



University of Connecticut
Office of the President

May 2, 2006

TO: The University Community

FROM: Philip E. Austin

The months since my last report to the University community have been unusually eventful, even by UConn standards. In the pages that follow I want to outline some of the more significant issues with which we are working now, and offer some thoughts about prospects for the next academic year.

We have been addressing several issues this semester. A few key examples:

- UConn continues to make significant progress in several areas of exceptional research opportunity, such as stem cell and fuel cell research. Much of our faculty's scholarship is of enormous potential value to the health, economic vitality, and quality of life in this state; equally important, research in all fields advances the boundaries of knowledge, a worthy value in itself.
- Reorganization of the school and college structure of the Storrs-based program is now being effectively implemented, with the involvement and guidance of those most directly affected.
- The plan to address the construction-related issues is on target. Resolution of specific issues is either complete or in progress.
- The student body continues to grow stronger with a new group of exceptionally well-qualified prospective freshmen, transfers, graduate and professional students.
- As we prepare for our ten-year reaccreditation review by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, our national standing as a center of academic quality is high.

In each of these areas, as in many others, more work needs to be done and difficult decisions need to be made. What I have said many times these past ten years remains true today: I would not trade UConn's position, or our prospects, with any other public university in the country.

Supporting Faculty Scholarship

In these reports and elsewhere I have often emphasized the University's commitment to supporting our faculty's research and creative activity. This is intrinsic to our mission as a research university. Quality scholarship represents an important way in which we contribute to the state and beyond, and it is the primary—though not the only—means of enhancing our reputation as a center of academic excellence. Since 1995, thanks to the confluence of interrelated forces that included UCONN 2000, recruitment of distinguished professors (many to endowed chairs), continued outstanding work by faculty already here, and aggressive pursuit of external support, the University increased research, training and public service awards from about \$98 million to an estimated \$190 million for FY '06. External funding, important in itself, is even more important as a proxy for the strength of our faculty's work in disciplines for which outside funding is available and the corresponding ability to generate support through competitive processes. As always, I hasten to add that scholarly activity in the humanities, the fine arts, some social sciences and a few other fields may not be as amenable to quantitative measurement, at least in the sense of funding. There too, however, UConn has made great strides.

Our growth has been significant but it has not been without its own challenges. Two in particular stand out:

- We dealt successfully with problems related to research animal care. The Health Center maintains its prized AAALAC (Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care) accreditation, and with the creation of a first-rate new research animal care facility at Storrs, and other steps, we are well positioned to seek AAALAC accreditation at Storrs as well.
- We enhanced significantly the University's oversight of, and support for, faculty compliance with all relevant federal standards and federal, state, and other regulations. This would be important at any time; in a period of declining federal investments coupled with close, and appropriate, scrutiny of research at all universities, it is essential.

There have been other challenges as well. On the whole, however, our faculty's research program and our institution's research infrastructure are in good condition, well positioned to take advantage of new opportunities, some of which—such as our work in fuel cell and nanotechnology research—promises to make a major contribution felt well beyond our state's and even our nation's borders. At the risk of unintentionally excluding other equally significant activities, let me cite a few additional examples that are especially noteworthy:

- In response to the State of Connecticut's farsighted investment in stem cell research, UConn is moving ahead at a rapid pace. Building on the work of Professor Jerry Yang and others, we have already established a strong

platform in regenerative biology and other advanced technologies, which positions us well to move ahead in stem cell research. Early this semester I asked Dr. Anne Hiskes, an Associate Professor of Philosophy whose scholarship deals extensively with issues of bioethics and research, to chair a University-wide Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee that will review University work in this area and assure compliance with ethical and regulatory standards. Dr. Hiskes' colleagues on the committee include scientists and humanists from Storrs and the Health Center, as well as two members of the public. We have implemented a process to solicit proposals from faculty, to be integrated where possible and presented as applications for State support. In addition, we recently recruited Dr. Ren-He Xu from the University of Wisconsin's highly regarded program in human embryonic stem cell research as Director of the core lab we are now establishing in Farmington. The promise of embryonic stem cell research is vast, and the ethical and operational issues involved in this enterprise are highly sensitive. I believe we are well positioned to move ahead in a thoughtful, responsible manner.

