"A Place Called Rutgers"
Annual Address to the University Community

President Richard L. McCormick
Friday, September 19, 2008

Thank you for that introduction, Professor Rabinowitz.

Members of the Senate, fellow members of the university community, and distinguished guests: This week has brought sad news to our university community. Our dear and treasured friend, Walter Seward, Class of 1917, who attended all but six of his yearly reunions, who took pride for so many years in being the oldest living Rutgers graduate, has passed away at the age of 111. While such events typically occasion a moment of silence, Walter was no typical alum, and so I ask you instead to join me in a moment of thunderous ovation for a life well and joyfully lived.

Thank you for this annual opportunity to share my plans and goals for Rutgers and to answer your questions. Let me thank the members of our governing boards who are here, including Board of Governors chair Bill Howard, Board of Trustees chair Tony DePetris, and Rutgers University Alumni Association chair Jim Rhodes. We also welcome our special guests, including Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan, Assemblyman Louis Greenwald, and Jane Oates, executive director of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education.

Let me also introduce our newest academic leaders at Rutgers, who begin their work this semester. I ask them to stand and be recognized:

- Doug Greenberg, Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences
- Jorge Schement, Dean of the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies
- Thomas Papathomas, Dean of the Busch Campus
- Mark Winston, Assistant Chancellor and Director of the Dana Library
- Harriet Davidson, Interim Dean of Douglass Campus and Douglass Residential College
- Yogesh Jaluria, Interim Dean of the School of Engineering
- Lucille Joel, Acting Dean of the College of Nursing
- Jerry Kukor, Acting Dean of the Graduate School–New Brunswick

We take enormous pleasure in welcoming more than 100 new faculty members. Among this group are Dr. Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel, who has made major contributions to Caribbean literary studies; Dr. Frank Thompson, who has been called one of the top living scholars in public administration and management; Dr. Nina Fefferman, whose mathematical modeling is helping us understand how ecology and animal behavior affect the spread of infectious disease; and Dr. Yuri Gershtein, one of the physicists on the hunt for the Higgs boson that will unravel the mystery of how material acquires mass. We welcome not only their achievements but also the fresh energy and insight they bring to an already exceptional group of scholars, the Rutgers faculty.

Just as impressive are our newest Rutgers students. The entering class of more than 7,000 is the largest in 30 years—and they are a talented group, including 132 valedictorians and salutatorians. Eighty-four of them are Presidential Scholars, having graduated in the top 5 percent of their high school class, with math and verbal SAT scores of 1500 or higher.

Our new students are also richly diverse. They come from 100 countries and 41 states. More than half identify themselves as non-Caucasian. One-third come from families in which there is no parent who graduated from college. Our first-year class has 13 percent more African-American students than last year's, and 15 percent more Latino students.

These fresh new faces are a welcome reminder of how lucky we are. At a difficult moment for our nation and the world, it is important to stop and recognize our great fortune to be at this place called Rutgers—to be engaged in this wonderful institution and in all its vital missions. Yes, we face financial challenges, and I'll say more about that later, but Rutgers is not letting state budget cuts define us or deter us. So many people in the world would give anything to be here. We have much for which to be grateful.

With scrutiny of American higher education at an all-time high, Rutgers earned reaccreditation with flying colors and glowing praise—especially for the university's courageous transformation of undergraduate education. Despite an unsettled economy, Rutgers set a record in private fundraising, with $121 million in new gifts and pledges. Rutgers faculty generated nearly one-third of a billion dollars for research from federal and state governments and from the private sector. Rutgers undergraduates gave service in myriad ways, including the Dance Marathon that raised nearly $320,000 for children with cancer and blood disorders. And while the competition for fellowships and scholarships is fiercer than ever, our students shone once again: four of our graduating seniors were awarded Gates Scholarships to study at the University of Cambridge in England.

Now we begin a new academic year with the launch of new programs across the university that serve emerging needs: a master of fine arts in creative writing in Camden, a new undergraduate major in public service at Rutgers–Newark, a new Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures in New Brunswick, and the expansion to four-year undergraduate business programs in both Camden and New Brunswick.

I have much to say today about our plans for the year ahead, but first I need to address a topic that has been in the news this past summer, and not always positively: intercollegiate athletics at Rutgers–New Brunswick.

There are good reasons why Rutgers decided long ago to have a high-profile athletics program that is consistent with, and supportive of, the university's overall academic experience. This means a program that brings spirit and pride to Rutgers and the state; that provides a window on the whole university and its educational programs; that invites alumni and other citizens to share in the life of the university; and, equally important, a program that is transparent and managed in full accord with the university's overall policies and governance.

At the outset of my time as president, I announced four goals for Rutgers athletics: 1) the academic success of our student-athletes; 2) the complete integrity of the program; 3) its growth toward financial self-sufficiency; and 4) athletic competitiveness. The Board of Governors and the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics firmly embraced these goals, and we have seen many signs of progress. For one, the NCAA has ranked our football team third in the nation in the Academic Progress Rate of its student-athletes, behind only Stanford University and the U.S. Naval Academy, and highest among all state universities.

It is also clear that our success, moving into the big time, has brought growing pains. We didn't always make the transition as well as we should have. There are areas where we should have done things better and more transparently. An internal audit at Rutgers revealed shortcomings last February, and my administration and athletics have been working ever since to address these problems.

We will soon appoint a new chief financial officer for athletics who will have responsibility for fiscal oversight in that department. In addition, we are preparing a comprehensive manual of policies and procedures for athletics. The university is now developing and, with approval from the Board of Governors, will implement new rules covering such areas as review and approval of sponsorship agreements and signatory authority for contracts. In athletics and across Rutgers, my administration will continue to ensure increased awareness of, and compliance with, the university's highest standards.

We will, moreover, hold firm to our commitment that the expansion of Rutgers Stadium will remain within its established budget and on time, even if it means we have to make adjustments to the original plan.

Keep in mind that even big-time athletics represents a small percentage of a university budget—in our case, about 3 percent. But the fact remains: in athletics, as in almost every area of the university, we can do better.

These past few months, and the intense focus on one aspect of the university, have become for me a time for reflection, a time for thinking about the totality of our ambitions—which, of course, are overwhelmingly academic and educational—and a time for considering afresh how our university is perceived and where it is going.

This was a season in which athletics had the headlines, but even in an otherwise sleepy summer, so many things were happening that will truly define Rutgers' future. As our four Gates Scholars made their trek to Cambridge, 200 boys and girls who are now eigth graders in Camden, Newark, New Brunswick, and Piscataway began their own journey to Rutgers. The university received the largest single donation in its history. The National Science Foundation expanded our capacity for stem cell research with a grant for 70 doctoral fellowships. New faculty members on our traveling seminar around New Jersey spent a full day in Newark, witnessing both the city's greatest corporate achievements and its citizens' darkest personal struggles. The faculty saw in both instances where Rutgers can make a difference.

It was a summer when our new slogan "Jersey Roots, Global Reach" became more visible than ever, when the university's first unified alumni association was created, and when, boring as infrastructure work can be, the greening of College Avenue finally began. And it was just last week that Pulitzer Prize-winning alumnus Junot Díaz, returning to his alma mater in the Writers at Rutgers series, electrified 900 faculty, staff, and students here in this room. His readings were brilliant, but our students' questions for him were every bit as good.

These are the stuff of our dreams and ambitions at a place called Rutgers. And at the center of these ambitions, as always, is the education of our students.

In New Brunswick, an era in undergraduate education began last September with the creation of our new School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and unified admission and graduation standards for all students. During the past year, the SAS faculty adopted new goals for a core curriculum, and work is under way that will make these goals a reality. Taken together, these changes mark one of the boldest transformations in Rutgers' history, all designed to ensure that our students, no matter where they live, have the fullest opportunities to benefit from our outstanding faculty, staff, and programs. Thousands of women and men at Rutgers have our collective thanks for effecting such momentous results.

One of our most important objectives was to strengthen the bonds between students and faculty—and that is happening, most especially through the Byrne Family First-Year Seminar Program. Some 1,500 students took these small-enrollment courses last year, with unforgettable experiences such as exploring urban planning at Coney Island, talking climate change with one of the world's foremost experts, and learning about women in presidential politics by attending a Hillary Clinton campaign rally. It is hard to say who was more excited by these courses—the students or the faculty. Twelve hundred first-year students are enrolled for the seminars this fall, and a like number are expected to take them in the spring.

Many of our students are participating in new living-learning communities that bring their academic passions into their daily activities. At the Discovery Houses on the Livingston Campus, for example, they take clusters of courses around common interests such as law, psychology, and business, and then meet with faculty outside the classroom to talk about career opportunities and other topics. Another exciting new community focuses on social justice and yet another on cinema studies.

