April 11, 2008

Dear Rutgers Alumni,

Greetings from your alma mater! I am pleased to share with you the latest developments in our ongoing effort to establish a strong new partnership between Rutgers University and its alumni. This is one of the most important initiatives Rutgers can undertake.

Two years ago I appointed a 27-member alumni task force to advise me on how the university could better support its more than 360,000 living alumni, how our alumni could better support Rutgers, and what organizational structures would best help us attain both goals. The task force presented its report and recommendations and posted them online in August 2007, and we announced their release to the nearly 300,000 alumni for whom we have email or mailing addresses. Last fall I held a series of open forums with the alumni community on all three campuses, in Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick, and hosted an online forum as well, to discuss the findings and recommendations of the task force. These forums gave shape to the plan for alumni relations that I presented to the Board of Governors in December 2007. At the very heart of the plan is the creation of a single, unified, effective Rutgers alumni association embracing all alumni. The task force report and my plan are available at alumni.rutgers.edu/transform.

Following the Board's adoption of my proposals, I appointed an implementation team, chaired by Robert Stevenson, a 1965 graduate of the School of Engineering. The team has been meeting throughout the early months of 2008 to begin turning our new vision for alumni relations into a reality. I am happy to share the results of their work (visit alumni.rutgers.edu/transform/RUAA.pdf to read the implementation team report).

The implementation team’s recommendations outline a proposed structure and constitution for the new Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA), to which every Rutgers graduate will automatically belong without the requirement of membership dues. Every member will receive Rutgers Magazine and regular information about events and opportunities at Rutgers.

On April 24, the Board of Governors will consider the adoption of a resolution formally establishing the RUAA and providing for its structure and governance. The RUAA will then begin its work on behalf of all Rutgers alumni. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated volunteers who gave so willingly of their time to make this possible.

It is also my pleasure to announce that James H. Rhodes, a 1994 graduate of the Camden College of Arts and Sciences, has agreed to serve as the first chair of the new RUAA Board. Jim is the former president of the Rutgers University–Camden Alumni Association and was a member of the alumni task force and implementation team. I know that his leadership and experience will enable the RUAA to get off to a strong start.

Partnership between Rutgers and its alumni, with shared management and shared priority setting, will be a foundation of the new organization. You will be hearing much more—and more regularly—about Rutgers and its alumni, and you will be invited to participate in more activities than ever with your fellow alumni. Working together, we can ensure Rutgers University’s place in the top ranks of American universities, a goal that is achievable only by institutions that truly value and support their graduates.

In Rutgers spirit,
Richard L. McCormick
President
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey