Dear Friends:

Despite the exceptionally difficult times we face, this fall was an auspicious start for the University’s 50th academic year. A half-century ago, on September 25, 1959, the newly chartered State College for Alameda County — now Cal State East Bay — with a handful of faculty and staff, welcomed its first 293 trailblazing students to classes in temporary quarters at a local high school. Funding was uncertain, and there were unresolved questions about the future, but a palpable sense of optimism filled the air. Faculty, students, and staff, together with regional leaders and supporters who had envisioned and fought for the college’s creation, were determined to succeed and make history.

A CRITICAL JUNCTURE

Today — with record demand, an all-time enrollment high of more than 14,800, and a stunning 17 percent cut in state budget support — we again find ourselves at a critical juncture dealing with great uncertainty not unlike 50 years ago. Now, however, not only is state support for higher education in steep decline, but our region’s economy and workforce are also threatened by recession and a rising tide of global competition. Never before has access to educational excellence and opportunity been more critical to the future of the region. And never before have we faced such daunting challenges as a regional institution. But the lessons of our history remind us that the future belongs to those with a resolute sense of destiny. Taking inspiration from our Pioneer heritage, we therefore recognize that we cannot afford to allow uncertainty about the future to distract us from making new investments and finding new resources to deliver on our mission.
RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS

In tackling our share of $564 million in budget cuts to the CSU system, we have moved quickly to reduce costs and increase efficiencies, in order to preserve our capacity to serve as many students as possible with the highest quality.

Most regrettably, starting next year — as part of a statewide reduction in funding for higher education — we will be required to reduce enrollment at CSUEB by 9.5 percent, or roughly 1,400 students. While this is a serious blow to our progress in growing enrollment and our historic mission of providing access to educational excellence, it reflects an even greater tragedy. Collectively, the state’s CSU, UC, and community-college systems will be forced to turn away 300,000 students at a time when employment prospects are especially bleak. This is nothing less than a great undoing of the state’s historic commitment to an educational system that has been the foundation of its ascendency as the world’s seventh largest economy.

WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE, our focus remains squarely on ensuring educational opportunity for as many of our region’s students as possible, coupled with the highest possible levels of support and service to ensure their success. We will do all we can to preserve access within the new constraints we face. Our recruitment processes will target the students best prepared for college success. And we will work even more closely with regional schools and community colleges to provide pathways to higher education for students who may need a little extra time and help before entering college. Most importantly, we remain committed to our long-term vision of enrollment growth to serve the growing and changing needs of our region, looking forward to the time when the state is again ready to meet the obligations of its social contract.

Recognizing that we cannot advance the University as quickly as we had planned, we have modified some of our plans for the future and scaled back certain near-term goals. But we have also resolved to do all we can — including working more closely with committed friends like you — to ensure these setbacks do not stand in the way of achieving the long-term vision we have forged together.

MARKS OF EXCELLENCE

In spite of serious financial setbacks, the University has nonetheless continued to make noteworthy progress:

- For the sixth consecutive year, the *Princeton Review* recognized CSUEB as a “Best in the West” university, noting its affordability; diligent, career-minded students; and vibrant, multicultural community.

- For the fourth consecutive year, the *Princeton Review* also rated the University as a “Best Business School,” commending its academics, career and placement services, student life, and admissions.
This fall, Cal State East Bay welcomed more than 1,460 new first-time freshmen, a class notable as much for the number of applicants as for being perhaps one of the best prepared in recent history.

For the 2009-10 academic year, Cal State East Bay launched eight new degree programs, including three additions to our growing online campus curriculum.

Pioneer men’s and women’s athletics are in their final year of candidacy to compete at the NCAA Division II level and are increasing their competitiveness by offering athletic scholarships.

The CSU Board of Trustees approved a new master plan for the Hayward Campus, providing a blueprint for our transformation into a regional educational powerhouse serving up to 25,000 students — nearly double our current enrollment — over the next 20 to 30 years.

These achievements are evidence of not only our progress, but also our readiness to capitalize upon and help stimulate economic recovery. By growing the number of skilled graduates we produce — now roughly 5,000 annually — Cal State East Bay will play an increasingly important role in the social and economic health of the region we call home. This recognizes a powerful truth: A vibrant region requires a great university, and a great university can only be sustained by a healthy, vibrant region.

**LAUNCHING THE COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN**

Last year, I shared with you our plans to launch the University’s first-ever comprehensive fundraising campaign. The campaign feasibility study we commissioned this spring concluded that we have the potential to raise $40–50 million or more over the next seven to eight years. Although we face an extraordinarily challenging economic environment, I concluded that we simply could not afford to wait. This campaign offers us a unique opportunity to raise foundation capital for a truly innovative future. At the same time, it holds the promise of a more secure future — one that does not rely on unpredictable state support to pursue new opportunities and work toward our ambitious goals.

Consequently, I am pleased to announce that we have begun soliciting major gifts for the initial “leadership” phase of our University of Possibilities campaign. During this phase, we are reaching out to corporations, foundations, and key friends for pace-setting campaign commitments. We expect this phase to last three to four years, at which time we will evaluate our progress and our goals, and move into the broad-based “public” campaign phase. I am confident that when the public phase launches and we invite all alumni and friends to show their support, we will be well on the way to our final goal.
CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

Regional stewardship commitments are at the heart of this campaign. These commitments were inspired and refined over the past two years with input from faculty, administrators, trustees, and friends like you, and reflect our highest priorities:

- Redefining academic quality through innovation in teaching and learning
- Increasing access to educational excellence and opportunity
- Fostering student success, ensuring engagement
- Capitalizing upon promising ideas and responding with agility to new needs

Among the campaign’s most important objectives is support for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education — a key University strategic initiative — including a new STEM center, building, equipment, and academic programs. This reflects the University’s unique three-part strategy to meet critical regional workforce and economic needs by preparing students for STEM careers; educating future STEM teachers; and developing a pipeline of future students interested in and ready to study STEM at a college level. Through this campaign, we will also seek support for scholarships and college pathway programs to preserve and expand access. In addition, we will seek support for undergraduate research, endowed professorships and chairs, and a 21st century learning commons to replace our aging library — essential to academic quality and student success.

The campaign prospectus and the University’s case for support of STEM education are available online at [www20.csueastbay.edu/news/2009/10/campaign.html](http://www20.csueastbay.edu/news/2009/10/campaign.html). I encourage you to read these documents and share your assessment with me so we can continue to shape this campaign and the future of our great, pioneering University.

A PERSONAL NOTE

This fall, I began my fourth academic year as president of Cal State East Bay. Of the many aspects of this experience that have made a lasting impression on me, the collaboration and support of the University’s closest friends — including many of you — has been the most profound. Thank you for working so earnestly and generously with me to help identify and develop the priorities and strategies that are not only guiding Cal State East Bay into the future, but also making possible the many achievements we are already seeing. My sincerest hope is that I can continue to count on your support and collaboration as we move ahead with our shared vision to transform Cal State East Bay to meet the needs and challenges of tomorrow.

Very truly yours,

Mohammad “Mo” Qayoumi, President
California State University, East Bay