

## Wayne State University Foundation Board remarks President Jay Noren 11.08

First I would like to offer an observation. The success of *Wayne First* is remarkably impressive, and that is because of this Foundation Board and the Division of Development under David's leadership. As we approach the campaign's final days, everyone here, and the thousands of friends and alumni, as well as faculty, staff, and students, who supported this effort, can celebrate what is strategically profoundly important to this University and the many people it serves.

We have a great deal to be proud of.

- More than 42,000 people donated to the university for the first time through this campaign.
- We endowed 232 new scholarships. The funding of a scholarship is one of the most precious gifts a university can receive and give. Attractive financial aid packages improve Wayne State's ability to compete for especially talented scholars and help keep the university affordable for those who might otherwise not be able to afford higher education.
- We created 13 endowed chairs and 5 professorships. These positions not only may be used to reward the best of our present faculty, but also help attract first-tier faculty and graduate students from other universities to Wayne State.

- Because of the campaign we have been able to build or plan to build the Marvin I. Danto Engineering Development Center, the Richard J. Mazurek, M.D. Medical Education Commons, the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, and our part of the South University Village complex. The campaign also makes possible a substantive renovation of the Chemistry building.
- The university's endowment increased from \$141 million to \$219 million.

The *Wayne First* campaign proved to be a powerful force for continuing and accelerating Wayne State's ranking as a top 50 major public research university.

This remarkable success has sustained Wayne States excellence despite the state of Michigan's major financial challenges of the past decade. Michigan's public colleges and universities have faced dramatically diminishing state support since the mid 1990s. Nationally, since 1998, average state allocations for higher education have risen by about 63 percent. Michigan, however, has increased its higher education budget appropriations at a rate of only about 16 percent during that same time period – dead last in the nation. Clearly the success of *Wayne First* has been essential to our continued excellence and has served as a critical counter balance to the lack of state support.

Now we face our next challenges, given the so-called “perfect storm” of economic meltdown. But we have reason to feel strength because of Wayne First and what will become even more critical—our next campaign which will begin a silent phase immediately. Private gifts will continue to be essential to our ability both to sustain excellence and refine and improve our service to students and society.

As you know, the history and character of Wayne State focuses on intensive engagement with the urban community. This history makes Wayne State distinctive because it ties the university’s academic, research and service resources to issues of immediate significance to America’s great cities. It is what makes us one of the nation’s foremost urban research universities (and the combination of urban and research is the key connection). There are many urban universities, but very few can bring the research power of Wayne State to the enterprise.

That research power and Wayne’s commitment to urban issues leads to four key challenges:

1. Great cities solutions: addressing the unique challenges of America's great cities by applying our research and engagement/outreach expertise in Detroit,
2. Economic development locally and regionally: major contributor to economic revitalization of Detroit & Michigan, and by example other states,
3. Instilled citizenship in graduates: lifelong commitment to engaged citizenship community activism in our graduates,
4. Access to higher education: innovative approaches to improving success for students across the spectrum.

I'll take a few minutes to expand briefly on these challenges:

**First – Resolution of urban stresses**

Many of the problems our society faces are felt most keenly in urban areas like Detroit. America's great urban universities like Wayne State must bring their research, education and community-engagement resources to address the stresses of urban life through efforts such as creative city planning, alternative energy, mass transit—light rail, PreK-20 education, delivery of health care and human services to underserved populations, workforce retooling, economic development.

In fact, Detroit is on the launching pad for revitalization. Recently a Detroit team met in Chicago as part of the national

CEO's for Cities initiative to exchange ideas with teams from other cities. Our team comprises me and Professor Robin Boyle (urban planning) from Wayne State, and others from the city including executives from Hudson-Webber Foundation, Kresge, Detroit Renaissance, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, DTE, Henry Ford, DMC, Michigan Municipal League, and others. The team will continue its efforts.

