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## State of the University Address

October 21, 2009

Kevin M. Ross, President

Good afternoon everyone. As you just saw, we have experienced quite a year at Lynn University. In our 2008-2009 academic year, we saw:

- The Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center and the Perper Tennis Complex begin to emerge from the ground.
- We witnessed the launch and successful start of our new core curriculum, the Dialogues of Learning, and a subsequent January-term that exceeded all expectations in its popularity and distinctiveness; as well as a corresponding speaker series that even further enlivened and helped shape the campus dialogue in the spring, not just among the student body or colleges, but also in departments and offices across campus.
- We have had several faculty and staff members present on numerous occasions and attend prestigious programs, including our Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Cynthia Patterson, and others, who will be presenting next month at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and Librarian Susan Montgomery, who attended a Fellows program at Vanderbilt University.
- And we saw our first-ever NCAA Division II National Championship in baseball, a championship that was easily among our most exciting, and one that had everyone – from our athletes and athletic department to Lynn alumni from as far back as our founding – reveling in this historic achievement. Also, our men's soccer team and men's and women's tennis team clenched their Sunshine State Conference titles; baseball coach Rudy Garbalosa was named ABCA/Rawlings National Coach of the Year; and we welcomed our new women's soccer coach, Chip Dutchik, and new women's basketball coach, Niki Washington, to campus.

We have also had a number of other recent successes to celebrate today, including the launch of our new Ed.D program in the Donald E. and Helen L. Ross College of Education.

We just welcomed our inaugural class, composed of local education administrators, and we are proud to be one of the 28 universities nationwide participating in the prestigious Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's Project on the Education Doctorate.

We recently launched some exciting new academic programs abroad. Lynn students now have the option of participating in a full immersion China study abroad program, starting in the spring of 2010, where they will work, study and live in Shanghai.

We have also partnered with the Swiss hotel management school DCT University Center to create a Lynn Switzerland program, where students in Switzerland have the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Professional Studies from Lynn.

And even now, additional partnerships with like-minded institutions abroad are being considered.

At our Welcome Convocation in September, our faculty carried in a new gonfalon – or rather, a newly revised one, announcing the establishment of our College of Liberal Education. This name change signifies this college's status as the very literal heart of our core undergraduate curriculum. Attached to that change, of course, were many other exciting developments, including Academic Affairs' ongoing work to fully weave international education into the very fabric of our experience and education.

I'm excited to see the work that comes together in that arena, and in so many others, on the academic front. Those of you engaged in that work have heard me say many times how truly impressive that work is.

But you haven't needed my endorsement. Not only has the Association of American Colleges and Universities endorsed your work – including in the Chronicle of Higher Education – but our faculty have also become fixtures on the panels and presenters lists at AAC&U's conferences based on our – your – success.

These are all incredible successes for our institution, and I would like to congratulate and thank all of you, because we couldn't have achieved all this – and so much more – without you.

There is much to celebrate right now, but as always at Lynn, the best is yet to come.

As you'll hear in the next few minutes, this year packs even greater promise for our university. In the weeks and months ahead, we will welcome to campus one of the country's – and world's – most successful and inspiring businessmen and philanthropists (who also happens to be a reality TV star); unveil a new program that will allow the hungriest and most driven students on our campus to save, at a minimum, \$45,000 on the cost of their undergraduate degree; and make an announcement of work on yet another new facility on campus – one that only two or three people in this room have even heard mention of.

But before we get to that exciting news, I want to take a few minutes – as is my custom during this speech each year – to take a deeper look back at the previous year – and the challenges and opportunities it has presented.

At this event last year, I stood here, in front of this seal, and pointed to the palm at its center. I mentioned at that time how appropriate that palm tree is for us. It is a tree that has literally withstood a number of storms and threats, yet remains pointed skyward – alive and well.

I mention that palm again today because this past year was a stormy one. And we have, like almost every other institution across the country – university or otherwise – seen our fortunes tossed in the breeze more than at any other time in recent history. The storms that buffeted us took several forms. And in most cases, we were not the only ones feeling their effects.

I recently read a piece in the *Economist* titled “Sorrow in the Sunshine State.” It mentioned our drop in tourism, the burst of our property bubble, the rise of our unemployment and the struggle of our local businesses. In short, the economy has been unkind to us as a state. And we have seen these impacts first hand.

We also have been – and will continue to be – impacted by the changing higher education landscape, locally, at the state level, and even nationally.

We are now competing with the new trend of traditional two-year community colleges offering four-year degrees at lower costs. And not only are these campuses adding these programs, but they’re also partnering with other institutions to offer master’s degrees on their campuses. Palm Beach Community College – now Palm Beach State College – will soon be offering master’s degrees at their Lake Worth campus through Nichols College, a private Massachusetts-based business school.

On top of that, Florida’s public institutions are experiencing an upswing in enrollments due in part to the economy. As the *Sun-Sentinel* reported, the rapid growth has students with urgent needs at institutions like FAU having to wait weeks to see an advisor, and classes are swelling to sizes unimaginable on campuses like ours. Yet the price tag keeps students there, and away from institutions like Lynn, where our faculty advisors tend to have only 20-25 students in their care.

There are also other competitive forces mounting. One, as I mentioned at this time last year, is the growing competition by for-profit entities, many of whom are planting stakes as close as the office parks along Yamato Road.

And just yesterday, the Sentinel reported that Nova Southeastern is deepening its own commitments in our home county, building a new 75,000 square foot facility in Palm Beach Gardens.

And there’s also the punks – or rather, “edupunks.” In an August issue of *Fast Company*, the magazine wrote about a new group of so-called “edupunks” who are out building online models aimed at enabling, as the magazine put it, “high-tech do-it-yourself education.”

The edupunks tag, said an educational technologist at the University of Mary Washington, was born, in part of (and I quote) “the utter irresponsibility and lethargy of educational institutions and the means by which they are financially cannibalizing their own mission.”

Cathy Casserly, a senior partner at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, put it this way: “The advent of the Web brings the ability to disseminate high-quality materials

at almost no cost, leveling the playing field. We're changing the culture of how we think about knowledge and how it should be shared and who are the owners of knowledge."

I don't want to suggest that we're competing head to head with the for-profits, or that one of the handful of new online movements pose a real threat to those of us with accredited degrees at this time. In fact, we know from SAT records that our competition is in fact 50/50 private and public – everyone from FAU across the street to our ICUF peer the University of Tampa. But certainly, we ignore these changes at our own peril.

And thankfully, with Lynn 2020 as our guide, we haven't simply been ignoring the challenges of tomorrow for those of today.

A prominent edupunk, David Wiley of Brigham Young University, said in that same *Fast Company* article that those universities that "can't find the will to innovate and adapt to changes in the world around them... will be irrelevant by 2020."

I couldn't agree more. And in fact, I don't think we're alone. Even the White House and Department of Education are eyeballing the year 2020 and pressing for innovation and attention among America's citizens – and its higher education institutions – to achieve an ambitious goal.

It is President Obama's challenge and goal to see the U.S. have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by that year.

We will certainly have a role to play in that. And I know we're up to the challenge.

With our eyes on 2020, we've already achieved so much. The Dialogues of Learning, the Wold Performing Arts Center, the Perper Tennis Complex and our new master plan are all part of our Lynn 2020 successes. Other completed Lynn 2020 priorities include the reduction of numerous student fees and the creation of a first-rate teaching workshop, the Center for Instructional Innovation. And in Priority One of our strategic plan, which focuses on our academic offerings, we have 12 out of our 14 initiatives already completed or currently in progress.

So clearly, in many ways we've already risen to the challenges of 2020. But there's more to do. And in the short term, I want us to focus on some more immediate challenges.

In some ways, we rode out the current economic storm better than others. Though we saw some initial impacts in our endowment, we saw little operational set-backs as a result. And thanks to prudent budgeting over the last several years, many of the financial impacts that beset other campuses – and their students and employees – haven't come to pass here, and we should take comfort in that.

A recent national survey found that two-thirds of private colleges planned to freeze salaries and 53 percent were cutting benefits. While we did have to freeze increases, we did not cut pay – or benefits – or employees.

