

Good news amid challenging economic times

However, Madison students still need your help

It is my pleasure to report to you an unparalleled triumph. On Oct. 2, the Phi Beta Kappa Society voted to establish a chapter of the nation's oldest, best known and most prestigious academic honor society at JMU. You understand the honor and distinction this brings to our university when you consider that only 288 U.S. institutions of higher education have a PBK chapter. Selection by PBK signifies a broader awareness of the high quality of our JMU faculty and recognizes the scholarly capability of our bright and talented students. You can read in depth about what PBK means for JMU on the facing page.

I want to thank the individuals who worked to bring Phi Beta Kappa to JMU, including application committee chairs Charles H. Blake, Linda Cabe-Halpern and Donna Harper; and committee members Melinda J. Adams, Christopher J. Fox, John R. Hanson, Patricia N. Hardesty, Kay M. Knickrehm, Robert A. Kolvoord, Robert N. Roberts, Kristen St. John, John Scherpereel and Lee Sternberger.

Amid the joy of this news, the economy and the budget are weighing heavily on our minds this semester. We hear the economy is slowly recovering, and yet job losses are on the rise and tax revenue is diminishing correspondingly in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The economy is hitting home in heart-wrenching ways for record numbers of JMU students, some of whom have parents who have lost their jobs. These students are at risk of not being able to return to JMU next semester. During the first three weeks of this semester, 530 students appealed for aid due to changes in family financial circumstances. That is 109 more appeals in three weeks than we normally receive in an academic year. Unfortunately, JMU funds for assistance have already been depleted.

In response to this overwhelming need, you may have heard about Madison for Keeps, JMU's emergency student aid initiative ending Dec. 31. Every dollar donated to this appeal will be used to help students remain in school.

The good news is alumni response has been enthusiastic and gratifying. At the magazine press time, donors had contributed \$219,000.

I urge you to learn more about how this emergency fundraising initiative is helping students. Please read the Special Report on Page

'In these challenging times, Madison for Keeps demonstrates once again JMU's trademark innovation and boldness.'



JMU President Linwood H. Rose urges alumni and friends to support Madison for Keeps to "hold the door open" for current JMU students to remain Dukes.

31, send a gift in the enclosed envelope or go to www.jmu.edu/madison4keeps and encourage your fellow alumni to participate.

In these challenging times, Madison for Keeps demonstrates once again

JMU's trademark innovation and boldness. We consider Madison for Keeps as a natural extension of the campus tradition of holding the door open for those behind you. I encourage you to hold open the door to the Madison Experience.

Even with the energy and strength exemplified by Madison for Keeps, JMU must come to terms with some stark realities. For JMU to meet a budget reduction of almost \$5.3 million this fiscal year, we will cut just under \$3.3 million across the board. We will draw \$1.5 million from the central operating contingency fund and will apply the \$500,000 interest on tuition to meet these reductions. Without federal stimulus funds available to soften the blow, the next fiscal year looks even more distressing.

To make matters worse, these cuts come during a time of overall diminishing support for higher education in the commonwealth's budget. The percentage of total general fund support allocated to higher education has fallen from 14 percent in 1992 to 11 percent in 2009–10. In 2008, before this latest round of budget cuts, Virginia ranked 40th in state and local appropriations for full-time enrolled students among the 50 states, and in 2008 its appro-

priation per student was the lowest of 16 southern states.

This makes no sense when you consider that education is a solution to the problems facing society — whether transportation, health care, energy, crime, poverty, the economy, conflict. It takes educated citizens and experts to explore and analyze our options, discover new solutions and innovations, and create the societal and political will to implement them. In fact, there is a movement among Virginia business leaders called Grow By Degrees that acknowledges higher education's role in a strong society. Its goal is to increase the number of Virginia college graduates. I encourage you to visit www.growbydegrees.org and join the coalition to support higher education funding and growth.

While higher education is accused often of overinflated budgets, just the opposite is true at JMU. We are well known for our effectiveness and efficiency, which comes from our entrepreneurial character, our committed faculty and staff, and their universitywide belief in one mission — the education of our students.

JMU has long been known as a best value. Please do all you can to help students graduate from JMU and solve the world's issues.

LINWOOD H. ROSE
President
James Madison University