- This fall Associate Professor Rafael Perez-Escamilla of the Department of Nutritional Sciences was awarded an \$8.25 million grant by the National Institutes of Health for research, education, training and outreach focused on eliminating health disparities that affect Connecticut's Hispanic community. On January 31, the Board of Trustees approved creation of a new Latino Health Disparities Center, which will operate under Dr. Perez-Escamilla's guidance as an interdisciplinary consortium in partnership with the Hispanic Health Council and Hartford Hospital. Connecticut's Latino population is the fastest growing minority group in the state, and there is abundant evidence that Latinos here, as in many other parts of the nation, experience exceptionally high rates of health problems, coupled with high poverty and lack of insurance. The Latino Health Disparities Center promises to bring University research and outreach resources to bear on a problem of critical importance.
- The University of Connecticut Humanities Institute, established in 2001, serves as a key vehicle for supporting our own faculty and visiting scholars conducting important cross-disciplinary work. Currently five UConn professor are in residence at the Institute: Cornelia Hughes Dayton and Altina Waller (History), Benjamin Liu and Osvaldo Pardo (Modern and Classical Languages), and Robert Hasenfratz (English). They are joined by two visiting faculty, anthropologist Keith Brown from Brown University and Pratima Prasa from the Language Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts, and two dissertation fellows, Aparna Gollapudi (English) and Carolyn Schwarz (Anthropology). Over the five years of its operation, the Institute has hosted twenty-four UConn faculty and eight visiting scholars. Their work at the Institute has earned NEH, Guggenheim, and Getty fellowships. This year, in addition to sponsorship of three major conferences,

the Institute inaugurated its first “Day in the Humanities” event. Conceived as an interdisciplinary forum for the University community, the program focused on a discourse on how different disciplines approach and analyze a specific topic, in this case the resonance of classical political dilemmas in the twenty-first century.

- In October, the Health Center received a \$12.3 million National Institutes of Health grant as part of the NIH’s “Roadmap for Medical Research,” which supports multidisciplinary projects to accelerate progress in medical research. Led by Professor Leslie Loew of the Department of Cell Biology, an interdisciplinary team of Health Center faculty developed the proposal that led to the grant, one of the largest ever received by the Health Center. Building on earlier work by Dr. Loew and others that led to the development of the “Virtual Cell” (a computational modeling platform) the team will develop new technologies that will advance significantly the capacity of scientists to understand the networks of molecules that make up living cells and tissues, and ultimately to expand understanding of the contributing factors to disease.

Updating the Academic Structure

I learned long ago that there is a unique relationship between the organization of the academic enterprise and the effectiveness of the academic program. To put it in a nutshell, good structures don’t necessarily produce great programs, but bad structures almost always get in the way of good people doing good work.

The Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine completed restructurings this year, the latest of several transformation initiatives in recent years at the Health Center, including formation of Signature Programs in Cancer, Cardiology, Musculoskeletal Health and Connecticut Health. The result has been a greater focus of the abundant talent across the Health Center on the key missions of research, teaching and service to the community.

It has long been clear that the Storrs-based programs are overdue for restructuring. The existence of eleven schools and two colleges in an institution of our size stood in the way of collaboration across disciplines, generated a top-heavy administration, and produced unnecessary redundancy. Many faculty and department heads engaged in long, hard work to overcome these obstacles, often with great success. But it clearly was time for us to undertake necessary reforms.

With my support, early this year Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Peter Nicholls proposed to make three fundamental changes:

- Reclassify the School of Family Studies as a department within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where Family Studies faculty will have multiple opportunities to work closely with sociologists, historians,

political scientists and others whose field of focus is on issues that are central to our family studies program.

- Eliminate the School of Allied Health as a free-standing school. The Department of Physical Therapy will move to the Neag School of Education, which already contains an outstanding program in kinesiology that has natural linkages to physical therapy. The Department of Applied Health Sciences and Health Promotion will move to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, where it will complement the work of our Department of Nutrition Sciences.
- Transform the College of Continuing Studies to a Division of Continuing Studies, headed by a director reporting to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.

All academic programs in the affected units will continue and there will be no impact on student enrollment or progress toward degrees. Nor will there be any reductions in faculty.

The Board of Trustees initially reviewed the proposed reorganization in November and, appropriately, asked Provost Nicholls to assure the broadest possible consultation with all affected parties before final approval and implementation. Ultimately the Provost and his senior staff held more than 40 meetings with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others. The Board gave final approval to the proposal on January 31.

