From the President

Why the University’s Campaign of Commitment Matters

My two favorite descriptions of a university president are
• Someone who lives in a big house and begs for a living.
• A person who operates a power mower in a graveyard: there’s lots of noise and action up top, but down below no one is listening.

Both descriptions poke gently but directly at two of the most important duties of a modern university president: to articulate a vision for the future of the university and to raise the money to make that vision come true.

So in a very important way, it’s part of my job to talk to you about the University’s $175 million Campaign of Commitment and how we plan to make our vision for the future a reality. What is that vision and how will the campaign make it possible?

Since I arrived at the University in 1998, I have tried to articulate a consistent and clear vision to describe the University that builds on its past and points directly to a bright future. We provide our students with distinctive educational experiences that blend the feel of a small, residential college with an array of academic programs and opportunities characteristic of a large university. We are a private university with a public purpose.

I believe these qualities have defined the University throughout its history. Although we have grown more complex as an institution, this vision continues to define us. The role of the campaign is to provide the resources to turn our vision into reality. And so far, with approximately $130 million raised, we are well on the way to being successful.

The Campaign of Commitment has three major goals:

To raise endowment monies to support teaching, research, and financial aid, which will help us attract and retain the best students, faculty, and staff. Thanks to the most significant gift in the University’s history, an $18.6 million bequest from Primrose Fuller, our total endowment stands above the $90 million mark for the first time ever. While still lower than that of many of our peers (because we are a relatively young institution), this endowment will ensure the future quality of the University.

To raise annual funds and other programmatic support, which allows us to provide quality educational programs above and beyond what student tuition covers. Most people know that tuition covers only a fraction of the total cost of attending a university. Annual and other restricted giving makes up the difference. In almost every case, the distinction between being a good university and being a great one is determined by the resources the annual fund provides. A great example of this is the National Honors Scholarships funded by a small group of generous donors who are helping us attract the very best students in the country. No gift to our Annual Fund is too small. Each one helps this University achieve its central goal: to provide a quality learning experience for all students.

To construct the facilities necessary to keep the University competitive and to ensure that we provide an environment for quality learning. I have spent a lot of my energies in earlier columns describing these important projects, but I will summarize them here.
We are on a real roll at the University of Hartford. We have momentum. Success in the campaign will sustain that and, most importantly, ensure a bright future for the University—something that so many of us dream of and work for every day.

- **Integrated Science, Engineering, and Technology Complex.** This project was completed in December, financed by bonding and with donated dollars. More is still needed. This magnificent facility will enable us to achieve our goal of regional prominence and national visibility in science, engineering, and technology.

- **Home Field Advantage (new playing fields).** The new soccer and lacrosse field was completed this fall; the new baseball and softball fields will be ready this spring. Our goal is to be a model small-university NCAA Division I sports program. These fields help us get there; they are the equal of any in our conference. A major $2 million gift by Tom and Suzy Reich helped immensely, but we still need about $1.7 million before October in order to fully fund this project and qualify for a matching Kresge Foundation grant. Every gift, large and small, helps, from naming a field to buying a brick that will forever link your name to Hawk sports (see the ad in this issue).

- **Performing Arts Center.** Our most ambitious and far-reaching project, our vision for this facility is to transform the former Thomas Cadillac automobile dealership at the corner of Westbourne Parkway and Albany Avenue into a state-of-the-art teaching facility for theatre and dance, benefiting both Hartt School students and children of the North Hartford community. Here we see our two purposes most clearly in sync: to provide the resources to support a world-class performing arts conservatory and to serve a public purpose in being a catalyst to spur the revival of the city’s North End. We are currently $3.5 million short of beginning the first stage of this project. It’s crunch time.

- **Arts and Technology Complex.** Elsewhere in this issue of the Observer we describe this project and what makes it so vital to our future as a visual arts school of the highest rank. Thanks to the $1 million leadership gift of Bob and Renée Samuels, we are well on our way to making this important project happen. But again, we need your help, in gifts both large and small, if we are to offer our gifted art students and faculty the facilities to grow and express their talent.

  All of this only hints at the energy and excitement that have gone into this campaign. We have raised $130 million; we have $45 million to go. While we certainly count money in this campaign, it’s not just the money that counts. It’s the expression of support for this University—and what it stands for and what it can become—that matters.

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