Dear Campus Community,

Before our academic year draws to its celebratory conclusion with the observance of our annual Honors Convocation and Commencement Exercises, I invite you to take a moment to reflect with me on the past ten months and to look forward to the year ahead. It has been a challenging year; only a few short months ago, Ruth Person announced that she would be leaving, as did our deans of Business, Education, and the Library. The campus had yet to complete its self study for the HLC and our April visit by the HLC team seemed even closer than only nine months away; and, as fall enrollments were tallied, we experienced the only enrollment shortfall at any IU campus, largely owing to the decision to drop our associate degree program in Nursing.

As we faced these circumstances with me as the new interim chancellor, I relied on several things: the extraordinarily high levels of competence, professionalism, and dedication to task of our faculty and staff; the willingness of the campus community to embrace a proactive approach to shared governance; and the warmth and generosity of our people. I have not been disappointed. As new and some not so new faces appeared to take on key leadership roles, you reached out to welcome them, including Janine and me, and I am deeply grateful to all of you for your patience and kindness.

Some of us will be staying on in our new roles, others will be leaving us on June 30th and we are indebted to them for their service to the campus and wish them well in whatever they turn their hands to next. We will be saying goodbye to Interim Vice Chancellor Steven T. Sarratore whose great good humor and critical insights has helped us reshape advising, the VCAA office; and gotten us over many a rough patch this past year. Interim Dean Pat Swails will be leaving us, but will have left the Division of Education well positioned for their upcoming NCATE visit; many thanks to Pat for her hard work on our behalf. We are pleased that Interim Dean John Wellington is staying on for one more year. I know this makes the faculty in the School of Business very happy, as it does me as I have seen the effects of his positive and thoughtful leadership as he engaged S.O.B faculty and students. I am also thankful that we concluded our search for a new vice chancellor for Administration and Finance and have Tim Sehr continuing as our VCAF. Not only does he do his job very well indeed, he enables me to do my job effectively, and
provides fiscal support and guidance to every other administrator on this campus. Many thanks to Diane Bever for her service as interim dean of the Library; her steady hand and guidance were much appreciated. She will be returning to her former duties as we welcome a new Library dean this coming August.

As you know, Sue Sciame-Giesecke will begin her two-year interim appointment at vice chancellor for Academic Affairs on July 1 and Erv Boschmann will assume the duties of the dean of Arts and Sciences effective August 1. Both Sue and Erv are seasoned academic administrators with outstanding records of leadership. In her most recent role, Sue led us to a very successful HLC accreditation outcome. Erv, an IU chemistry professor emeritus, has served as an associate vice president in UITs and was interim vice chancellor for Academic Affairs for one year at the East campus. Sue will also be supported by Gerry Stroman in her new role as assistant vice chancellor for Student Success and Advising and Kathy Ross has accepted our offer to become the director of the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment: they will be joined by an additional assistant vice chancellor for Academic Affairs to be named shortly, who will support the VCAA in the areas of scheduling, assessment, and the oversight of a number programs under the purview of the VCAA. The reorganizing of the VCAA’s office has been long overdue and I expect that these additional staff resources will lead to higher levels of engagement and productivity from our VCAA and our academic schools and divisions.

One other individual who will be stepping down from her current position is Sharon Calhoon who has been our assistant vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, leading our efforts in assessment and directing the CTLA. She will be returning to a teaching and research role, but has agreed to taking on expanded responsibilities in the area of institutional research and will be reporting directly to the chancellor. As you all know, she has done an outstanding job for us these past several years; teaching us how to do assessment and earning us high marks from our HLC team in this area. Her work in faculty development has also been transformative for many of our junior and senior faculty alike. I am very pleased she will be continuing in a supportive role at the campus-wide level.

Academic Affairs was not alone in reorganizing itself. In addition to our work on advising this year, we have seen a restructuring of Student Services by VC Jack Tharp to consolidate administration and place more emphasis on serving and
recruiting students. We have also been discussing ways to improve the success of our students in our Learning Communities. This will continue throughout next year as we participate in John Gardner’s Foundations of Excellence program. This year-long engagement will involve every aspect of our freshmen year. I encourage you to go to www.fyFoundations.org for further information on this important and transforming program. VC for External Relations, Paul Nowak has proposed reorganizing its work to achieve greater results in fund raising and to better manage the campus’ web content. We are looking carefully at these proposals as we construct the 2009-2010 annual budget. We are very grateful to UITS for our .50 of chief information officer, Beth van Gordon. She has already begun to help the campus understand and address our critical IT needs, so that our teaching and research enterprises will continue to have a robust and cost-effective IT infrastructure, as well as outstanding support services. The recent IU Kokomo IT survey indicated a 97% satisfaction level with IT services. This is a remarkable achievement by our IT staff and we want to thank them all for their work on behalf of the entire campus.

Let me say a few words about our Physical Plant and Security Staff. Their tireless efforts maintain a safe and aesthetically beautiful environment that makes working and studying on the Kokomo campus more pleasurable and helps us recruit, engage, and retain our students. Projects like Campus Beautification Day and water quality projects such as the riparian buffer zone have involved our faculty, staff, and students and have become sources of pride in our campus, as well as opportunities for learning. We have a beautiful campus owing largely to the caring attention of our hard working staff and the leadership of Charlie Cary.

All of the above and much, much more has contributed to our campus attaining the second highest six–year graduation rate at Indiana University, 33%, behind only IU Bloomington. This was noted at the last Board of Trustees meeting, as was our solid showing with new admits for the coming fall. These numbers do not simply happen by themselves. They are the result of the cumulative actions of all our faculty and staff that in ways both large and small make a difference in the lives of our students and are the underpinnings of our campus community. Only a few years ago, we hoped for a 30% graduation; now we can set our goal higher still. Despite the challenges we faced, including the fiscal challenges (lowered enrollment and a 1% cut in our state appropriation) the campus has come through this year in excellent fashion. We have achieved a
great deal together across all facets of the campus and I believe there is more and greater success yet to come. Congratulations to you all!

Only, the absence of a positive outcome to the General Assembly’s budget deliberations remains troubling. During the last Board of Trustees meeting, it was clear to all that IU’s 2009-2011 operating and capital budget futures are uncertain at best and could well be highly problematic, especially if the final budget ends up closer to the governor’s original wishes ($460,000 cut for the campus over the biennium). All we can do at this time is to continue to contact our representatives, thank them for their support and urge that it continue. Clearly, in this climate, it may be difficult to make any progress on our plan to address faculty and staff salary issues. Indeed, in light of Purdue’s decision to give no raises this year the Board of Trustees may well decide to follow suit. We will not know the answer to any of this for a certainty until after the state has a budget approved by the governor and that won’t be until well into mid to late June. In the meanwhile Tim will be preparing a budget, so we can be prepared to present it to central administration and implement it on campus in a timely manner.

Whatever the budget brings, I am confident that the progress we have made together will continue. Moreover, I am certain that we have faculty, staff, and campus-wide leadership that is very broad and very deep. The more than thirty members that comprise our Administrative Council are smart, savvy leaders with whose guidance we can and will do great things in the coming year.

See you at Commencement and have a wonderful summer.

Best regards,

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