Dear Friends:

**Reinvention** is both our greatest challenge and our most important opportunity at Cal State East Bay. The impact on the University of consecutive years of deep cuts in state support — $20 million, or 13 percent, over the past two years — has been profound. But even as we see indications that the economy may be poised for recovery, we recognize that doing business as usual is simply not an option. Instead, I have challenged the University community to rethink how we teach, support, and serve our students, and how we meet the learning and workforce development needs of our region. I invite you, as a close friend of Cal State East Bay, to join in this discussion.

**BUDGET CHALLENGES**

Last year, state lawmakers took drastic action to close a $42 billion budget gap. This included a painful $625 million cut to the California State University system for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which ends June 30. Since my last letter, Cal State East Bay has coped with its share of this cut by consolidating units, making operational changes to improve efficiency, keeping vacant positions unfilled, and reducing overtime and part-time positions. In addition, we reduced salary costs by 10 percent through a yearlong, CSU system-wide furlough program, which ends June 30, 2010.

Absent any budgetary increases, enrollment must be cut at every CSU campus in the 2010-11 academic year — including 9.5 percent at CSUEB, as I reported in my last letter. In addition, effective June 30, up to 140 non-teaching staff positions will be reduced through time-base changes, reassignments, and layoffs. Temporary faculty also will be reduced by 50 percent. And although we have not eliminated any academic programs, we will reduce certain class offerings and increase class sizes.
MAINTAINING MOMENTUM AS A DESTINATION UNIVERSITY

Given our remarkable trajectory over the past several years — growing enrollment, expanding campus and residential life offerings, building recognition — these are disappointing setbacks for the University as well for aspiring students who will be denied access to CSUEB and the opportunities it represents. But we recognize that these reversals are only temporary and therefore remain undaunted in our work and in our shared vision to transform CSUEB into the region's high-access university of choice and a center of innovation in higher education.

As you read this, the Fall 2010 class is taking shape as our enrollment team processes yet another record year of applications. I am proud to report that application volume — roughly 19,000 as of March 1, versus just over 13,000 at the same time last year — evinces Cal State East Bay’s headway in becoming a destination university.

To put this into perspective, over the past three years, our first-time freshman applications have tripled, graduate applications have quadrupled, and transfer applications have almost quintupled. During this same time, the demand for a Cal State East Bay education has grown and enrollment increased by 12 percent, exceeding CSU targets, and fulfilling a top University priority.

Following record-high enrollment of 14,749 in Fall 2009, however, we must reduce CSUEB’s total enrollment for the coming year to approximately 12,000, as the entire CSU system brings enrollment into balance with a diminished budget. Nonetheless, we will maintain a large freshman class of more than 1,300 — preserving our momentum in anticipation of a time when state and CSU budgets can again support enrollment growth.

Our enrollment management plan also includes careful monitoring of student retention with increased support for current students in meeting graduation requirements. We are dedicated to fulfilling our promises to current students while offering the opportunity of higher education to as many promising new students as possible.

With Cal State East Bay’s growing reputation in the region — and recognizing that the state economy and budget eventually will recover — I believe we are well positioned to resume growth when the opportunity presents itself.

STEM, SUSTAINABILITY, AND STEWARDSHIP

As I’ve discussed in our past correspondence, among the University’s highest strategic priorities is becoming a regional center of innovation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and a demonstration site for sustainability. Not only is this a natural expression of our regional stewardship mission and commitment, but it also builds
upon our core strengths. Although it is a bold vision, I believe it also is a critical transformative opportunity. That’s why it is at the heart of our strategic and academic plans, as well as University’s first comprehensive fundraising campaign, now underway.

With such an ambitious agenda for the future, Cal State East Bay is fortunate to be working with outstanding partners who share our vision of this University as a gateway to educational excellence, innovation, and opportunity in the future, ensuring and undergirding regional economic vibrancy and health. Here are just a few examples:

- Our College of Education and Allied Studies has been chosen by the California Emerging Technology Fund to participate in its School2Home Project to improve educational performance by bringing computing and broadband technologies into the classroom and homes of all students in California’s low-performing middle schools.

- With a grant from the Living Cities consortium, CSUEB has formed a “Gateways Cradle to Career Education and Workforce Partnership” with corporate, civic, philanthropic, and community partners to encourage innovation in regional education from pre-school through college as a means of ensuring regional economic and social vibrancy.

- Chevron has selected CSUEB for a $1.5 million grant to support the University’s mathematics achievement academies, which help underserved students gain ground in algebra and math — a crucial building block of college readiness.

- Cisco Systems has invited CSUEB to help launch its initiative to rethink education and build an entirely new and innovative community-based model of continuous, lifelong learning through a global “Learning Society”.

Cal State East Bay also continues to be a driving force in the CSU’s “Super Sunday” events, partnering this past February with 21 regional churches to encourage and support college aspirations among African-American students. Also in February, CSUEB hosted its annual Education Summit, designed to inform and empower African-American and Latino youth and their families to realize their college ambitions, attracting more than 1,500 attendees from throughout the region.

While Cal State East Bay’s STEM education vision is expansive and represents a substantial commitment of resources, the return on this investment will ensure our place as a university of choice in the future. It will raise our profile within the state and the nation and meet critical needs today and in the future. It will position us for sustained enrollment growth as the state’s economy and budget recovers. And it sets the stage for major partnership and fundraising opportunities among private supporters.
CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

Since the launch of the University of Possibilities campaign last summer, I’ve worked closely with our fundraising professionals to spread the word about this transformative initiative. To help guide the initial “leadership” phase of this campaign, which focuses on major corporate, foundation, and private gifts, we also have formed a Campaign Steering Committee led by two outstanding alumni, Lou Miramontes ’76 and Allen Warren ’89.

Despite the challenging economic environment, this campaign remains a priority for the University and its friends. Already we’ve received $4.6 million in gifts, pledges, and testamentary commitments. As I have expressed before, I am confident that over the life of the campaign — a projected 7 to 8 years — our fundraising activities will continue to grow, and we will achieve our campaign objectives.

I am excited and inspired — as I hope you are — by the tremendous potential this campaign represents in building a stronger philanthropic foundation for Cal State East Bay’s important work while also reducing our dependence upon uncertain public funding. I am deeply committed to the success of this campaign and am devoting more of my time to meeting and working with key University supporters, including many of you.

To share campaign information and developments with you, we’ve created a new Web site at www20.csueastbay.edu/giving/possibilities. There you’ll find overviews of campaign priorities and support opportunities, the latest news of support, and a helpful list of frequently asked questions. I encourage you to explore this site and learn more about the University of Possibilities campaign and its role in the reinvention of Cal State East Bay. And please continue to share with me your campaign ideas and suggestions.

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

The rapidly changing and growing needs of our students and our communities, together with the economic challenges we face, are constant reminders of the need to approach our work in new ways, with a fresh perspective about what it means to be our region’s steward and high-access university. At the same time, we also are reminded of the critical role that steadfast supporters — friends like you — play in our quest for reinvention. Knowing that I can continue to rely on your interest, counsel, and support, I remain convinced that the East Bay will not only continue its transformation, but also help lead the region and state in economic recovery and renewal.

Very truly yours,

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