Dear <First_name>,

This is an exciting time for Wayne State University. It’s our Sesquicentennial Celebration, marking 150 years in the heart of Detroit.

As I’m sure you know, universities’ identities are linked to the cities they call home. Wayne State is no different. Since 1868, our history has been intertwined with Detroit’s. We began as a small medical college in an almost rural area of what was then a small town. Today, Detroit is a thriving metropolis in the midst of a reinvention that has captivated the nation. Wayne State was here through it all, and today is ranked among the nation’s best research institutions, attracting students from around the world to study in our 13 schools and colleges.

When our founders opened the doors to the Detroit Medical College, they couldn’t anticipate the impact — both local and global — this institution would make. Our commitment to medical research and training is stronger than ever, and Wayne State has made vital contributions to technology, business, the arts and beyond. The same passion that inspired five Civil War physicians to say “we can make a difference” lives on in each of our students and faculty members. For 150 years, that dedication has been at the heart of Wayne State’s mission.

During my nearly five years on this campus, I’ve gained a great appreciation of the work done here and a deep respect for the women and men whose research, teaching and scholarship have led to advancements in countless fields. Here are just a few highlights of our 150-year story:

- Founded as a medical college, a commitment to innovation has always been part of our history. In 1952, Dr. Forest Dewey Dodrill was the first to use a mechanical heart pump in open-heart surgery, a development that happened at our own Harper Hospital. Additionally, it was Wayne State University researchers who discovered AZT, the first FDA-approved drug to treat AIDS patients.

- We have a long history of collaboration and are a proud member of Michigan’s University Research Corridor, a consortium of Michigan’s three major research universities. Since 2002, the three universities have cultivated 210 startup companies, including 79 that have formed in the past five years.
• In 1963, Wayne State opened the nation’s first — and longest-running — graduate repertory theatre, the Hilberry Theatre. For decades, the Hilberry has been home to outstanding productions and, along with the Bonstelle Theatre, is part of the second-largest theatre district in the United States.

• We bring students to Detroit, and many alumni stay in Michigan throughout their lives, adding to Wayne State’s $2.5 billion overall annual economic impact in the state.

• We are focused on preparing the next generation of Warriors. That’s why we work closely with local students to provide them with knowledge and experience that will help them succeed well beyond college and throughout their careers. Across Southeast Michigan, more than 1,000 girls in grades 7-12 have received an introduction to STEM through the GO-GIRL program, and nearly 1,200 high school students have been engaged in STEM education through the C2 Pipeline program.

• We have led the way in environmental impact. The College of Engineering was the first in the nation to launch an alternative energy technology master’s and certificate program and is home to the country’s first Electric-drive Vehicle Engineering Program (2009). When the water crisis arose in nearby Flint, Wayne State researchers created the Flint Area Community Health and Environmental Partnership to examine the possible association between changes in Flint’s water system and public health.

• We are always looking ahead — something you can see firsthand at the Mike Ilitch School of Business, where a new state-of-the-art building is slated to open in the heart of The District Detroit later this year. The Mike Ilitch School of Business will continue to build on its proud history to leverage local partnerships and the expertise of our faculty to revolutionize business education in Detroit, and draw on its position in the heart of a thriving sports city to offer a new M.B.A. program in sport and entertainment management.

This is just part of our story. I encourage you to visit 150.wayne.edu for more information about Wayne State University.

I hope you’ve enjoyed learning about Wayne State in these letters, and I want to hear more about your university and the opportunities that exist for collaboration. Throughout our 150 years, many of our greatest successes have come through working with other universities, and leveraging our expertise to further knowledge, save lives and prepare the next generation of leaders.

I look forward to hearing from you.

M. Roy Wilson
President
Wayne State University
Wayne State University researchers discovered AZT, the first FDA-approved drug to treat AIDS patients.

Since 2002, Wayne State has been home to the National Institutes of Health’s Perinatology Research Branch — the only NIH branch in the country dedicated to the study of premature birth and infant mortality.

In 1950, Wayne State opened the first university computational lab in the Midwest.

In 1952, Dr. Forest Dewey Dodrill was the first to use a mechanical heart pump in open-heart surgery at Wayne State’s Harper Hospital.

More than 260,000 alumni around the world have gone on to be respected leaders in nearly every field.

Alumni of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts include a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and recipients of and nominees for the Grammy, Emmy, Tony, Golden Globe, Obie, Screen Actors Guild and Caldecott awards.

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Since 1868, Wayne State has been furthering the fields of medicine, technology, business and the arts. Here are just a few of the milestones we’ve seen in our 150 years — and we look forward to many more in the years to come.