



April 14, 2010

TO: Campus Community
FROM: Neil Kerwin, President
SUBJECT: Spring Semester Update

General Condition of the University

The overall condition of American University is sound. Since my last campus letter, our community members have received a number of impressive honors, some of which are outlined below. There have been no significant changes in our financial condition, and we will complete the year in a manner consistent with the targets we set for both revenues and expenses. Accordingly, I begin this communication to the community expressing great appreciation to the faculty, staff, students, and alumni whose talent and dedication produced another fine academic year.

Looking toward fall semester, the incoming class of new students looks very strong. Some 16,934 applied (representing a 13 percent increase compared to last year) and approximately 43 percent were admitted—a decrease of 10 percentage points compared to previous years' admit rate. We expect to enroll 1,500 new first-year students this fall and 300 transfers. In addition to the increased number of applications and the greater selectivity we are implementing, the quality of both student applicants and admitted students also has increased. The average SAT of admitted students is 1300 (12 points higher than last year) and the average GPA is 3.87. Attendance at campus-based and regional conversion events has been robust (as are daily visits to our welcome center). The deadline by which students must accept our offer of admission is May 1.

Strategic Plan

Progress continues during this first full year of strategic plan implementation. The Strategic Plan Measurement Team is doing important work clarifying the metrics, developing the protocols for data collection, and establishing the reporting systems to chart our progress in an accessible and transparent manner. The next several months are important in setting the measurement infrastructure. The mechanisms for outreach and reporting must enable all members of the community to review and comment on pertinent aspects of plan implementation. My first formal report to the Board of Trustees is scheduled for their meeting in September of this year. That report and supporting information will be based largely on the work of the Strategic Plan Measurement Team and will be made available to the community.

Campus Plan

The 10-year campus (facilities) planning process continues with ongoing internal assessments, external conversations with the neighboring community, and Board of Trustees review of university priorities, project possibilities, potential sites, and financing options. Led by the academic and program needs outlined in our strategic plan, among our highest priorities are the need for additional student housing and facilities upgrades to improve the on-campus student experience, including recreational and dining services, a new home for the Washington College of Law, upgrades for our sciences facilities, and expanded faculty and instructional space. Housing tops the list, as we seek to increase our housing inventory by more than 20 percent at various campus sites; this includes closely examining how the eight-acre Nebraska Parking Lot might be developed to help address this need in tandem with other possible campus sites. The Tenley campus is being considered as the potential new home for the law school, as it offers promising possibilities for its increasingly strong profile in legal education and a prime location along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor with Metro access. While the idea of new facilities is exciting, equally important is our role as citizens in northwest Washington and our compliance with the obligations outlined in the 2001 Zoning Commission Order. All of our commitments are being examined and improved or adapted to ensure that AU's future impact is appropriate and that our mission of education, service, and economic contributions are beneficial to our city and community.

Commencement Weekend

More than 2,500 graduates will participate in AU's six commencement ceremonies in Bender Arena to be held May 8 and 9, followed by the law school on May 23. We are pleased to have attracted graduation speakers of note to whom we will present honorary degrees at the individual ceremonies:

Saturday, May 8:

- School of Communication—9:00 a.m., Barbara Kopple, Two-Time Academy Award–Winning Filmmaker;
- Kogod School of Business—1:00 p.m., Seth Goldman, Co-founder and CEO of Honest Tea;
- School of International Service—4:30 p.m., Michelle Bachelet, Former President of Chile.

Sunday, May 9:

- School of Public Affairs—9:00 a.m., Donna Shalala, President of the University of Miami and Former Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- College of Arts and Sciences—1:00 p.m., Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security and Former Governor of Arizona.

Sunday, May 23:

- Washington College of Law—1:00 p.m., Eric H. Holder Jr., United States Attorney General.

More information on graduation activities is online (www1.american.edu/commencement).

Honors and Awards

A number of prestigious annual awards have been announced and I congratulate all recognized faculty, students, and staff. Provost Scott Bass recently announced the 2010 faculty members who will be honored at the annual Faculty Recognition Dinner on April 18. Of special note are: Andrew Popper of the Washington College of Law as the 2010 Scholar/Teacher of the Year; Christine Chin of the School of International Service for Outstanding Teaching in a Full-Time Appointment; Deborah Brautigam of the School of International Service for Outstanding Scholarship, Research, Creative Activity, and Other Professional Contributions; Virginia Stallings, Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Sciences, for Outstanding Service to the University Community; Robert Lehrman, School of Communication, and Thomas B. Williams, Government, School of Public Affairs, for Outstanding Teaching in an Adjunct Appointment; and Joshua Lansky, Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Sciences, as the Morton Bender Prize winner.

This month we learned that Kelsey Stefanik-Sidener, a junior political science major with a minor in communication, has been named a 2010 Harry S. Truman Scholar—AU's eighth in six years. The award provides up to \$30,000 toward graduate education leading to a career in public service. Annual student awards will be announced at the end of April.

At WAMU 88.5, we were proud to learn that Diane Rehm, host of the nationally syndicated *Diane Rehm Show*, won one of broadcasting's most prestigious honors—a George Foster Peabody Award—for her more than 30 years as a source of reasonable, civic discourse on issues of pressing concern. General Manager Caryn Mathes has been named as one of the “Most Influential African Americans in Radio” by the industry trade publication *Radio Ink*.

Washington College of Law dean Claudio Grossman was honored by the American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital Region in March, receiving the Henry W. Edgerton Civil Liberties Award for his internationally acclaimed advocacy of domestic and international human rights and his relentless work to eradicate torture.