### **Second: Revitalizing our economy**

We believe Wayne State is fundamental to our home city's vitality and to Michigan's future prosperity, and the lessons we learn and communicate about economic revitalization will be useful to other cities and states around the country.

The foundation for our role in this economic renewal is our capacity for innovative and transformational research. When Michigan – and, ultimately, the United States – returns to economic health, it will be because Wayne State and other vigorous research universities act to nurture and attract knowledge-based economic ventures in fields including information technology, the biomedical sciences, engineering, robotics, nanotechnology, creative changes in K-12 education particularly in the inner city, health care, financial services, creative management and others.

At Wayne State we will be increasing our support for research and development in these and other high-tech fields, not only through individual programs but also through the funding of additional endowed chairs and professorships. We have to establish centers of excellence throughout the university in fields that will pay off for Detroit and Michigan in new jobs and new businesses and help pave the way for lasting economic prosperity.

We have an exciting new partnership in Michigan's economic renewal—the University Research Corridor, an alliance of Wayne State, Michigan State and Michigan for research leading to economic growth. It's already competitive with similar research consortia around the country like North Carolina's Research Triangle and Boston's beltline 128 partnership of Harvard, MIT, and BU. One of our first emphases is alternative energy, in which Michigan has much untapped potential.

**Third: Graduates with a commitment to engaged, lifelong citizenship**

It's not news to anyone that America faces major economic, social, environmental, security, educational, legal and health care challenges. But these challenges will remain just that, and turn into crises, unless more of us get involved in finding solutions to them. Wayne State is committed to encouraging our students to

make involvement with their communities, and with the future of their country, a lifelong effort.

We consider this a fundamental educational priority and accomplish it both in the focus of our Honors College and throughout all majors by emphasizing service learning and community-based student projects and activism.

**Fourth: Access to higher education**

We also are committed to the full range of student success-- from gifted young men and women in our Honors College to disadvantaged Detroit Public Schools students—a special role of urban research universities. This is both an educational engagement mission with our partners in K-12 and a major educational research mission of value throughout America's cities with challenged K-12 systems.

It's clear that in our society those with no college degree are simply going to be left behind economically. Therefore, public universities in particular are obligated to make certain everyone has the opportunity to pursue higher education to the fullest extent of his or her abilities and energy.

Wayne State is more than a nationally recognized research university; we are a very special “university of opportunity.” In this role, of which we are justifiably proud, we not only admit more at-risk students than our peer institutions; we also offer an

increasing number of programs and incentives to help them succeed. Because Wayne State goes the extra mile for these students, we produce skilled, inspired graduates who would not otherwise have the chance for success.

As we look past *Wayne First* toward the university's next capital campaign, one of our foremost concerns has to be increasing our ability to fund both merit-based and need-based scholarships. In this era of decreased state support, rising tuition and other costs, not all those who wish to attend Wayne State have the financial resources to make their dream a reality. This gives financial assistance through scholarships their importance, and makes private gifts to the university so critical.

Service to others is the basis of everything we do at Wayne State. I would have everyone who believes in this university see themselves as part of an organization with limitless power to transform, whether we mean changing individual lives or the direction of society itself. We already do this in so many, many ways, and each of you has had a role in ensuring that this university has the resources to serve our city, state and nation as only it can.

I firmly believe that Wayne State today is more strategically placed to impact the future of America's great cities than any other

university in America. We are in the right place, at the right time, with the right assets and people to make dramatic, lasting and nationally significant contributions. Furthermore we live and work in the center of the best location in America for creative community engagement and research on solutions to great cities problems—that is the beauty of Detroit.

And Wayne state is strategically placed nationally in large part because of this board and the Foundation. Because of you we have new classroom and research buildings, a trio of new residence halls and a campus as a 24-hour hub of activity in Midtown Detroit. Our academic programs and scholarships have excelled despite dramatic downturn in state appropriations—again—because of you.

Again, congratulations to you all on the success of *Wayne First*, and thank you for a job well done. It is an honor to be your partner in the continuing pursuit of excellence.