

Joel Seligman Report to the Faculty Senate
October 18, 2016

Let me frame where we are in strategic terms and conclude by highlighting that we now are ready to ascend to the Next Level.

Background

[Opening SLIDE] We have come a long way since 2005 when we began together.

[SLIDE 2] In 2004, we had 8,300 students; we now have more than 11,100 students, an increase of more than 33 percent.

[SLIDE 3] Our average two-score-equivalent SAT for undergraduates in Arts, Sciences and Engineering has risen from 1304 in 2004 to 1391 today, an increase from the 87th to the 96th percentile.

[SLIDE 4] We have grown from 2,009 faculty and instructional staff in 2004 to 2,560 today.

[SLIDE 5] Our budget has grown from \$1.66 billion in 2004 to \$3.63 billion today.

[SLIDE 6] Our endowment payout has decreased from 6.9 percent in 2000 to 5.7 percent this year.

[SLIDE 7] We have grown from 20,041 full- and part-time employees in 2005 to 28,923 full- and part-time employees in 2016.

[SLIDE 8] Where we once had two hospitals, we now have a six-hospital system as well as Accountable Health Partners with 1,940 providers, five urgent care centers, and three ambulatory care centers.

[SLIDE 9] *The Meliora Challenge* capital campaign concluded on June 30 of this year, raising more than \$1.373 billion, 14 percent above our initial \$1.2 billion goal. The campaign resulted in adding 103 endowed professorships, deanships and directorships, and providing more than \$225 million in student support, creating 388 new endowed scholarships and fellowships during the campaign. The George Eastman Circle has grown to more than 3,300 members. Since the campaign began in 2005, we have increased cash giving from an average of \$65 million to more than \$105 million; annual gift commitments (including cash and future pledges) have doubled from \$70 million to more than \$140 million. In all, since 2005, we have completed or initiated 28 new facilities, with a budget of \$857 million.

Our goals as defined in our 2013-2018 *Aiming Higher* Strategic Plan also largely have been achieved.

[SLIDE 10] In our 2013-2018 Strategic Plan:

- By 2018, we envisioned that the University of Rochester will fortify its position as one of this nation's leading research universities consistent with our core values of academic excellence, academic freedom, diversity, and community.
- Fundamental to our progress will be continued strengthening of our faculty, students, and staff.
- Five years from now we intend to be a university ever better in the quality of our teaching, research, clinical care, and creative arts.
- During the next five years we will make major commitments to data science; health care; faculty growth in the College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering; new or expanded programs to support learning and research; improved infrastructure; and classroom and library renovation.
- [SLIDE 11] We will successfully complete our first comprehensive capital campaign since 1924.
- Our campus in 2018 will include College Town, an expanded Brooks Landing, the Golisano Children's Hospital, a new

Imaging Sciences/Pediatric Ambulatory Building, a new University Data Science facility, and a Science and Engineering Quadrangle including the new University Data Science building and Goergen, Wilmot, Gavett, Hutchison, and Hopeman halls, the Computer Science building, and Carlson Library.

- The University, the Medical Center, and each School will have a sustainable financial model.
- Within our community we will build on our role as the region's largest employer and engine of economic development to help catalyze the revitalization of Rochester.

[SLIDE 12] In July 2015, the new Golisano Children's Hospital, the largest construction project in our history, opened with eight floors and 245,000 square feet of space dedicated to children and their families, including a greatly expanded Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Phase II construction of the new Golisano Children's Hospital building has begun and will feature six additional operating rooms, the Clay E. and Rita M. Buzzard Pediatric Cardiac Cath Lab Suite, and 23 new private pre-op and post-op recovery rooms. Construction is scheduled to be completed in 2017.

[SLIDE 13] Wegmans Hall, home to the Goergen Institute for Data Science, was dedicated on October 6 during our Board meeting and is scheduled for full occupancy in winter 2017.

[SLIDE 14] The Edmund A. Hajim Science & Engineering Quadrangle, which includes the Robert B. Goergen Hall for Biomedical Engineering and Optics, Hylan Hall, Hutchison Hall, the Computer Studies Building, and Wegmans Hall, also was dedicated during our Board meeting on October 7.

