We have had a long, complex, successful, and occasionally bittersweet year. The bittersweet comes in the form of colleagues either retiring or changing positions. I would be especially remiss not to thank on behalf of the university three colleagues who will no longer be serving in academic leadership roles—Ara Volkan has served as dean of the Richard’s college of Business for only one year, but was an essential citizen of this university for 15 years, and the key to our reaffirmation in SACS and separate accreditation in accounting. Charles Beard served this institution with great distinction for more than 32 years. He has been recognized locally, regionally and nationally as a true visionary on library as a center of service for those seeking knowledge. Richard Miller has been dean of the college of arts and sciences for 12 years, and who has been essential in the changing the expectations of the intuition to one whose faculty and students aspire to greatness. They are colleagues who have our greatest respect, our strongest admiration, and our affection—well, affection may be a bit over the top—but we will very much miss our colleagues, even as we know the task of searching nationally to replace them will be easier because of their incredible dedication and work. Thank you, colleagues.

It has been complex—we have no budget as of today, we are not likely to have support for dollars that reflect our needs and the value of our faculty, staff and students. Nonetheless, we believe we will make some progress in this tough budget year, and create the foundation for better years to come. As more information becomes available, we will share it with the campus community.

It has been a successful year—the first stage of the American democracy project identified project areas of voter registration, environmental education, focused service learning, a pilot campus newspaper readership project, and an inventory of the broad range of current community service projects in student organizations. The faculty senate approved a student pledge to academic honesty—a first but important start to a commitment to transforming campus values to honesty and ethical behaviors. We will be granting our first doctorate next week, and the faculty senate approved a recommendation to the Board of Regents to request another doctoral program in psychology. We were reaffirmed by SACS for ten years—assuming we complete our follow-up reports. We had more examples of student success this year than every before. In many tangible ways, this was a fine year.

I thank you for all you do, as well as appreciate the way in which so many of us live the statement of John Maynard Keynes (and not the statement: “In the long run, we’re all dead.”) : “…if we consistently act on the optimistic hypothesis, this hypothesis will tend to be realized; whilst by acting on the pessimistic hypothesis we can keep ourselves for ever in the pit of want.”

Thanks for all your support for this university and its students.