In fact, that was a very deliberate strategy, to assure that we kept you, the people who make this place special, employed and on campus. And I'm proud that we were able to accomplish this.

But we have felt the effects of this recession. And today I wanted to share with you some details about how we in particular have been affected— not to disarm you, but rather to arm you and embolden you.

And I feel confident that I can accomplish that today, primarily because of the work already underway – a very clearly defined, determined work – to assure we emerge from this storm stronger than ever.

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This year, our overall undergraduate enrollment is down 9 percent.

We have seen since 2005 a decline in the size of our incoming class. The largest decline occurred between the incoming classes in 2007 and 2008, when we chose quite intentionally to increase our focus on quality over quantity. Clearly, much of this drop off in numbers was anticipated and even purposeful. Even this fall we expected a bit of a dip, and we saw one.

That said, we exceeded the new student number we anticipated. Yes, exceeded.

It is in the returning student numbers where we saw unexpected fluctuation. This year, our returning student numbers did not hold to our usual return rate. Put simply, we saw more than 100 students not return whom we expected to see. That's an issue. And one we need to address.

But before I get to that: here's some good news. Last year I touted the quality of the new students we attracted. Today, I can do that again. This year we once again attracted a more qualified and better performing class to Lynn. The average sat scores for this year's class – the Class of 2013 – are 27 points above the Class of 2012 and 53 points above the Class of 2011.

But that is not the only positive increase we have seen. Our increase in graduate students this term was almost 8 percent – a sizeable jump. In our most recent available data, we have also seen an increase in our six-year graduation rates.

But we still have a lot of room to improve – and we need to all work hard to make those improvements. For one thing, we must continue to help parents and families understand the value of a Lynn education – and an independent education in general. We know that those families, as I said at this time last year, are walking a beam right now. The economy and the uncertainty attached to it has made decisions of this magnitude all the more harrowing. They're doing a balancing act, and we must be sensitive to that.

And because of that, we know that the answer to this decline is not to dramatically raise our annual tuition rate or pass any additional fees on to our students.

For the third year in a row, we have maintained a tuition rate increase that was below the national average. As the College Board just announced yesterday, private non-profits raised their tuition by an average of 4.4 percent last year, down from 6 percent three years prior. Our own increase was just 2.9 percent. And I expect the board to continue down this path of making Lynn more and more affordable when compared to peers across the state and nation.

This academic year we have also halted room and board increases, and we are continuing our long-running freeze on student fees.

So our solution to this problem is not to pass it on to our students – our solution is for all of us to work to improve and increase our retention and recruitment.

Right now, our data indicates that we have some work to do. But is achievable work. And it is work we always knew we'd have to tackle when we set our minds to increasing the average quality of students we recruited, rewriting our core curriculum and shutting down one popular doctoral program in favor of building another to serve as a national model.

Would it have been easier for us to be doing this work in a sunnier economic cycle? Of course. But again, this is work we knew and know needs to be done. And we must continue to do it.  
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And because of our careful planning and dedication to doing more with less, we can. Through hard work and cooperation among everyone here at Lynn, we have an executable plan to increase our enrollment and restore us to firm financial footing, which may take time.

We have had to shift around some of our Lynn 2020 priorities – but that is okay, because we intentionally created a flexible strategic plan. And we have had to cut down in our travel and conference attendances. We could invest in sending more people to conferences, but that would mean having to lay off some of our employees. We decided it was more important to invest in our people, and I hope you all agree.

So I want to thank you all of you for your patience, your understanding and your sacrifices.

We are currently building a retention plan, and we have engaged outside experts to perform a retention analysis and provide us with recommendations. There is also a tremendous amount of work being performed right now by integral departments around our campus.

Our Office of Admissions, with support from my office, is working hard to finalize their new – and Lynn's first – recruitment plan, which is called for in Lynn 2020. They have spent a lot of time and effort reviewing the entire admissions operation, providing additional staff training and building communications flows and statistical reports. Additionally, their office began distributing new view books, and the revised admissions web site now offers two additional electronic applications.