[SLIDE 15] Under the leadership of Rob Clark, Senior Vice President for Research, and Richard Waugh, Associate Vice President for Research and New Initiatives, in 2013 the University articulated a Research Strategic Plan to identify targeted growth areas within the

research enterprise, new ways to support existing expertise, and the development of novel, cutting-edge studies, building on the University's more than 700 research-active faculty, approximately 1,000 doctoral students, and more than 250 postdoctoral trainees engaged in scientific research. The Research Strategic Plan, among other things, led to the establishment of the Goergen Institute for Data Science, the Center for Energy and the Environment, and an intensified focus on entrepreneurship and new venture creation through the restructured office of UR Ventures.

[SLIDE 16] Construction also continues on a new 90,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art building for imaging sciences and complex pediatric care on East River Road to provide the region's first outpatient interventional radiology clinic and the region's first standalone clinic for the integrated care of autism, the William and Mildred Levine Autism Clinic.

[SLIDE 17] The School of Medicine and Dentistry and the School of Nursing have created the Institute for Innovative Education to facilitate common Medical Center educational priorities and to support and promote inter-professional education initiatives.

[SLIDE 18] The Warner School of Education has substantially amplified our presence in the greater Rochester community through its leadership in the partnership with East High School and has created a new Center for Urban Education Success, with an advisory council chaired by Board member Sandy Parker.

[SLIDE 19] In 2013, the Simon School and Arts, Sciences and Engineering effectively began the Barry Florescue Undergraduate Business Program, in which students either can complete a BA or a BS degree in business and fulfill the social sciences division of the Rochester curriculum.

[SLIDE 20] The Eastman School of Music has begun new programs in Film Music & Contemporary Media and Music Leadership and created the Beal Institute for Film Music and Contemporary Media.

[SLIDE 21] At Eastman, the year began with a refurbished Kilbourn Hall, with new carpeting, seats, aisle lighting, and handrails.

[SLIDE 22] The Simon Business School added and updated the Office of Student Engagement in Schlegel Hall, and also renovated classroom spaces in Schlegel and Gleason Halls.

[SLIDE 23] The Frederick Douglass Building has been transformed into a new student center. In the past few weeks, the four-story building has opened a state-of-the-art dining facility, redesigned student gathering spaces, the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center, and the new Language Center.

[SLIDE 24] A new bridge now connects Rush Rhees Library to the renovated Frederick Douglass Building.

[SLIDE 25] Evans Lam Square now is open and modernizes the first floor of the Rush Rhees Library. Lam Square was dedicated on October 5 and will function much like a town square, serving as the central location for library users to do research, collaborate on projects, and explore new technologies.

[SLIDE 26] On the second floor in Rush Rhees Library, we will soon complete a new 8,500-square-foot Humanities Center space, which will feature lounge and conference space, offices, and a seminar room. Dexter Perkins Professor in History Joan Shelley Rubin was recently appointed as the new Ani and Mark Gabrellian Director of the Humanities Center.

[SLIDE 27] A renovation and expansion of the press box in Fauver Stadium and a refurbishment of the concourse was completed in early October.

[SLIDE 28] Construction began during the summer on a new 72,000-square-foot residence hall overlooking the University's Brian F. Prince Athletic Complex, due to open in fall of 2017. The finished building will feature four residential floors to house approximately 150 new beds, meeting rooms for study groups and workshops, a new locker room facility, and training rooms for our athletic programs.

[SLIDE 29] College Town opened in May 2015 with 20 retail outlets, an apartment complex, a parking garage and more than 2,000 parking spaces, and the Hilton Garden Inn. There have been a few hiccups, such as the closure of Constantino's Market and the Corner Bakery. But a new Barnes & Noble Café is now open and [SLIDE 30] a new expanded CVS store opens soon. Since we last met in May, College Town Dry Cleaners, Rochester Running Company, and Saha Mediterranean Grill also have opened. We anticipate further openings over the next few months.

[SLIDE 31] In the fall of 2014, we opened a new apartment building at Brooks Crossing, which added housing for 170 upperclass students in one-to-four-bedroom apartments with full kitchens, individual bathrooms, air conditioning, and wireless Internet.

[SLIDE 32] In order to provide additional housing, we expanded the master lease with the developer of Riverview to add another building in the center of the complex which added an additional 104 beds to our residential life inventory. It is fully occupied. The building was completed in record time and handed over to the University in mid-July.

Our Strategic Position Today

[SLIDE 33] In strategic terms, during the past 11 years, we have stabilized the trajectory of the University and in several specific instances accelerated our progress.

