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Memorandum

TO: University System Faculty and Staff and Administrators

FROM: Erroll B. Davis, Jr., Chancellor 

DATE: March 31, 2006

SUBJECT: Greetings from the New Chancellor

I had an opportunity to introduce myself to many of you via the webcast of my first board meeting in February. I am sending this message to reach those of you who missed the webcast.

My wife, Elaine, and I are excited about the prospect of living in Georgia and to have the opportunity to work for such a great University System. We have been overwhelmed by your legendary Southern hospitality, and we like it!

I want you to know that your work makes an important contribution to our state and in many instances to our nation. We must be driven by our mission of "creating a more educated Georgia" – a mission that changes individual lives and enhances the overall quality of life for our state's citizens.

It is due to your work and effort each day that higher education is available to citizens throughout the State of Georgia – a quality education that is drawing more and more national recognition. This University System also powers Georgia's economic engine. It is no surprise that this state is the fastest growing east of the Mississippi. That did not happen by accident. People and businesses are drawn to centers of education and intellect, and you are the nucleus of that intellectual activity. You must also be the catalyst for its expansion. That is why what you do has so many implications for the future prosperity of this state.

I appreciate all that you do to create and sustain a world-class system of public higher education, a system that serves more than 250,000 talented students, who understand the indisputable impact that education – quality education – will have in their lives.

The next few months will be a time of transition for the System, during which I will listen, learn and observe. Through visits to all 35 USG campuses over the next few months, I also will give you an opportunity to meet with me so that you learn my core values, my principles and commitments.

Already, I have had many meetings with staff and phone conversations with legislators and have been charged by the Governor with safeguarding Georgia's "crown jewels." I am anxious to hear your views regarding what is working and what isn't to help me in working with the Board of Regents to establish the future direction of this System.

So far, I have visited 11 USG institutions and enjoyed them all. Your creativity is evident and the pervasiveness of your achievements is staggering. But, I also am receiving lots of feedback on what we at the System level can do to make the System function better and more responsively to its constituents.

I will continue to use my campus visits as data-gathering opportunities to help formulate my vision and plans for the future. I want to better understand our System, its current performance, and the needs and issues on our campuses before drawing any conclusions. I also plan to meet with our legislative partners during and after the session.

The activity I have seen in just seven short weeks here in Atlanta – budgets being developed, new presidents being named, academic programs being evaluated, and economic development taking place – all reflect the incredible vitality and significance of this University System. My pledge – my contract – with you is to develop and articulate clearly what we will do, how we will do it, what our end results should be, and certainly how they should be measured.

This is a great time to be involved in public higher education. Never before in the nation's history has the creation of a more educated society held such great significance for the future direction of this state and our nation. In a world in which some countries are just starting to realize the dynamic power higher education holds to transform societies, our role in affirming that truth here in Georgia takes on a new, competitive urgency.

I'm excited to be on board. I look forward to celebrating our future achievements together.