

04/16/2007 Letter to the Vanderbilt Board of Trust

Dear Members of the Board of Trust, VU Administration and Prominent Guests, I am thankful for the opportunity I have been given this day to converse with you on behalf of the University Staff Advisory Council.

As I was reflecting on what to write, I was reminded of the recent Founder's day activities in which we honored those who gave so generously to establish this celebrated University. Without these gifts, there could be no University, no students, no distinguished faculty or alumni, no staff, no research or medical discoveries and the list goes on and on..... This thought permeated my mind as I imagined what this world would be like if no one ever decided to give. Thankfully, I do not have to reflect on this contemplation at all. It is evident by your generous giving that our world and its discoveries are being germinated continually by your gifts.

**"Men are all mosaics of other men"**- Henry Drummond made this statement in an address to a small group in 1872 and it still rings true today. As genuine leaders, it is our responsibility to establish and give noble gifts for future generations. This responsibility includes financial aspects as well as giving of our talents as faculty and staff. I will let you know that there are many talented staff members at Vanderbilt who truly know what it means to give. I am proud to represent this group to you.

As we move into the final phases of The Commons project, it will be crucial for our success to have leaders in place from all the segments of the Vanderbilt population- students, faculty and staff. The integration of this "home away from home" experience coupled with the pursuit of education is a cutting edge concept. To be successful, we must incorporate all facets of our environment: resources, minds and talents. You will find that the people who possess the most influence in life are people who believe in your mission. In an atmosphere of suspicion men shrivel up; but in an atmosphere of acceptance, they expand, and find encouragement and educative fellowship. Building these core relationships will be imperative in the years to come.

I am equally proud of the discipline and creativity with which we have executed our overall mission. We have drawn on our employees combined talents to identify avenues of change. It **is** all about the people. As Vanderbilt evolves and matures, human capital becomes increasingly important to ensure our continued success. This means doing all that we can to educate, energize and enhance our employees and challenge them to rise to the next level. We need to be constantly evaluating and anticipating our needs to make sure we have the right people in the right positions to nurture Vanderbilt's growth. We will need to hire new, talented professionals to help us execute our initiatives, as well as relying on staff members who have been with us over the years that share our core values. Nothing brings us more satisfaction than watching talented, motivated people advance at Vanderbilt.

Our ideas not only bring us great investment opportunities, they force us to constantly view things from different perspectives.

I am grateful to all the Board Members for their time, integrity, diligence and overall contribution to our success. Mere words cannot express how thankful I am that you have chosen to invest your resources into Vanderbilt. The lives that you choose to empower today will be impacting the world for generations to come.

Respectfully,

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