Change in large organizations is never easy, and that holds doubly true for institutions of higher education. No decision will please everyone. It is the responsibility of the administration and the Board of Trustees to assure that all important concerns are heard and, more fundamentally, that whatever is proposed is aimed at enhancing the university's ability to fulfill its core functions of teaching, research, and service. The basic proposal for a reduction in a less-than-optimal number of schools and colleges was long subject of discussion at UConn, and the resolution approved this year moves us a step forward.

I am glad that in this instance the process of consultation gave the Provost the opportunity to reiterate the fact that the programs in the affected schools will, if anything, be strengthened. I especially appreciate, as Provost Nicholls does, the spirit of cooperation that has guided faculty, administrators and staff in the months since January as we move toward implementation.

Construction

UConn's major challenge over the past year has been to address the issues that came to light at the conclusion of the second phase of UCONN 2000; to assure that as we

proceed with 21st Century UConn the construction program is structured in a way that will assure exceptional quality; and to maintain the confidence of the public and the state's elected leaders in the University's ability to manage the task.

About a year ago I sent the community a lengthy e-mail that outlined the seven-point remediation program that had been endorsed by the Board of Trustees and communicated to the General Assembly and to the Governor. The elements included strengthened oversight and an enhanced audit and compliance function, organizational restructuring, creation of a new University Office of Fire Marshal and Building Inspector placed under the University's Division of Public Safety, revision of our systems of project budgeting and reporting, enhanced systems for contract and expenditure approval and administration, steps to assure that the most highly qualified individuals are placed in charge of the construction program, and steps to assure that contractors resolve problems themselves or cover costs incurred by the University. All those steps have been implemented or, in the case of the last item, are currently being implemented.

Last spring and summer the Governor's Commission on UConn Review and Accountability examined the UCONN 2000 program closely. The Commission's report, issued on September 1, voiced several legitimate concerns, which in many cases we had already identified and were working to address. Significantly, the report recognized the value of the overall program and endorsed the University's remedial plan. The Commission recommended some additional steps to promote effective oversight, including creation of a Board of Trustees Committee on Building, Grounds and Environment and establishment of a second body, appointed jointly by our Board and by the State's elected leaders, to oversee compliance with policies and practices related to the construction program. The Board committee was established in January. The General Assembly has approved legislation that authorizes the second body, and includes other provisions recommended by the Governor's Commission and supported by the University. We are pleased that the bill provides a useful oversight function while maintaining the Board of Trustees' and the University administration's financial and operational management of the program.

We have also had generally positive outcomes regarding several specific projects:

- *Husky Village*, the housing complex on the north end of campus off of Route 195 that houses about 300 students, mostly fraternity and sorority members, was brought up to standard last summer and students moved in on schedule for fall semester. Capstone Building Corporation, the original contractor, remediated the deficiencies at its expense.
- Most problems at *Charter Oak Apartments and Suites*, located off of North Hillside Road, were addressed by the original contractor, JPI Apartment Development, during winter break. We are negotiating with JPI concerning their resolution of remaining issues and expect that they will return to complete the work this summer.

- Efforts to recover costs at *Hilltop Apartments* are proceeding, though on a different path. We did not reach a satisfactory agreement with the original developer in time to assure that corrective work would be completed in order for the facility to open at the start of the Fall 2005 semester, and we contracted with another firm to do the work. Work essential for occupancy was, in fact, completed but more needs to be done this summer. We are in negotiations with the original developer concerning the additional work and are also vigorously pursuing our claim for recovery of the earlier outlays.
- The successful resolution of another contractual issue is worth noting, though it pre-dates the more recent residence hall issues. In 2000 the University terminated HRH/Atlas as general contractor for the *Biology/Physics Building* for failure to perform in accordance with their contract with the University and for failing to demonstrate that it would complete the project within a reasonable time frame. Another firm was retained and the project was successfully completed in 2003. HRH/Atlas filed a \$45 million claim against the University for alleged wrongful termination. After two years of arbitration proceedings an interim decision by an arbitration panel rejected HRH/Atlas' claim for wrongful termination and we anticipate final ratification of the decision in the near future. Meanwhile, the University intends to present a counterclaim to recover costs incurred as a result of HRH/Atlas' failures to perform adequately.

With the actions taken thus far and those ongoing, I believe we are well positioned to resume the construction program's positive momentum. This past year we celebrated the opening of the new Pharmacy-Biology Building, and I am confident that the new facility will support the continuing growth of excellent academic programs. By this fall we expect the Student Union to be fully open and ready to play a key role in sustaining a high quality of life on campus, as will the Burton Family Football Complex and the Mark R. Shenkman Training Center. Planning is underway for the long-overdue replacement for Arjona and Monteith. The capital budget for the coming year will be discussed by the Board of Trustees Financial Affairs Committee on May 25 and will be presented to the full Board in June.