[SLIDE 34] The Medical Center regional health care system continues to expand. Last year affiliates Highland Hospital and Thompson Health were joined by Noyes Memorial in Dansville and Jones Memorial in Wellsville. The Wilmot Cancer Institute now provides care through 11 regional locations. Endocrinology and Neurology/Neurosurgery earned Top 50 clinical rankings from *U.S. News and World Report*. Family Medicine, Neurology, Orthopaedics, Pediatrics, Public Health Science, and Surgery were ranked among the Top 20 in National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding.

[SLIDE 35] Notably, the Medical Center received \$19 million this past August from the NIH, its third consecutive clinical and translational award since our Clinical and Translational Science Institute was first recognized as one of the initial 12 recipients of a Clinical and Translational Science Award in 2006.

[SLIDE 36] The School of Nursing last year climbed 10 spots to number 25 in annual rankings of research funding from the National Institutes of Health. The school has begun a new master's program in Nursing Education and has expanded employer contracts for the Center for Employee Wellness to 13.

[SLIDE 37] During the past 11 years, Arts, Sciences and Engineering has increased its tenured/tenure track faculty from 312 to 361, increased its undergraduate student body from 4,077 in Fall 2006 to 5,533 in Fall 2016, and increased its master's students from 152 in Fall 2006 to 347 in Fall 2016, added 25 new undergraduate and seven graduate majors, seen a substantial increase in undergraduate engineering students from a total number of engineering students in all

classes in Fall 2006 of 681 to a total of 1,749 this year, and graduate (MS and PhD) engineering students from a total of 412 in Fall 2006 to 585 in this year's class. Key programs such as data science, optics, photonics, computer science, the humanities, earth and environmental sciences, biomedical engineering, mechanical engineering, and dance have been amplified as has the associated program in the Laser Lab. Significantly, the six-year graduation rate has increased from 80.7 to 86.0 percent in the past 11 years. This year the undergraduate program received its highest recent ranking in *U.S. News & World Report* of 32nd in the National University ranking.

[SLIDE 38] In relative terms, we remain one of the smaller private research universities with medical centers in the Association of American Universities (AAU) in terms of faculty and students, with our faculty size at approximately 60 percent of the average of 19 peers as of the most recent data and our student size at approximately 52 percent. Two of our private university AAU peers are outliers – USC with about 42,500 students and NYU with more than 49,000 students. If we exclude these two universities, our faculty size today is 63 percent of the average of our AAU peers and our student size is 60 percent.

[SLIDE 39] Our Long-Term Investment Pool, principally including our endowment, is \$2.1 billion compared to a close peer mean of \$4.0 billion. To be sure, we have made some progress, including doubling the rate of additions to our endowment in the past 10 years. We currently are 43rd overall in the size of our endowment.

[SLIDE 40] On September 13, 2016, S & P Global Ratings reaffirmed its AA- long term and underlying ratings on specified bonds based on its view that our “enterprise profile is extremely strong and financial profile strong...” Specifically, S & P commended:

- An approximately 9.3 percent increase in total headcount enrollment to 11,060 in fiscal 2015 from 10,111 four years earlier;

- Full-accrual financial operating and bottom-line margins of 2.2 percent and essentially break-even, respectively, in fiscal 2015 and 3.8 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively, in fiscal 2014;
- Robust management and governance;
- Concentrated revenue with more than two-thirds (68 percent) of its revenue from health-related operations;
- Successful fundraising with \$1.37 billion pledged at the conclusion of its *Meliora Challenge* capital campaign; and
- Low 3.11 percent maximum annual debt service.

These favorable credit rating strengths were diminished somewhat by:

- Strong competition from other Northeastern and mid-Atlantic colleges and universities;
- Location in an economically challenged region of New York;
- Endowment spending rate that has slightly exceeded its target of 5.5 percent for the two years preceding fiscal 2015;
- Capital spending the past five years that on average has been substantially in excess of the cash flow it realizes from depreciation and amortization, leading to a 63 percent increase in long-term debt when the overall increase in total assets was 33 percent; and
- Expendable resources that totaled \$2.2 billion in fiscal year-end 2015, resulting in a 63 percent ratio relative to operating expenses and 182 percent relative to debt outstanding.

