certain that as the state’s economy slowly improves we will be able to look to Frankfort for additional help. We appreciate the Governor and General Assembly’s efforts to refrain from cutting us any more because of the impact it will have on our progress.

I look forward to reminiscing with my friends in the legislature over the next several weeks. But more importantly, I look forward to talking to them about Kentucky’s future and the impact that only education can have on the economic strength of our state.

Driving Progress, Achieving Success

Despite a tough economy we are achieving success at UofL.

In order to stay on this successful path we need to maintain base funding.

▶ We cannot cut any more without hurting our students’ education.
▶ Tuition is directly connected to the state’s support of higher education; as state support declines, it becomes tougher for students to afford and attend college.

We are meeting you in the middle to ensure we continue to be successful.

▶ We have kicked off the university’s largest fundraising campaign EVER.
▶ We are implementing cost-savings measures wherever we can — more than $100 million in cost savings or avoidance.
▶ We are turning under-performing assets like our Shelby campus into revenue and job creators for Kentucky. For example, 9,800 jobs were created from direct and indirect effects of the university between FY03 and FY09.

We are meeting you in the middle to ensure we continue to be successful.
UofL hosts Veteran Symposium for Higher Education

Employees from universities nationwide will gather in Louisville next month to discuss the future of veterans in higher education. The University of Louisville will be host to the 3rd Annual Veteran Symposium for Higher Education, Feb. 21-22 at the Brown Hotel in downtown Louisville.

The conference is designed to help universities become more veteran-friendly. More than a dozen presenters, including student veterans, will discuss best practices, research and experiences. This is the third veteran symposium UofL has hosted.

“The Symposium is an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to share how they are engaging students that are also military veterans,” said Tom Jackson, vice president for student affairs. “Participants truly learn from the various experiences other campuses are having in these efforts. Ultimately, it is the student and the university that benefits because the outreach to students, and the services universities are able to provide are improved.”

Kent School program aims to reduce teen pregnancy, disease risk

The University of Louisville’s Kent School of Social Work will work with several community youth-serving organizations to help teenagers avoid unhealthy relationships and risky behavior, thanks to a five-year, $4.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The federal grant from the department’s Office of Adolescent Health will be used to test the impact of two teaching programs about teen risky sexual behavior, with the intent to reduce teen pregnancy, violence and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

Details of the program called CHAMPS, for Creating Healthy Adolescents through Meaningful Prevention Services, were announced January 5 at a news conference at Americana Community Center, one of the partner organizations.

“This is a project that really will make a difference,” President James Ramsey said at the announcement.

“This is a big day for us, a big day for the community.

Learn more about this phenomenal program at louisville.edu/uofltoday

Education Is King

Hundreds of Kentuckians celebrated historically black Simmons College and its new relationship with the University of Louisville at a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event titled “Education is King.” Simmons President Rev. Dr. Kevin Cosby and UofL President James Ramsey spoke about the importance of cooperation between Simmons College and UofL to make college degrees more accessible to African Americans in Louisville. The two leaders also presented the first Charles H. Parrish, Jr. Achievement Award to David and Betty Jones for their work and philanthropy involving higher education. The community event was held at St. Stephen Church and was attended by Gov. Steve Beshear, U.S. Senator Rand Paul, Congressman John Yarmuth and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer.