



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

CORNELIUS KERWIN
PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

December 1, 2008

TO: Campus Community
FROM: Neil Kerwin, President
SUBJECT: “American University in the Next Decade: Leadership for a Changing World”—Our New Strategic Plan

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Board of Trustees approved the university’s [strategic plan](#), including vision statement and goals, at its November 21, 2008 meeting. I want to thank the entire community, especially the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, for the hard work, engagement, and deliberations that allowed us to reach this important milestone.

The board approved the plan with three changes to the document. These amendments emphasize the importance of ethics and service in our vision and clarify the intent of intellectual diversity in Goal 5. The approved plan, reflecting those changes, is attached.

Our attention now turns to the process of developing specific objectives, related action steps and a budget for the next two-year budget cycle, which will allow us to begin to make progress on the goals in the plan. Provost Scott Bass and Vice President of Finance Don Myers are co-chairing the Budget Committee. Guided by the budget criteria also approved by the board at its last meeting, they will now lead a process that places the highest priority on making progress on our new goals. I have asked the Strategic Planning Steering Committee to remain in operation during this next stage to provide information and advice, including stewarding the many ideas the committee collected from members of the community during the planning process. Two-year objectives, action steps, and the budget proposal will be presented to the board in February 2009.

In addition to the development of university-wide objectives, action steps, and budget proposals, we must also begin to develop unit plans and action steps to reach the goals, with emphasis on what can be accomplished in the first two years. In this process, the schools, colleges, and major administrative units will have the opportunity to review the many ideas suggested during the planning process, both those collected by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and others captured during unit-level discussions. We expect these plans to be done in May 2009, by the end of the current academic year.

This integrated approach to two-year objectives, action steps, and budget is the

logical next step in the process of our strategic planning. Though no one can predict the future in these uncertain times for our nation's economy, I believe our careful attention to financial management over many years has given us the stability to make significant progress over the next two years on the goals in the plan.

Finally, we are committed to maintaining the same approach to outreach and participation in this stage of implementation that characterized the development of the plan. This week, the Budget Committee will hold a town meeting and there will be a number of other opportunities for community input during the coming weeks. Please use these to express your views and assist in building this first, important stage of strategic plan implementation.

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