Student Enrollment: Size, Quality and Diversity

Over the past ten years the number of applications for the Storrs freshman class has more than doubled, from just under 10,000 to over 20,000. If that rate of increase were to continue, by the time we celebrate our 200th anniversary more than two million young people—almost every prospective college student in the country—will be applying to UConn. (However, since similar extrapolations suggest that global warming will submerge Storrs in water by then, we probably don't have to worry about increasing our admissions staff to compensate for the increased workload.) More seriously, while our appeal is not limitless, it is strong and it continues to grow. In my last letter I gave a

detailed report on the numbers for this past fall. As best we can tell, the numbers for the class that will enter this fall are once again better than the prior year, and include a rise in first-choice applications for the regional campuses.

One point deserves special attention. On April 11, Vice Provost for Multicultural and International Affairs Ron Taylor presented a report to the Board of Trustees on the implementation of the diversity plan adopted by the Board in 2002. Most of the numbers were positive, but one truly stood out: Between Fall 2004 and Fall 2005 the number of minority freshmen at Storrs increased from 545 to 650, a 19% climb at a time when we held aggregate freshman enrollment constant. This prompted some Board members to wonder if this was simply a data anomaly.

It was not. The increase reflected a strong, well-implemented program led by Director of Undergraduate Admissions Lee Melvin, who joined us in 2004. Lee previously served in admissions at Wayne State University in Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Georgia and the University of Michigan, and at several of those institutions he was heavily engaged in minority recruitment. He brought to UConn tremendous expertise in this area of minority recruitment, which he used to build on the strong foundation already laid by his predecessors and by the Admissions staff. Recruitment of students from underrepresented backgrounds to a school in Connecticut's rural northeast corner imposes special challenges, which I am proud to say we are meeting. Moreover, we are proceeding fully mindful of federal law as interpreted by the Supreme Court and by our overriding commitment to academic quality. There is no conflict between diversity and excellence. In fact, while UConn is notable for a strong overall six-year graduation rate (the standard measure used nationally) of 72%, our rate of 66% for minority students is even more distinctive when compared to many of our peers. Our goal, of course, is to increase both numbers and bring minority and overall graduation rates to an equal level.

A number of factors are necessary to recruit students of color to a major university: academic programs recognized for their strength; active recruitment efforts; and the perception that students from *all* backgrounds will find a congenial home here, with enough people from similar backgrounds that they will not experience the anxiety that might come from being part of a tiny minority. For UConn, the "recognized academic program" piece is no problem. The "active recruitment" piece includes elements such as our scholarships, recruitment, and outreach; enlisting current students from our cultural centers to call admitted minority students; implementing and monitoring diversity recruitment plans in all admissions departments; sponsoring electronic application days at urban and rural high schools; phone calls of appreciation to high school guidance counselors and to others who submitted letters of recommendation for applicants; hosting UConn informational luncheons for urban and rural guidance counselors; fast-tracking the processing of minority applications; and providing professional development training about diversity issues in college admissions to the admissions management team. The combination of a strong program and an intelligent recruitment effort has helped us mightily to address the third need, creating the "critical

mass” that will help maintain a strong application base from students from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, income and other backgrounds.

Similarly, at the graduate and professional level we can point to a highly diverse student body. Thirty-one percent of our graduate students are either international or from underrepresented American minority groups. The numbers from our professional schools are equally impressive: 37% of this year’s entering students at the School of Medicine were from minority backgrounds, 32% at the School of Dental Medicine, 22% at the School of Law, and 27% at the School of Social Work.

These numbers are important, not just because they demonstrate our commitment to basic values of inclusion and access that should characterize any major public university. More directly, they demonstrate our capacity to prepare students who are well qualified to enter a diverse workforce and strengthen the fabric of a multicultural society.

Reviews and Assessments

Colleges and universities undergo constant assessment and evaluation, and UConn generally does quite well. Some evaluations come from what, if we were another kind of enterprise, we might refer to as the marketplace. As cited above, those who wish to obtain higher education and have multiple options to do so choose our university in growing numbers. Moreover, donors who could invest their resources in any of a limitless array of worthy enterprises are similarly choosing UConn as a target of philanthropy: in 2004 the UConn Foundation concluded a fundraising campaign by reporting support of cash and in-kind contributions of \$471 million, 57% in excess of the \$300 million goal. As planning gets underway for a new campaign, regular fundraising continues unabated, with donors contributing \$55.8 million in new gifts and commitments last year, the best non-campaign year on record.