Douglass Residential College is succeeding even beyond our expectations. The women choosing this community are a wonderful mix of students even more diverse than the overall student body, and they are gifted, involved, and excited both to continue Douglass traditions and to seize new opportunities.

Our students have done a masterful job of reorganizing student governance, long a hallmark of Rutgers, through the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA), and they deserve great credit. I would like to ask RUSA chair Chris Keating to stand so we can applaud his leadership and that of his fellow students.

But more remains to be done. The transformation of undergraduate education is not yet complete, and there is important unfinished business. Vice President Barry Qualls is completing an extensive survey of faculty, staff, and students, through which we are learning about problems, as well as about unintended consequences.

For example: The centralization of student affairs offices has improved and streamlined the delivery of many services, but funding cuts have affected the depth and availability of offices, such as cashiers, that we had hoped to operate on every campus. Some students have felt the weakening of unique campus identities. And it is clear that we have not yet found the ideal academic arrangements for nontraditional students.

We need to address these concerns, and we will. Within our budgetary limitations, we will do our best to expand student services. We will work with students, and with the campus deans and deans of students, to build a larger sense of community on each campus. And I have asked Sue Schurman, dean of the University College Community, to offer ideas for strengthening our commitment to adult learners. The transformation of undergraduate education will not be complete until it benefits all our students.

New Brunswick, of course, is not alone in wanting the best for our undergraduates and bringing changes to achieve these goals. Students in Camden are benefiting from significant new opportunities in experiential learning through internships and clinical activities, civic engagement, research collaborations with faculty, and participation in international programs. I want to express my deep appreciation to Interim Chancellor Margaret Marsh for her willingness to serve another year in her position, and for leading Rutgers–Camden so ably, while we continue the search for a chancellor.

In Newark, a faculty-led committee is working on a bold recommendation to cut general education requirements nearly in half and to require every student to pursue a second concentration, such as a minor, another major, or a joint baccalaureate-master's program. Chancellor Steve Diner is eager to have this recommendation, along with several others, reach the faculty for review and approval this year. He and the faculty have already created a wealth of academic programs that give students opportunities to learn while responding to the needs of New Jersey's largest city.

Our students' education at Rutgers is so special because they are learning from faculty who are engaged in research and discovery, who know far more than is in any textbook, and who are contributing solutions to the most important global human problems.

Last year at this time I highlighted Rutgers' research in the vital areas of climate change and alternative energy sources—fields where Rutgers already has significant expertise and comparative advantages, where there are pressing human challenges and a high degree of student interest, and where resources are available to make a difference.

Now we seek a new level of excellence in the critical area of nutrition. Obesity and its associated health effects, including diabetes and heart disease, have become a real epidemic, especially among children. Millions of Americans are overfed, undernourished, and prime candidates for chronic disease and premature death. This is a major issue here in New Jersey and around the world. Its implications extend beyond health care to social development, economic success, and public policy.

Rutgers has much to contribute to improving nutrition and a leadership role to play. We were among the first universities to establish departments of nutrition and food science, both dating back more than half a century, and we have related strengths in genetics and behavioral science, nursing, pharmacy, agriculture, public policy, and educational outreach.

By building on our existing strengths, Rutgers will chiefly accomplish two things: nutrition research that is scientifically among the best in the world, and the delivery of educational and outreach programs that move what is learned from the laboratory into daily application.

Through the establishment of the New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health—to be located on the George H. Cook Campus but drawing expertise from across and beyond the university—we will ask and answer questions such as these: Why are young children developing health problems normally associated with overweight adults? How can we teach portion control and motivate healthier lifestyles? What are the best low-calorie diets to keep children lean? How can we help communities serve those who are most at risk? The answers developed at Rutgers will contribute to better nutrition around the world, but, as appropriate to our role as the state university, the first beneficiaries will be the people of New Jersey.

In teaching and research and in everything we do at this place called Rutgers, our greatest asset is our people, and the diversity of our university's students, faculty, and staff has been a point of pride for many decades.

Last year in my annual address I announced a number of initiatives designed to increase the diversity of Rutgers, and today I want to share our progress with you. The new President's Council on Institutional Diversity and Equity, co-chaired by Professor Cheryl Wall, has developed a signature initiative in diversity cluster hiring. Two impressive proposals for recruiting groups of faculty with related interests have gained the support of the council and the administration. One is a Newark-based cluster hiring effort in the field of urban entrepreneurship; the other is a New Brunswick-based effort in the field of Caribbean studies, in which several academic departments are participating.

Last year also saw the establishment of the Rutgers Center for Race and Ethnicity. Founded by Professor Keith Wailoo, the center promotes interdisciplinary research, advances collaborations, and identifies areas for future policy development. The center has hosted roundtables on timely topics, such as the subprime mortgage crisis, racial disparities in criminal justice, and Hurricane Katrina. Through these projects, and in concert with other units such as Professor Clem Price's Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, the center not only sheds light on critical human problems but also reinforces Rutgers' reputation for outstanding research and policy on diversity.

Rutgers' student body is already admirably diverse, and, as I noted earlier, this year's class of first-year students marks another big step forward. But our student body is largely suburban, and too few young men and women come to Rutgers from our state's cities. So this year we established the Rutgers Future Scholars Program, based in our university's hometowns of Newark, Camden, New Brunswick, and Piscataway. We identified an initial cohort of 200 bright and talented rising eighth graders whom Rutgers will mentor and support while they finish high school and to whom we have promised that if admitted to Rutgers they will pay no tuition or fees. All of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds; virtually all would be the first in their families to go to college.

This summer, each of the young Rutgers Future Scholars participated in programs on one of our campuses. They began to get a feel for college life and, hopefully too, the beginnings of conviction that they could actually go to college. There will be opportunities for all of us at Rutgers, including students, to teach, mentor, and support the Rutgers Future Scholars—both the initial group and the subsequent cohorts that will come aboard each year. I want to thank Vice President Courtney McAnuff, program director Aramis Gutierrez, and all those on our faculty and staff who are making such a success of this pioneering program.

This agenda for diversity places Rutgers in the vanguard, which is exactly where we should be. In early December, a national conference on the Future of Diversity and Opportunity in Higher Education will contribute to keeping us there. Cosponsored by Rutgers, Columbia University, and the College Board, the conference will be hosted by Rutgers and will explore methods and principles for maintaining and enhancing diversity in the 21st century. We all have a lot to learn, and Rutgers has a lot to share.

As the Rutgers Future Scholars Program recognizes, our university has particular obligations to the communities where our campuses are located. Rutgers must never be simply a landowner in these towns; we must contribute educationally, culturally, economically, and civically and must do our part to help them thrive.

This past spring, Rutgers–Newark marked a century of reaching higher—100 years in our state's largest city. Rutgers continues to be an instrument of hope and opportunity for the residents of Newark. Chancellor Diner's vision of a 24/7 campus that enriches the life of the city is coming to fruition with the opening of University Square residence hall for undergraduates and with plans for new graduate and undergraduate housing. The campus is partnering with Dr. Clifford Janey, Newark's new superintendent, to establish a consortium that will undertake rigorous research on the city's public schools.

The School of Public Affairs and Administration is engaged with the Newark Housing Authority on quality control and continues to provide executive education to city hall employees. Our Center for Urban Entrepreneurship is working closely with the city administration to advance minority-owned small businesses. These are just some of the ways in which Rutgers is reaching out to be a good citizen and an active partner in the future of Newark.

Urban renewal in Camden remains a mighty challenge. There are clear signs of hope, however—from waterfront development to the beginnings of neighborhood revitalization, and Rutgers is playing and must continue to play an important part. Our Camden faculty have expertise in a wide range of relevant fields, including urban education, childhood studies, public health, civic engagement, immigration law, criminal justice, and retail strategy.

We already contribute to the training of preschool teachers, advance downtown economic development, support the progress of the LEAP Charter Schools, and work with the attorney general's Operation CeaseFire initiative. But we can do more. This year Chancellor Marsh will convene a working group of faculty and staff to develop, with community input, a strategic plan for Rutgers' engagement with the city of Camden.

As this planning gets under way, Rutgers is already engaged in two new partnerships with Camden residents. The first is in North Camden, where citizens want to improve housing and schools and attract new businesses. Rutgers will explore placing some facilities on the North Camden side of the Ben Franklin Bridge, such as playing fields for both Rutgers students and the community. In the second partnership, our Center for Children and Childhood Studies will work with teachers and parents in areas from preschool education to tutoring and mentoring Camden teenagers. Our goal is to help Camden and its residents achieve their full promise.

Rutgers–Camden, –Newark, and –New Brunswick alike are all engaged in improving our campuses and facilities. Counting projects that are in planning, design, or construction, the university is now doing more than $700 million in capital projects.

This includes renovation of the Rutgers Business School building in Newark and the housing I mentioned earlier. In Camden it includes the long-awaited recreation center, as well as a law school facility that matches the excellence of its students, faculty, and staff. In New Brunswick, the new building for the College of Nursing is nearly complete, the Institute for Health Sciences facility is getting under way, and the Livingston Student Center is being renovated and expanded.

Other key projects include the Center for Integrative Proteomics Technologies on the Busch Campus; construction of a Visitors Center, also on the Busch Campus, to serve prospective students and other guests; and the greening of College Avenue. In addition, we are spending $75 million to address deferred maintenance on our campuses.

The renovations that will affect more students and faculty than any other are the classroom improvements across the university. In the first phase of a three-year project, 110 classrooms in New Brunswick have been or are being enhanced, including eight of our major lecture halls at Douglass and Livingston. In Camden, two new fully functional smart classrooms have been completed and furniture has been replaced in several classrooms at Armitage Hall. In Newark, work will begin this winter on renovations to more than a dozen classrooms and lecture halls.

Rutgers–New Brunswick needs and deserves a bookstore equal to the academic excellence of our university. It should carry an expansive collection of scholarly works and textbooks, as well as school supplies and Rutgers gear. But the bookstore should also be a destination in itself. A place for readings by famous authors hopping off the train from New York or Philadelphia. A stimulating venue for special events and Saturday morning programs for children. A comfortable gathering place for Rutgers people and the larger community. A hub of university and city life.

Following months of study and an intense competition, we have selected the company that will operate our new bookstore to be located in the Gateway building at the corner of Easton Avenue and Somerset Street. The Mayor of New Brunswick and I will be making an announcement about that very soon.

Last year I sketched for you the outlines of a long-term initiative to develop the Livingston Campus as a center for business and professional studies. Creating a campus of professional schools and disciplines—including business, education, social work, and management and labor relations—has enormous potential for transforming these fields, meeting the needs of our students, and generating economic and social progress. It will also give Livingston a distinct identity, much as Busch is known for science and engineering, Douglass for women's programs, and Cook for environment and ecology—and an identity that relates to its history of leadership and social justice.

Now it's time to act on our vision, and we can begin to do so because of a wonderful act of philanthropy by a Rutgers graduate. I am proud to announce today that we have received an anonymous gift of $13 million, ten million of which will support the construction of a new building for the Rutgers Business School on the Livingston Campus, and three million to endow a professorship in business and natural resources. This is the largest single donation in Rutgers' history, and we are honored to receive it. With this great gift, we are closer than ever to realizing our vision for Livingston.

Indeed, it will make possible the first element of the campus's new academic program: expansion of the Rutgers Business School to a four-year undergraduate program. For years, business education in New Brunswick has been an upper-division program with only about 400 students. Yet we know there is high demand for business education, a clear need for business expertise, great talent among our faculty, and opportunities for joint programs with the sciences and engineering. For the fall of 2008, we had 11,000 applications from prospective undergraduates who were competing for 300 seats. Next year we will enroll 400 first-year business students, and over the next five years enrollment will grow to 3,200 undergraduates.

The anonymous gift toward business education at Livingston had not even been counted when we announced the record $121 million in private donations and pledges that the university received last year. And for the future, Rutgers will depend more than ever on private fundraising.

We will always advocate strongly for funding from the State of New Jersey, but Rutgers' goals and ambitions far exceed what the state provides. The responsibility for filling that gap rests with us. Becoming truly great—gaining the world-class distinction in multiple areas of teaching and research that our students and the people of New Jersey deserve—requires us to venture beyond the funding streams we have relied on in the past. We can and must control our own destiny by undertaking a comprehensive, multipronged effort to expand Rutgers' resources.

We are in the early stages of our largest-ever fundraising campaign, with a goal of approximately $1 billion. Rutgers Foundation President Carol Herring and her staff have worked closely with every part of the university community to craft a prospectus that describes our ambitious goals and lists a stunning array of programs for which we will seek private funding. Most important are scholarship assistance for our students; endowed professorships to enable the university to recruit and retain the best faculty; and program support for signature fields, like nutrition, upon which our reputation and excellence depend.

