



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

CORNELIUS KERWIN
PRESIDENT

July 23, 2009

TO: Campus Community
FROM: Neil Kerwin, President
SUBJECT: Summer Update

I am writing to provide an update on recent developments at the university since my last campus letter at the end of spring semester.

General Condition of the University and the Strategic Plan

The condition of the university is sound, and we are confident that the implementation of the initial stage of our strategic plan and current two-year budget will proceed as planned. The strategic plan implementation report, *Report on Implementation of the Strategic Plan* (www1.american.edu/strategicplan/pdf/docs/Strategic_Plan_Implementation_030609.pdf), and the university's two-year budget (www.american.edu/finance/upload/BudgetFY10-FY11.pdf) were approved by the Board of Trustees at their February 2009 meeting. Revenue and expense projections for this year are in line with the approved budget. Another indicator of institutional health remains positive. Last month, Moody's reaffirmed the university's A2 bond rating with a stable outlook. As we have reported previously, American University's finances have withstood the recent tough economy very well, and our prospects are steady. In these tough times, with some universities facing spending cuts and layoffs, we are pleased that our staff will be eligible for compensation adjustments effective in September.

We are not without our challenges, and some of these are also noted below. But, as the fall semester approaches, we are well positioned to carry out our educational mission and the initial stage of our new strategic plan.

Fall Enrollment

Our fall enrollments are on track to meet our overall targets, with some variation across key categories. Deposits for the freshman and transfer class are strong; as of this writing, the deposits suggest that we will hit (and may slightly exceed) our enrollment goals—of 1,500 new first-year students and 275 transfer students—while maintaining the academic quality for these enrollment categories. Retention figures are also strong and are currently at 92 percent—our highest ever—from freshman to sophomore years. Deposits for our master's and doctoral programs are ahead of last year at this time and are consistent with the targets set in the current year budget. The Washington College of Law is having another solid year for its programs—in both the enrollment numbers and the qualifications of the entering classes.

The positive news regarding enrollment does present significant challenges, however. Provost Bass and the deans are enhancing instructional resources to ensure the academic experience of our new and continuing students remains at a high level. The Office of Campus Life will again deal with large numbers of resident students in our halls and using a wide range of related services. Almost all new first-year student assignments are complete—with 57 percent of the entering class in triples. The university has rented 80 apartments in the Berkshire Apartments, adjacent to campus, for returning, transfer, and Abroad@AU students, and 50 Washington semester students will be living in housing on Capitol Hill for fall semester.

Opening Activities for AY 2009–2010

Fall semester will begin in a few weeks, with residence halls opening for new students on Saturday, August 15, and for returning students on Wednesday, August 19. We expect that campus will be more than 60 percent occupied by the end of the first move-in weekend, August 15–16. Welcome Week will be held August 16–23, and related activities will include the Freshman Service Experience (August 17–20), Discover DC (August 18–20), *Writer As Witness* (August 21), and the All American Barbecue (August 21) among them. Opening Convocation will be at 11 a.m. Friday, August 21, in Bender Arena, with a few new wrinkles designed to augment our AU traditions. Classes begin on Monday, August 24.

And while spring commencement (May 2010) is months away, we will build on the successful format implemented last spring and introduce at least one significant change effective with the August 2009 graduates. All diplomas—doctoral, master’s, bachelor’s, and honorary degrees—now will be 11 x 14 inches.

New Colleagues

A number of new colleagues have recently joined the university. These include new staff and faculty throughout the institution. There have also been a number of senior appointments in the past few months, including Dr. Peter Starr as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Rosemary Wander as vice provost of graduate studies and research, Dr. Phyllis Peres as vice provost of undergraduate studies, Camille Lepre as senior director of communications, Deborah Wiltout as senior director of marketing, and Chris O’Brien as director of sustainability. Please welcome them and all new employees warmly to American University.

Army Corps

Progress has continued, but work schedules were adjusted for preparations for two public hearings held in late spring and early summer, which enabled public discussion of the progress achieved and work yet to be done on the formerly utilized defense site in northwest Washington. One was held (May 11) by the D.C. Council’s Committee on Government Operations and the Environment; the second (June 10) was held by the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the Environment. The materials submitted by American University are outlined on our Army Corps project Web site. One outcome of the hearings was the Corps’ avowal to make available more information regarding the operation status and any “finds” on their Web site. Meanwhile, the work continues at all campus sites as “low probability” operations; should that change, we will inform the campus immediately.