Other evaluations come from the media. By now our consistent *U.S. News and World Report* ranking as the top public university in New England is almost taken for granted (though we need to be wary of over-confidence), and we are regularly listed among the top twenty or thirty public universities in the nation. The other standard guides, such as the *Princeton Review*, similarly give UConn very good ratings.

The most comprehensive and stringent assessments, however, come through processes of peer review. The concept of university accreditation via a non-governmental body is distinctively American and is one of the means of safeguarding institutional freedom from excessive governmental control. Here at UConn, the accrediting body is the New England Association of Colleges and Schools (NEASC), which, like its counterpart organizations across the country, is a consortium of public, private, religiously affiliated and other institutions at the elementary-secondary through postsecondary levels. One of NEASC’s arms is the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE), comprised of approximately 230 colleges and universities. NEASC is led by a representative body of individuals from member schools and public

members from the New England states. Since last year I have had the privilege of serving as President of the NEASC Board of Trustees.

NEASC reviews colleges and universities for re-accreditation on a ten-year cycle. UConn's accreditation was last affirmed in 1997, and we are up for review next year. Approval of our accreditation is based on our compliance with approximately 170 criteria in eleven categories: mission and purposes, planning and evaluation, organization and governance, the academic program, faculty, students, library and information resources, physical and technological resources, financial resources, public disclosure, and integrity.

The first significant element of the reaccreditation process is development of an institutional self-study that reviews UConn's status with regard to the NEASC criteria, outlines changes since the last review, and discusses plans for the coming years. The self-study is proceeding now, under the direction of Professor Karla Fox of the School of Business. Approximately 100 faculty, staff, and students are serving on committees relating to each of the eleven standards and are at various stages of completion of their reports. These will be compiled into a single document, available for University-wide and public review and presented to NEASC by the end of October.

The next step will be a site visit by a team of faculty, administrators, and possibly others, chosen in consultation with UConn based on their knowledge and experience in the respective criteria. Chancellor Mark Nordenberg of the University of Pittsburgh, a nationally recognized leader in higher education knowledgeable about public universities in general and UConn in particular, has agreed to lead the team. He assures me that his assessment will not be influenced by the outcome of any UConn-Pitt athletic contests.

The team will review our self-study with great care, and will visit the University next January. While here they will meet with as wide a selection of UConn community members as possible, and an open hearing is generally part of the process. Some weeks later they will present a report to the CIHE, which will vote on UConn's accreditation status.

The process, though exhaustive and time-consuming, is well worth the investment. I am deeply grateful to Professor Fox and to all those who have worked hard and long on the self-study. The chairs of the eleven committees are particularly deserving of our appreciation: Professors Richard Brown of History, John DeWolf and Erling Smith of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Pam Bramble of Art and Art History, Bill Stwalley of Physics, Gerry Gianutsos of Pharmacy, Richard Langlois of Economics, Cameron Faustman of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Rob Hoskin of Accounting, and Jack Clausen of Natural Resource Management, and Rachel Rubin, our Director of Compliance, who chairs the committee on public disclosure.

We have much of which to be proud at the University of Connecticut and we are pleased to have the opportunity to tell our story to our peers on the site visit team and at

NEASC as a whole. But we also have opportunities for improvement, and an exercise like this one is extraordinarily helpful in bringing important issues to the fore.

There are, of course, other external assessments that are also of great importance. The National Research Council (NRC), a non-governmental body linked to the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine ranks a wide range of doctoral programs approximately every 10-12 years. The last report, published in 1993, represented a disappointment for UConn, with only a few programs attaining exceptionally high rankings. In part this reflected organizational anomalies, including the separation of programs at the Storrs campus from analogous programs at the Health Center and thus not reflecting the University's level of strength. Moreover, in 1993 the impact of UCONN 2000 construction and recruitment of several additional outstanding faculty had yet to be felt.

We are now preparing for the 2006 NRC doctoral assessments. Those engaged in the process have worked assiduously to assure that our programs are appropriately linked and that the assessment is accurate and comprehensive. We will keep you informed of the NRC evaluation process as it moves forward.