Through the work of our outstanding faculty, research grants continue to increase. Last year they topped $320 million, including two major grants for research on the performance of our nation's bridges and on treating severe battlefield injuries. Thanks to the efforts of Vice President Michael Pazzani, licensing revenue also increased to $8.1 million, and we expect it will continue to rise. We have renamed the technology transfer office as the Office of Technology Commercialization, signaling our intention not simply to transfer our discoveries but also to work with industries to form a complete process of commercialization.

The greatest potential for financial growth at Rutgers lies in revenue-generating academic programs—programs that draw on our teaching excellence and reach students, paying students, whom we are not educating today. We will never establish a program just for the money. We will never offer a program that fails to meet the faculty's high academic standards. And the heart of our student body will be the traditionally matriculated students we have today.

But from practically every discipline we can reach out to people who have educational needs that Rutgers can meet. One example is the professional science master's program. This is an idea, developed by Dean David Finegold, to offer master's or certificate programs that combine an applied science specialty with a core of business and management skills. Those who enroll will be able to study full or part time, and the revenues will go back to the academic units where the students are taught.

We have on- and off-campus professional programs—executive education, continuing education, and certificate programs—that are currently offered by some Rutgers schools, and could be offered by more. Entrepreneurial deans and faculty are making them happen—in New Jersey, in Beijing, and in Dubai.

Another increasingly successful area is off-campus degree completion programs. New Jersey citizens who live too far to commute to our traditional campuses are now using our Western Monmouth and Atlantic Cape Community College programs to earn a Rutgers degree. Last year these programs grossed $2 million, a 33 percent jump in one year. Deans and chairs should look at degrees they could be offering on these or other campuses around the state.

Still another area of great potential lies in online courses. Right now Rutgers offers a nursing masters and a government accounting degree online. One of the most inventive and effective online efforts is the Librarians for the 21st Century master's program offered by our School of Communication, Information and Library Studies. Thanks to the leadership of Associate Dean Karen Novick, SCILS has established a program that is much more than online courses—they have built a sense of community, offered important support services, and ensured retention and graduation.

I strongly encourage, and the university will be doing all it can to facilitate, the development of online courses as well as hybrid courses—those with both an on-campus and online component. This is not about replacing the face-to-face interaction that is so vital to higher education, especially for traditional undergraduates—but about supplementing it. The world that our students enter is now dominated by on-the-job, online training.

Rutgers must also continue to build on programs such as our lifelong learning institute for retired adults. Enrollment has grown tenfold since 1993, and the interest will keep expanding as our population grows older.

These programs are important to our ambitions for Rutgers, and they make sense for our mission. They educate constituents we are not now serving. They address the social needs of the state, the nation, and the world. Done well, they will also lead to greater visibility for Rutgers as the state university. And they will bring resources we so urgently need.

Let me close by recognizing one final challenge, and that is communicating who we are and what we do at Rutgers. Is there anyone here who has never exclaimed: If only Rutgers told its story better? The elements are now in place to do that more effectively than ever before. Through the "Jersey Roots, Global Reach" campaign in newspapers, on buses and billboards, and on TV. Through the new Rutgers University Alumni Association, 370,000 strong, whose members have just received the latest issue of Rutgers Magazine. And on April 25, 2009, when we will have the first-ever Rutgers Day on the New Brunswick Campus—a great big, one-day show-and-tell for the entire state.

Building on the long and wonderful traditions of Ag Field Day and the New Jersey Folk Festival, which already bring thousands of people to the Cook and Douglass campuses each spring, the idea is to make the last Saturday in April a day when people from across the state come to Rutgers to experience their state university. A trip through a geological time machine, an ask-the-author talk on baseball in New Jersey, a performance by the Livingston Theatre Company, a historic tour, and our fabulous Faraday physics demonstration are just some of the events being planned—and many, many more are being solicited. We will roll out the scarlet carpet, welcoming thousands of visitors to show them what we do at Rutgers.

We have so many reasons for pride in what we do at Rutgers, and each of us has so many causes for gratitude to be here. And yet so much to accomplish. Our ambitions for Rutgers are very high, and they should be. Our challenges are difficult, and perhaps they always will be. But our resolve is unyielding, our passion for discovery unstinting, our commitment to New Jersey unrivaled, and our quest for excellence unstoppable. It's a place called Rutgers, and for now we have the responsibility for its present and its future. Thank you.