- 4835 Glenbrook (President's House)—Work is completed, and we await the final risk assessment document to summarize the project. With this achievement, we are planning to use the house as the president's home fall semester; information will be forthcoming. We are pleased this important university resource will again be available for a wide range of functions, entertaining, and events for AU community members and friends.
- 4825 Glenbrook—Work continues, and additional test pits (small, defined digging areas) have been added to the work plan. Ten additional pits were dug, sampled, and completed in the driveway, with no World War I debris found, but some spots have elevated levels of arsenic in the soil at depths of four feet or more. The soil will be removed and replaced to achieve the background (20 ppm) recommended for this area.
- Public Safety Building—The Corps continues to investigate the debris areas behind the Public Safety Building and has found laboratory glassware, stained soil, and an occasional intact container dating back to the World War I era. To date, the Corps has removed some 60 pounds of debris (glassware, containers, metal fragments, etc.). The cleanup of the single spot of mercury found last spring has been completed, and horizontal drilling under the building (to assess what's there) will likely commence in October.
- Other Areas—The Corps is planning to dig three test pits on the Nebraska parking lot around August 10, a single test pit between Beeghly and the soccer field, and four test pits next to the media production center. Any work planned for Reeves Soccer Field will be done during winter 2009–2010, to not interfere with scheduled athletics activity. The Corps does not anticipate finding any munitions in these areas.

While most of the campus community is familiar with the Army Corps presence on campus, anyone new to campus can find project information on AU's Web site devoted to the project (www1.american.edu/usace).

Flu Precautions

As reported in the news media, H1N1 influenza cases have been reported around the nation, including the Washington, D.C., and surrounding metro area. Four cases (two employees and two students) were reported in the AU community over the summer; in each case, university officials followed CDC protocols and took appropriate precautions to protect the patient and those in close contact. Heading into fall semester, we anticipate that occasionally faculty, staff, or students may report symptoms. We will track all cases reported, take follow-up actions as recommended by local and federal health officials, and prepare in other ways to educate and advise our campus community. Campus health officials will work with D.C. Department of Health officials to ensure that surveillance methods, flu testing protocols, preparedness updates, and reporting mechanisms are used effectively, and our emergency work group and Office of Risk Management and Safety Services will be vigilant. Most importantly, we advise that anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms should stay home, contact their physician, and alert their supervisor (employees) or Student Health Center (students) of their illness. Periodic updates will be forthcoming as needed.

International Activities

In April I traveled with Tom Minar, our vice president of development and alumni relations, and Lou Goodman, dean of the School of International Service, to Taiwan and Korea. In Taiwan we visited a number of universities at the request of the Ministry of Education and met with a number of officials. We also met with the president of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou, and at that session agreed to explore a program of training and professional development for senior executives in their public

service. In Korea we met with the leaders of both Sookmyung Women's University, with whom we have a long-standing partnership, and Korea University. We also met with alumni and in Seoul were hosted at a dinner attended by more than 70 AU alumni, spanning several generations. We engaged the leaders of our Korea alumni association in the effort currently underway to develop a Korea Garden as part of the new SIS building project.

The American University of Nigeria (AUN) held its first graduation ceremony on May 31, 2009. Since January 2004, American University has had a management partnership with AUN. In all, 88 of an initial entering class of 126 students received their degrees. The commencement speaker, Nobel laureate and member of the AUN Board of Trustees Archbishop Desmond Tutu, noted the historic nature of the occasion and encouraged the graduates by telling them: "You have a huge responsibility to make Africa viable and transparent." AUN currently has a total of 1,200 students enrolled as of spring 2009.

In July, provost Scott Bass, SIS professor Paul Wapner, and assistant vice president of facilities and administrative services Jorge Abud traveled to Salzburg, Austria, to attend "Greening of the Minds: Universities, Climate Leadership, and Sustainable Futures," an international conference to advance interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability in curricula, programs, campus facilities, the environment, and quality of life. Seventy-two participants from 23 different countries examined higher education's role in driving change toward a sustainable future. AU was one of the conference's three official partners, reflecting AU's role as a sustainability leader in higher education.

Facilities and Campus Plan

The new School of International Service building is on track for completion in May 2010. The building's steel structure is nearly complete, and we expect it to be weather-tight by late October. The new SIS home will be the university's first LEED Certified green building. In other work, finishing touches are being made to Anderson Hall, as part of our annual residence hall renovation process, which includes both infrastructure and cosmetic work. A variety of other major maintenance activities are underway to keep AU's facilities in good working order, including heating system, electrical, and paving replacements. A number of small office renovations are also taking place to accommodate faculty and staff growth, as well as changed work processes. This past spring, we began work on the development of a new facilities master plan by asking units to identify their facilities needs for the next 10 years. We are organizing these needs requests and will discuss them in the fall, as we develop ideas on how to meet those needs with new or improved facilities. The end result of this process will be a new campus plan that will be submitted to the District of Columbia Zoning Commission for approval. As part of that regulatory process, we have begun working with neighboring residents to get their input on the plan.

Development and Alumni Relations Update

The *AnewAU* campaign has reached the \$183.5 million mark, and alumni giving is off to a very good pace ahead of last year's performance. Alumni remained engaged and involved, with more than 250 participating at a film festival, Baltimore reception, Miami networking event, Kennedy Center performance, and GLBTA night at the Washington Nationals. Over the next few weeks, alumni chapters and individual alumni volunteers will host seven new student send-offs, including one hosted by our newest alumni chapter in Central Pennsylvania. The Tokyo alumni chapter will host a Faculty on the Road event with CAS professor Peter Kuznick in August.

Honors and Awards

AU faculty, staff, students, and alumni have earned a number of individual honors and group awards in recent weeks. Among them:

- Scott Bass—provost, was appointed to the Commission on the Future of Graduate Education in the United States, a joint commission convened by the Council on Graduate Schools and Education Testing Service. The commission will guide policy on graduate workforce and graduate program needs and examine trends that impact participation in graduate education.
- Kellee James—a 2004 alumna (MBA/KSB and MA/SIS) has been appointed a White House Fellow for 2009-2010. Currently an economist with the Chicago Climate Exchange (from where she will take a one-year leave of absence), James was one of 15 fellows selected from around the nation to spend a year with a high-ranking White House or cabinet official.
- Joely Hildebrand and Garret Harkins—two sophomores, were two of 20 students chosen nationwide for the U.S. State Department’s Thomas R. Pickering Undergraduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship. Pickering Fellows receive tuition, fees, and a stipend for their junior and senior years of college and first year of graduate study; the fellowship funds participation in a junior year summer institute as well as one domestic and one overseas internship with the State Department.
- Jennifer Corey—AU student, was named “Miss District of Columbia” at a pageant this summer. She earned a \$5,000 scholarship and will represent the nation’s capital in the Miss America pageant in January. At AU, she launched the recycling awareness program, “Let’s Talk Trash!” Her talent was opera singing, and she is currently an intern with the Washington National Opera.
- Fernando Benadon—assistant professor of music, has earned a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2009—one of only 33 awarded to artists, scholars, and scientists from Latin America and the Caribbean, out of more than 500 applicants.
- James Girard—professor of chemistry, was named a 2009 Franklin Fellow. He will serve as a science advisor to the U.S. Department of State, where he will work on global issues of importance to the United States.
- Anthony Hayes—director of corporate marketing for WAMU 88.5, was named “Development Professional of the Year” by the Public Radio Association of Development Officers and received the award at a national conference in San Diego. Hayes leads a team that has gained national attention by increasing the station’s corporate support by 243 percent since 2003.
- David Swartz—assistant vice president and chief information officer, has been named chair of the EduCAUSE Cyber Security Task Force, a group responsible for leading the charge for IT security in higher education.

We also want to congratulate AU Alumni Board president Brian Keane on his new position as special assistant to the deputy secretary of energy.

A few notable university or school achievements include:

- Best Web Site and Use of Interactive Media—In a national competition among colleges and universities, AU’s new Web site was named eduStyle’s “Best Web site,” and our

virtual tour won eduStyle’s award for “Best Use of Interactive Media” in judging by both the people’s choice (online voting) and the professional judges (experts). Many people across campus had a hand in building our award-winning site and producing our award-winning virtual tour, and these outstanding awards by peers and professionals in the field are testimony to the quality and value of their efforts.

- National Science Foundation \$1.5 million grant—The School of Education, Teaching, and Health will partner with Math for America, a program launched by the Carnegie Academy for Science Education in 2008, to help ensure the availability of qualified mathematics teachers for D.C.’s public and public charter secondary schools.
- Athletics GPA—Men’s swimming and diving earned the top GPA in the nation (3.54) spring semester, besting Lafayette, Dartmouth, Ohio State, Columbia, and Notre Dame—while men’s wrestling attained the highest GPA in the nation for the second straight season, ahead of Harvard, Stanford, Duke, and Davidson.

Campus Events

A more complete listing of fall semester events and activities will be forthcoming, but among them will be:

- Diane Rehm’s 30th Anniversary—The Diane Rehm Show on WAMU 88.5 will be celebrated with a gala in her honor at the Mellon Auditorium on September 24. The event will salute one of Washington’s most distinguished broadcasters, whose program is syndicated to more than 135 NPR member stations nationwide and is heard around the world, reaching 2.2 million listeners each week.
- Dalai Lama—On October 10, Bender Arena will host a morning teaching by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel laureate and the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. He will discuss traditional Buddhist teachings to help achieve well-being. An afternoon discussion will focus on incorporating meditation and compassion into everyday life. Ticket information and additional details are forthcoming.
- Faculty Retreat—On October 16–17, a faculty retreat cosponsored by the president and provost will bring full-time faculty together at the National Conference Center in Landsdowne, Virginia. The retreat will focus on the implementation of the strategic plan and include work sessions, speakers, and networking opportunities for faculty. More information is available online (www.american.edu/provost/facultyretreat).
- Family and Alumni Weekend—Parents, family members, and alumni will return to campus October 23–25 to participate in a full schedule of activities.

Before we know it, we’ll be gathering for Opening Convocation on Friday, August 21, welcoming new faculty, students, and staff to our community, and getting started on a new term. Enjoy the rest of the summer, and be safe.