New Faces

A fact of life in large universities is that highly talented administrators often move on, either to accept new challenges or to meet personal needs that cannot be fulfilled while performing 24-hour-a-day jobs. We have been relatively fortunate at UConn in terms of faculty retention, though here too we have on occasion lost people we would very much like to have kept with us throughout their careers. The one consolation is that we have had great success in recruiting senior people from other institutions, often to endowed chairs made possible by private support.

Over the past several months we have announced the impending departures of several people in senior posts, all of whom leave with the affection of their colleagues and the satisfaction that comes from having made significant contributions to our progress. Among those leaving their positions are four deans who contributed mightily to the maintenance and enhancement of their respective programs' quality and reputation:

- Peter Robinson of the School of Dental Medicine will retire as Dean this December, after nine years in that position. After a sabbatical he will return to the faculty on a part-time basis to focus on access to oral health by needy populations.
- Laura Dzurec of the School of Nursing, who has held that position since 2000, will be leaving the deanship this summer, and her position will be filled on an interim basis by Associate Professor Carol Polifroni.
- Nell Jessup Newton, who has led the School of Law since 2000, is leaving at the end of this academic year to assume the position of Dean of the University

of California's Hastings College of the Law, her alma mater. Kurt Strasser, Phillip I. Blumberg Professor of Law, will serve as Interim Dean.

- William C. (Curt) Hunter, who joined us in 2003, will be leaving shortly to accept the deanship of the Tippie School of Business at the University of Iowa. The Interim Dean will be Professor Mohamed Hussein, who currently serves as head of the Accounting Department.

Plans are in place for national searches to fill each of these positions.

As I announced in March, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Linda Flaherty-Goldsmith is returning to her home in Alabama to fulfill family responsibilities. Linda has been here for a little less than three years. In that time her contributions to the University's human resources, information technology, environmental and other responsibilities have been tremendous, and in particular the value of her leadership in meeting construction-related challenges cannot be overstated. Linda's position will be filled on an interim basis by Dr. Barry Feldman, whose outstanding record of achievement as Town Manager in West Hartford is supplemented by his service here as an adjunct in our Public Policy program.

Finally, I want to add two notes of great sorrow. Dr. Richard Berlin, Associate Dean for Research Planning and Coordination at the School of Medicine and head of the Department of Cell Biology, passed away in February following a courageous struggle with cancer. Dick Berlin was a brilliant, dedicated scientist and academic leader, and he played a key role at the Health Center for more than thirty years. Shortly before his death Dick was awarded the Board of Directors Faculty Recognition Award, a richly deserved honor recognizing his longstanding contributions.

Another loss at the Health Center came in January with the tragic death of Paula McManus, Associate Vice President for Planning. I came to know Paula a few years ago when the Health Center engaged in an intensive and ultimately successful effort to address the severe financial challenges that affected UConn along with academic health centers across the nation. She contributed significantly to that process and continued to play an important role in mapping the Health Center's future plans and objectives.

Closing Thoughts

Through the 2006 calendar year the University is commemorating our 125th anniversary. Many members of the community, including faculty, staff, students, Storrs residents and even members of the Storrs family, are coordinating a wide range of visual communications, publications, and activities, and I thank them for their hard work. We began the celebration with a moving ceremony in February, and continued with a wonderfully successful picnic on Founders Day, April 21, that attracted several thousand students, faculty, staff, and guests. (Let me add a special note of appreciation to Director Dennis Pierce and his colleagues in Dining Services for their great contributions to that event.) I urge you to stop by the Wilbur Cross Building at Storrs to review a very

impressive display of photographs and documents from our past, or to look at the 125th Anniversary website at www.uconn.edu/125/.

In the rush of daily activity, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that UConn has an inspiring history—not long by the standards of many universities, but notable for the constant themes of pursuit of academic quality for our students and commitment to the service of the state. Our role as a center of excellence in scholarship and research came a bit later in our evolution, but now stands along with teaching and service as one of the three key aspects of our mission.

This heritage is not the exclusive province of historians or antiquarians. It belongs to all of us. As we recognize a century and a quarter of challenge, expansion of mission, growth of population, and enhanced stature, I hope we are each mindful of our responsibility to build our own chapter in UConn's evolution. The challenges are varied: keeping the curriculum rigorous and current, reaching out to previously underserved student populations, and expanding research and scholarship. They are all essential.

We come to the end of another academic year, my tenth at the University of Connecticut, moving in the right direction in each of these areas. This puts us on a good path for the next academic year and, as best we can tell, for the next century and a quarter. I wish all of you a good summer, and I look forward to continuing our work in the months and years to come.

c: Board of Trustees