[SLIDE 41] As with all leading research universities today, we face significant challenges. Some are ongoing. There is a transformation in health care that is likely to continue and is unpredictable. It is moving slower than we expected, but is a challenge for all research universities with medical centers as health care, among other things, likely gravitates from a fee-for-service payment model to

population health management with greater risk shifted to University hospitals.

[SLIDE 42] The rising cost of higher education is receiving considerable attention. Some in Congress are discussing mandatory payouts from endowments. If, for another example, public higher education is subsidized for families earning less than \$125,000, it is hard to know how that change will affect other federal University resources such as sponsored research and Pell grants.

[SLIDE 43] This is a period of increased international competition and increased international interdependency. Global engagement is more vital now than a decade ago because of our increasingly international student body and faculty, as well as relationships with an increased number of campuses throughout the world.

[SLIDE 44] In part because of the national and state elections this year, there is increased uncertainty of federal and state financial support for higher education and health care.

[SLIDE 45] On the other hand, our fundamental commitment to diversity was endorsed by the United States Supreme Court this past June in *Fisher v. University of Texas* with Justice Kennedy memorably writing for the 4-3 majority, “enrolling a diverse student body promotes cross-racial understanding, helps to break down racial stereotypes, and enables students to better understand persons of different races. Equally important, student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society.” This means that *Grutter v. Bollinger* will not be overturned and race can be taken into account in admissions decisions.

Ascending to the Next Level

[SLIDE 46] In March 2015, our campaign leaders met in Amelia Island and discussed our ambitions for the period until our likely next

capital campaign in 2020. When the Board met two weeks ago, our school and Medical Center leaders sharpened our focus on three integrated fundamental initiatives:

First, we are committed to the four Next Level initiatives – [SLIDE 47] Data Science, [SLIDE 48] Neuroscience, [SLIDE 49] the Humanities and Performing Arts and [SLIDE 50] Revitalizing our Community – as well as the Medical Center clinical health expansion. Each of the Next Level areas can result in national or international recognition if implemented effectively.

[SLIDE 51] Second, our schools and the Medical Center also have identified other strategic priorities.

[SLIDE 52] We are committed to supporting our faculty through endowed professorships and programmatic support. Simon is working to create research and faculty impact with particular focus on junior faculty.

[SLIDE 53] We also are committed to our enrolled students through scholarships and other support.

[SLIDE 54] Diversity is a core priority of the University of Rochester. Eastman is committed to increasing diversity in enrollment by starting several programs that will provide local children with access to quality music instruction, lessons, and good instruments with the aim of “growing our own.”

[SLIDE 55] RNA biology, or what the Medical Center describes as “genomics 2.0,” has broad implications for the development of novel treatments for virtually all disease processes. Focusing on RNA biology would take advantage of our prominence in this key program area, led by Lynne Maquat, the J. Lowell Orbison Distinguished Service Alumni Professor.

[SLIDE 56] The Medical Center is also focused on securing National Cancer Institute (NCI) Comprehensive Care designation. There are currently 69 centers designated as either “clinical” or “comprehensive” cancer centers by the NCI. Not only does NCI designation provide direct support for cancer research, it makes centers eligible for grants only available to NCI designees.

[SLIDE 57] The Center for Urban Education Success and East High School will leverage the significant resources already committed to our East Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) plan to develop research-based solutions to specific urban education problems. This new Center will address local problems for the benefit of the Rochester community while at the same time developing models that can have national impact.

[SLIDE 58] Arts, Sciences and Engineering is investing in broader experiential learning opportunities for students, such as faculty-led programs abroad to the Smith’s Island Archeological Project in Bermuda and the San Martino Archeological Field School in Italy.

[SLIDE 59] Third, we intend to integrate new Advancement and [SLIDE 60] Communications strategic plans with University, Medical Center, and school strategic priorities.

[SLIDE 61] In the past 11 years, we have achieved a strong foundation from which we now can ascend to the Next Level.

[SLIDE 62] We are now laying the groundwork for our next University strategic plan that we are likely to adopt to be effective July 1, 2018 that can take us substantially further. Work on this plan will deeply involve our faculty.

Recent Highlights

In addition to focusing on strategic planning, many on our campus have been very busy in the period since I last addressed the Faculty Senate. Let me highlight some of the extraordinary recent achievements by members of the University community.

[SLIDE 63] Jessica Cantlon, associate professor of brain and cognitive sciences, was selected by *Science News* as one of their 10 early-to-mid-career scientists to watch. Her work centers on how human and nonhuman primates distinguish between quantities and where the understanding of numbers comes from.

[SLIDE 64] LaRon Nelson, assistant professor of nursing and the University's Center for AIDS Research associate director of international research, was selected as the Ontario HIV Treatment Network's inaugural research chair in HIV Program Science for African, Caribbean, and Black Communities.

[SLIDE 65] Robert Waag, professor emeritus of electrical and computer engineering, received the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hajim School in September. During 46 years of research at the University, Professor Waag has helped improve the resolution and clarity of ultrasonic images, earning international recognition for his pioneering research in medical imaging, biomedical ultrasound, and acoustics.

[SLIDE 66] Under a four-year, \$2 million National Science Foundation grant, Qiang Lin, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, will lead a photonics system integration project to ultimately reduce the complexity and increase the capacity of quantum information processing for secure communication, metrology, sensing, and advanced computing.

[SLIDE 67] Harris “Handy” Gelbard, professor of neurology and director of the Center for Neural Development & Disease, received the Hilary Koprowski Prize in Neurovirology at the International Symposium on Molecular Medicine and Infectious Disease at Drexel University for developing an unconventional drug that shows promise in treating brain disorders associated with HIV.

[SLIDE 68] Ehsan Hoque, assistant professor of computer science, was named by *MIT Technology Review* as one of this year’s “innovators under 35” – an honor that has previously gone to individuals such as Mark Zuckerberg, the cofounder of Facebook; Larry Page and Sergey Brin, cofounders of Google; and Jonathan Ive, chief designer of Apple.

[SLIDE 69] Feng (Vankee) Lin, assistant professor of nursing was recently awarded the Brilliant New Investigator Award from the Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science at the organization’s 2016 State of the Science Congress on Nursing.

[SLIDE 70] Jerry Zimmerman, Professor Emeritus at the Simon Business School, received the 2016 Outstanding Accounting Educator Award at the annual meeting in New York City in August. He has now received all four major awards from the American Accounting Association.

[SLIDE 71] The Warner School and principal investigator Jeffrey Choppin received a \$2.8 million NSF-funded grant as part of its Learning in the Digital Age (LIDA) strategic initiative, a collaborative, multi-disciplinary effort to provide teachers in rural school districts access to innovative online professional learning experiences in mathematics.

[SLIDE 72] Jonathan Burdick, vice provost and dean of college admission, was presented with the Inclusion, Access, and Success award by the National Association for College Admission Counseling at its national conference.

[SLIDE 73] The Eastman Institute for Oral Health celebrates its centennial this year. The school's new, custom-designed SmileMobile, as part of a \$3.5 million Department of Health and Human Services grant, provides access to people with special needs, including older adults, people with developmental disabilities, and other medically complex conditions.

[SLIDE 74] Eastman School of Music's Arts Leadership Program certificate can now be earned online, allowing students who are not Eastman students to apply and follow the program to receive the certificate.

[SLIDE 75] Recently the University's Ain Center for Entrepreneurship co-hosted with Rochester Institute of Technology for the annual conference of the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship, which brought about 400 faculty and staff who are engaged in entrepreneurship education to Rochester to share best practices.

[SLIDE 76] This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Optical Society of America, reminding us that the histories of Rochester, the OSA, and the Institute of Optics are closely intertwined. OSA has returned to Rochester this week for its annual meeting.

[SLIDE 77] Former National Football League tight end Roland Williams will deliver Simon Business School's Diversity Conference keynote speech on October 21.

[SLIDE 78] Rochester was named by *U.S. News Real Estate* as number 19 in the 20 Best Places to Live in the U.S. for quality of life.

[SLIDE 79] In August we welcomed a class of 1,368 students to the College Class of 2020 from all over the globe. They come from 49 states (all but Alaska), 90 nations, and 1,089 high schools. Fifty percent

of the class is female, and 50 percent is male. Fifteen percent of the incoming class is composed of underrepresented minorities.

Commission Reports

[SLIDE 80] Last Thursday, I responded to the report of the Security Commission. Safety of all those on our campus is the most important consideration in making these decisions. This means safety both in the sense that there are increased concerns expressed by those in the Emergency Department and elsewhere in the Medical Center concerning their safety and also that all on our campus should feel safe.