Vice President for Enrollment Management Delsie Phillips and her team have also expanded our reach – and we believe this “widening our funnel” approach will allow us to continue to improve our quality, while also slowly increasing the size of our undergraduate student body.

Admissions will also increase their efforts to recruit local students and, in particular, Hispanic students, one of the fastest growing demographics in Florida. In 2005, Hispanic students accounted for more than 10 percent of Florida's public school graduates, and that number is expected to increase 5-10 percent by 2015.

Additionally, they will be focusing their efforts on post-9/11 GIs and their families. I am proud to say that Lynn University was an early adopter of the newly revised GI Bill and the Yellow

Ribbon Program. Congressman Ron Klein, a huge supporter of the bill, recently came to visit our campus to discuss the education of our veterans, and I am proud to announce that Lt. Colonel Jeffrey Johnson will be spearheading our institution's veterans' affairs efforts.

Lynn's Office of Finance has also been laying the groundwork to allow us to not only weather this storm but also grow in the future. For the fourth straight year, this office is continuing to put lean muscle on our university's frame, expanding our services while making the best use out of our available resources.

Meanwhile, our Office of Marketing and Communication has been leading a campus-wide branding effort. To support that effort, they have launched a concentrated search engine optimization campaign and within the next few days, along with Academic Affairs, they will debut our individual colleges' new Web sites.

They have also worked diligently to become a national leader in the social media space – executing a full court press on Facebook and external college search sites, while growing the university's blogging program to include 10 student and three staff blogs. And they've even convinced me to join them on Twitter – which was itself no small job, I assure you!

Also underway is a concentrated push and focus on our local advertising market. Behind the campaign “Stay Closer to Home, Go Farther in Life,” we are actively promoting the value, return on investment, safety and practicality of a Lynn education.

The Office of Development has had a successful year with the strong support and growth of the Wold Performing Arts Center and Perper Tennis Complex. These achievements are a tribute to the hard work of this office, but these are not the only areas where we are seeing the results of their work. Ending June 30, this office had a \$6.5 million fundraising year – and that is tremendous success in one of the fiercest recessions to hit our country in the last century.

Lynn's Student Administrative Services has also been doing a tremendous amount of work, and according to our research, they have been picking their pitches well over the past few years. This office is continuing to guide parents and students through all aspects of the student financial process. Much of what our marketing materials and counselors say to students points them right back to this department and its staff.

Lynn University's Academic Affairs department is a testament to the results – and rewards – of planning. They are providing our students the unique opportunity to participate in a dynamic, outcomes-focused curriculum that favors experience and applicable knowledge.

They are also providing one of the best environments for undecided students because this curriculum allows them to experience a variety of subjects in various fields. These students are not confined to classes within a single major and have room to explore.

And to enhance the Lynn experience for our students even further, Academic Affairs is now overseeing the development of an even more dynamic set of majors.

It is our mission to provide the education, support and environment that enables individual students to realize their full potential and to prepare for success in the world, and to me, the

Office of Student Life is one of the most important actors when it comes to fostering and providing that environment.

Under our new Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Phil Riordan, the Lynn environment is becoming more comfortable, welcoming and invigorating than ever before. He and his team have implemented a new open campus security approach, launched a new student-led residence life system, increased lively – and now co-ed – intramural programs and even added a long-overdue women’s center and multicultural center. And on top of that, this department has committed itself to leading the H1N1 offensive on our campus.

So many of our university’s efforts are team affairs, requiring involvement from members of a number of different departments and colleges across campus, but I wanted to highlight one in particular that is truly, in every way, a team project – and one I believe shows our commitment to making a Lynn degree affordable, and especially appetizing to the “hungry” – those students with a passion for using their college campus as a proving ground, not a rest stop.

Today I am proud to announce our firm decision to offer eligible students a three-year degree option, dubbed Lynn 3.0, beginning in the fall of next year. A cabinet committee is currently working out all of the final details, and this program will only be offered to a select few of our most driven students.

But the rewards to those capable of the challenge will be great. Not only will they earn their degree faster and be able to enter the workforce or a graduate program earlier, but they will also save a minimum of \$45,000 on their undergraduate degree here at Lynn.