Additional employee honors will be presented and recognition activities will occur in May as part of our annual Staff Appreciation Week, May 17 through May 21.

Campaign and Alumni Activities

As we begin planning to celebrate the successful conclusion of the *AnewAU* campaign in October, I highlight a particularly successful area of the campaign that will remain a top priority under the Strategic Plan—scholarship support. Since the campaign began, we have raised more than \$52.6 million in endowments (exceeding the \$45 million goal), mostly in scholarship support, and created 77 new scholarships that generated over \$5.2 million for AU students this year. Scholarship donors have included trustees, advisory board members of the schools and colleges, appreciative alumni, grateful parents, local businesses and organizations, and retired faculty members who have already given so much to our students. In late March, close to 250 scholarship donors and recipients attended the annual Celebration of Scholarships luncheon; we honor the generosity of these donors and are proud of the students who benefit from the extraordinary power of that generosity.

Alumni events through the winter and early spring have been held in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Boston, Kansas City, Baltimore, Denver, Tucson, Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Puerto Rico, and Nigeria. I will continue my travel to meet with alumni this spring. Looking

ahead, our annual Alumni and Family Weekend, now our All-American Weekend, will be October 22–24. And finally, Alumni Relations has published a brochure outlining the benefits and opportunities of alumni engagement, and our alumni can now follow AU on Facebook, LinkedIn, InCircle, and Twitter through AmericanUAlum.

Corps of Engineers

The Army Corps of Engineers work continues in northwest Washington and on AU property with two main areas of campus focus.

- **Public Safety Building**—The corps has completed its low-probability work around the building grounds, having periodically found and removed World War I era debris, including glassware, shell fragments, and similar material. A plan has been approved for the next work to be done on site—which will entail eight sideways borings underneath the building to assess the soil and better determine whether anything is beneath the building that might require removal. The specific dates have not been selected for this work, but it should begin after graduation. The Army Corps expects to conduct this as low-probability work that does not require workers to wear protective gear. After the borings are done and the samples are analyzed, the corps will make a recommendation as to whether they believe their work to be finished at this site.
- **4825 Glenbrook Road**—A main focus of the current Army Corps operation continues to be the university-owned property at 4825 Glenbrook Road. High-probability work had been done under the containment structure, with more than 350 pounds of glassware and debris removed. Any containers that were intact or which had residue were sent for testing and further analysis. In addition, some 676 drums of soil were removed. Among the excavated findings was a bottle with mustard agent (about two cups), and more recently, a new chemical compound from the era, arsenic trichloride, was found by the work crew under the containment structure and will be addressed according to the Army's safety protocols. All work has temporarily halted at the site until they can make an assessment and recommendation to the partner agencies, including the EPA, D.C. Department of the Environment, and American University, about next steps and work plans.

We will continue to provide updates on timelines and project operations as they affect AU. As a reminder, the university has a Web site devoted to the project (www1.american.edu/usace), and the Army Corps has a Web site dedicated to the full scope of their work in northwest Washington, including reports, maps, news releases, and photos. It can be accessed online at (www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm).

Progress on the Development of a University Brand Campaign

Our work to create a more effective marketing and branding program has reached a critical stage. After completing the discovery and strategy phases of the work with our agency, we turned to the talents of our in-house team in University Communications and Marketing to develop the creative concept— or “big idea” that will be used in materials ranging from the view book and admissions welcome center designs to advertising, graduate recruitment, and alumni communications. It is an ambitious task that our talented team is excited to take on, benefitting from an insider's understanding of American University's distinctiveness. Having

focused intently on this challenge for the past four weeks, on April 15 the branding team will present two alternative concepts to the University Marketing Advisory Council, the campus-wide group of representatives guiding this process. One of the two concepts will be recommended for additional refinement and creative testing. Following audience testing and approval, we will move to the production phase. The campus community will see presentations of the final concept after testing is finished and a final concept is approved.

Dialogue on Sexual Assault

I want to acknowledge the challenges our community faced in the wake of a provocative column in the March 31 *Eagle* on the topic of date rape. Our community exchanged views on this incident in a manner that reflects the value we place on civil discourse. Through dialogue, exchanges of opinion, and discussion forums, several principles were affirmed—among them, that sexual assault in all its forms and circumstances (including date rape) is a crime and a violation of AU's Student Conduct Code; and that the First Amendment protects the right to share viewpoints, even when they may be hurtful or insensitive. Date rape victims/survivors were personally affected and many were deeply offended by the column's words. *The Eagle* editors have acknowledged they could have made different editorial choices that would have avoided the harm without compromising First Amendment rights. The editors should be commended for acknowledging their mistakes, listening carefully to criticisms, and responding thoughtfully.

It is important to remind everyone that we have many resources, programs, and services designed to educate, prevent sexual assault, support victims/survivors, and prosecute or adjudicate offenders. We have a Student Conduct Code that is being revised during this academic year to deal more effectively with adjudicating sexual assault charges. In addition, one year ago, we approved a budget for a Women's Resource Center that will open in fall 2010 and serve as a clearinghouse for these and other resources, programs, and services. For more information on these resources, please see the materials on the Web site (www.american.edu/ocl/vp/Virtual-Womens-Center.cfm).

In closing, I wish everyone a successful completion of their remaining work for spring semester. To assist students during exams, the library will be open 24 hours a day through May 3 and the Jacobs Fitness Center will have extended hours for campus community members to work off final exam-related stress.

Have a productive and safe summer.