[SLIDE 81] Early in 2016, I convened a commission chaired by Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer Holly Crawford to perform a five-year review of the recommendations made in the 2011 Security Commission Report on the Department of Public Safety. Commission members include senior leaders on the River Campus, the Medical Center, and Eastman, as well as advisors in Public Safety, Environmental Health and Safety, and the Office of Counsel. The charge of the Commission was to evaluate the current role of the Department of Public Safety in maintaining the safety of the University's campus environment, focusing specifically on adequacy in staffing, training, equipment, and authority of Public Safety personnel.

[SLIDE 82] In the period after the recommendations were forwarded to me on September 7, I participated in town hall meetings on the River Campus, the Medical Center, and the Eastman School of Music. I also discussed the issue with the University Cabinet, the University Management Team, the Board of Trustees, and with the Faculty Senate.

I invited confidential comments from anyone in the community and received 168 email messages that expressed opinions. I am deeply grateful to those who took the time to share comments with me.

I announced last week that we will take steps to deter the potential of unacceptable violence to our employees, patients, and visitors. While I made clear I am not authorizing arming Public Safety officers on the River Campus generally, I authorized the arming of 38 Department of Public Safety officers in the Medical Center to address safety concerns on a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week basis. This will provide an ongoing public safety presence in the Emergency Department, foot patrols throughout designated areas in the Medical Center, and a vehicle assigned to the Medical Center. These officers except in emergency circumstances would be present solely in the Medical Center.

I also will support arming the four senior officers of the Department of Public Safety, specifically the Chief, Deputy Chief, Patrol Commander, and Commander of Investigations.

[SLIDE 83] To avoid the possibility of any misuse of weapons on campus, I also created a Public Safety Review Board, which for an initial three-year term will be chaired by Francis Price of the University Board of Trustees. The Review Board will periodically review our selection, training, cultural sensitivity, de-escalation procedures, terms of engagement, and gun safety measures. It will also provide an independent review of any future instance of use of a weapon by an officer of the Department of Public Safety and review each instance of a complaint of racial bias in the Department consistent with existing University policies and procedures. The Review Board will report to the University President.

[SLIDE 84] The membership of the Public Safety Review Board will be approved annually and will include the chair or one of the co-chairs of the Faculty Senate. Mary Jane Curry has agreed to be the Faculty Senate representative this first year. The Board will also include a Medical Center faculty member and a Medical Center student, resident, or fellow selected by the Executive Committee of the Medical Center Institute for Innovative Education; the president or a delegate

selected by the Students' Association; and on a permanent basis, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, who will be expected to be a conduit for staff views, the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance, and the Chief Operating Officer of Strong Memorial Hospital. I will expect all members of the new Review Board to be selected by November 1 of this year and in subsequent years no later than October 1. The Public Safety Review Board annually will prepare a report for the President that subsequently will be published for the University community on its principal findings and recommendations. The Office of General Counsel will provide staff support for the Review Board. The Review Board will be expected to meet with or receive reports from the Department of Public Safety and all other relevant parties as necessary to effectively perform its work.

I particularly want to thank members of the Faculty Senate for their proposal of the Public Safety Review Board and their thoughtful comments generally. I am deeply grateful to all those who participated in town hall and other meetings and who forwarded written comments to me.

Commission on Race and Diversity Report

[SLIDE 85] In November of last year, I announced the creation of the Presidential Commission on Race and Diversity, chaired by Paul Burgett, vice president and senior advisor to the president, and Richard Feldman, dean of the College. On January 31, the Commission provided its interim report based on its charge to assess issues of race and diversity at the University. In the next few weeks, the Commission will submit its final report to me. The final report will be the culmination of a rigorous effort of inquiry and discussion.

The process for considering the report of the Commission on Race and Diversity and its recommendations will similarly include a period for open comments from the community and town hall meetings to allow people to express their views in person. I will not make a decision on

any of the recommendations made by the Commission until everyone who wants to contribute to the process has an opportunity to be heard.

Conclusion

These are challenging issues that deserve our full attention and thoughtful consideration.

In the past 11 years, we have achieved a strong foundation from which we now can ascend to the Next Level. As we now celebrate the conclusion of the most successful capital campaign in history and begin to chart our next chapter, I am particularly proud of the outstanding quality of our faculty, our students, our curriculum, our programs, and our role in the community. We are laying the groundwork now for our next University strategic plan that later can take us substantially further. I look forward to working with you to become *ever better*.