Dear Friends -

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying a happy New Year! It is indeed an interesting time as we experience great changes in our nation and in the world as a whole.

I am optimistic for what lies ahead for the University of Georgia Foundation in 2009. We have a donor base that remains steadfast in support of our beloved institution in good economic times and bad. Our board of trustees includes people with some of the brightest minds I have ever encountered and I personally believe, when it comes to managing the foundation’s resources, their abilities are unparalleled. They have done a wonderful job in fulfilling the foundation’s primary objective, which is to assure that all funding entrusted to our care provides the maximum benefit in support of the University of Georgia’s academic mission.

I’m optimistic for 2009 because the University of Georgia Foundation has weathered many economic downturns during its 72 years of existence and always emerged stronger. I expect no different results this time because of you, our donors, and because of the hard working dedicated professionals on our board who work tirelessly to assure the foundation not only survives but thrives regardless of the economic conditions.

For your unwavering support of the university and this foundation, I offer my heartfelt thanks and best wishes for 2009!

Emeritus Trustees honored at Grady College Gala

Congratulations to ten University of Georgia Foundation emeritus trustees who are part of the charter class of the Grady Fellowship!

I am optimistic for what lies ahead for the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. An induction ceremony for the inaugural class of 64 honorees was held during the Grady Gala in November.

UGA Foundation emeritus trustees honored at the event include Jimmy Alston, Otis Brumby, Jr., Maxine Clark, Carlton Curtis, Tom Dowden, William S. Morris, W.H. “Dink” NeSmith, Don Perry, Claude Williams, Jr., and Richard Yarbrough. Swann Seiler, a former ex-officio member of our board, was also inducted into the Grady Fellowship.

“The charter class of the fellowship are a core of individuals who proudly proclaim the University of Georgia and Grady College as alma mater and a few who, although not UGA graduates, have become synonymous with the college’s success,” said Grady College Dean E. Culpepper Clark.

Christina Faust earns prestigious Mitchell Postgraduate Scholarship

Foundation Fellow Christina Faust has another prestigious scholarship to add to her resume. She was recently one of only 12 students in the United States to be honored with a George J. Mitchell Postgraduate Scholarship sponsored by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance.

Christina will use the scholarship to study immunology and global health at the National University of Ireland in Maynooth. She is a senior pursuing a dual bachelor’s/master’s degree in ecology and was a 2008 winner of both the Truman and Udall scholarships. She is a product of Cedar Shoals High School in Athens and is the daughter of Lynn Faust and the late Tim Faust, who was a professor in UGA’s Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources.
UGA students get up-close look at history in Washington

As reported in our fall newsletter, we made an award in October from the Legacy Endowment of the University of Georgia Foundation Trustees to the Washington Semester Program. That initiative gives students the opportunity to live, work and study in Washington, D.C., and earn up to 12 hours of college credit in the process.

One of the more interesting stories related to the program involves Lucas Puente, a Foundation Fellow from Wilmington, North Carolina, who was selected for a fall internship in the office of then senator, and now president, Barack Obama. In addition to having a ringside seat for the historic 2008 presidential election, Lucas conducted research that was considered when the $700 billion bailout of the financial services industry was debated on Capitol Hill.

Lucas is a junior majoring in international affairs and finance. Prior to enrolling at the University of Georgia, he was valedictorian of his class at E.A. Laney High School in Wilmington and an all-state tennis player.

First Bill and June Flatt Professor appointed

Mary Ann Johnson, a foods and nutrition professor who has developed research-based programs to help older adults eat nutritious meals, has been named the first Bill and June Flatt Professor in Foods and Nutrition in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences.

“Dr. Johnson is a leader in the field of nutrition and aging,” said Laura Jolly, FACS dean. “In collaboration with local, state and federal agencies, she has developed, implemented and evaluated programs designed to increase physical activity, improve dietary habits and self-management of diabetes and other age-related conditions.”

Johnson’s research programs have received continuous funding for nearly 25 years. She has written or co-written more than 100 peer-reviewed articles, reviews and book chapters, and serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of Nutrition for the Elderly and Nutrition Reviews.

Bill Flatt, professor emeritus of foods and nutrition, has been a part of the university’s faculty since 1969 and served as dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences for 13 years. Dr. Flatt endowed the new professorship with his wife June, the funds for which are managed by the UGA Foundation.

Carl Swearingen serves on governor’s working group

Carl Swearingen, an emeritus trustee of the UGA Foundation, is part of a working group appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue that is investigating innovative ways to create long-term, comprehensive education reform in Georgia. This group is co-chaired by former University of Georgia President Charles Knapp and is working to help determine how the state might transform education policies and practices to make Georgia’s educational system more globally competitive in the next 15 years.

UGA degree provides high return on investment

It was with great pride that I read about a study conducted by Smart Money magazine (a publication of The Wall Street Journal) which reported the University of Georgia provides a tremendous return on investment to students earning degrees.

The study evaluated median salaries of graduates three and 15 years after graduation and compared that to the cost of tuition incurred to earn their degrees.

With a very impressive return on investment of 239%, UGA ranks fourth in the United States with a payback nearly triple that of some Ivy League institutions and far ahead of most universities that have been considered the crème de la crème of higher education in America.

The study only affirms that our efforts as a foundation are right on track in funding many chairs, professorships and scholarships that attract the best and brightest faculty and students to Athens.

Dr. Keith Harris named first Barry G. Harmon professor in veterinary pathology

The University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine has appointed Dr. Richard Keith Harris, a nationally recognized leader in pathology and research, as the first holder of the Barry G. Harmon professorship in veterinary pathology.

The professorship is made possible by an endowment established through the University of Georgia Foundation by friends and family in memory of Dr. Harmon, the former department head who passed away in 2007.

Dr. Harris, who comes to the university from Wyeth Research in Chazy, N.Y., brings 32 years of veterinary experience, including head veterinary pathologist positions in the United States Air Force and at several national pharmaceutical corporations.