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I’ve mentioned a number of the ongoing initiatives aimed at increasing the size of our new class in 2010. But there is more to be done – and I need all of your participation.

Last year I asked you to be good stewards of the resources at your disposal, and you succeeded at every level in that effort – and we are all sitting here today because of your success. But today I am going to ask even more of you. I am going to ask each of you to do everything in your power to keep those students already attending Lynn engaged in the work they are currently doing.

Our job: retention – making sure our current students return to Lynn each subsequent year. Our Admissions office works extremely hard to admit students who are the right fit for Lynn, and all of us put a lot of labor into tweaking our programs to provide the best experience for those students – and we need everyone’s help making sure those students stay at Lynn.

I am asking that you do everything within your powers to clear away the hurdles for our students and their parents. The work we do is complex. For example, balancing a financial aid package with many moving parts is a challenge for those of us who do it professionally – so imagine how confusing it is for our students and families. When you have an opportunity to help them sort out this confusion, please continue to take that initiative.

And if you have students working in your office, challenge them. And then reward their success with even greater challenges. Our students, through the guidance of our colleges, Employee

Services and our career center, get greater professional experience working for us than they can at many other institutions, and often, than they would get off campus.

Please continue to make them feel a part of your team. And find new challenges to bring them back next year to continue as a student worker.

Those of you in the classroom also have an important role to play. Continue challenging your students. And when you have the opportunity, challenge them outside of your classroom as well. In your role as mentor and advisor, help them identify how to apply their unique skill sets in the professional – and rapidly changing and hard to predict – world, as well as in their other studies.

Help them see all of the benefits that come with a Lynn education – benefits that they would never experience at another institution of a larger size or at an institution that focuses less on the students and more on other measurements for faculty success.

While we will have our formal retention plan and analysis finished mid-spring, this is an effort that already occurs on our campus and will need to continue. Your effort and energy in this direction will pay dividends. And I hope you will continue to be about it without hesitation.

We have seen a lot of flux and change over the past few years here at Lynn. We created a new core curriculum with new courses, formed new relationships and created new class dynamics. We have become a better version of ourselves. And now, a little shy of five years into Lynn 2020, the time has come for us to streamline how we define ourselves.

For that purpose, I have asked several members of our marketing office to apply their time and creativity toward composing that definition. Put simply, I have asked them to create a page - a literal page we will all use to tell others – our neighbors, our spouses, our friends and our colleagues – exactly who we are and all we offer.

That document will be in your hands just as soon as is possible. But in the meantime, I want to ask all of you to warm up your voice. As I've mentioned, our goal is to increase not only our role as a community resource, but also to recruit more of our students from South Florida. In that effort, no billboard, radio ad, or open house is more important than what you say about Lynn University.

So while I have you here, I'm asking for that. Your voice. Don't be shy. Tell your neighbors about this institution. And when you network with colleagues, do the same. Brag on yourself, sure. But brag on Lynn as well. We have much to brag on (I'll even give you more examples in just a minute).

And as small a thing as it may appear to be, wear that attitude on your sleeve as well. Literally. Wear your fighting knight pride to Publix. Drape the blue and white across your bumper. Use that discount you get in the campus bookstore.

I think we've all been content with being a best kept secret for way too long. It's time for some boasting. So often I hear from parents who say "if only others knew" about all we offer. If only they did.

Well, the most powerful messages we can offer are our own. So until you get your messages, please use your own. If we all add our voices to the chorus, our community and neighbors will begin to hear the notes.

Stephanie Hammerman, a sophomore who is right now spearheading Disability Awareness Month, recently wrote:

“The Lynn student experience is unlike any other... the classroom is not just a place for cracking open books and listening to lectures. It is a place where discussions are formed and people are listened to. Professors don’t just stand and lecture, but sit and listen. It makes all the difference when their help is needed, and Lynn surrounds its students with that exact atmosphere.”

This is a powerful testament to all of you – because you have created that environment for this student. But we need to make sure that each student feels this excited to be at Lynn – and I know that all of you are up to that task.

So thank you in advance for all of your work. I am looking forward to having the opportunity to stand before you here again next year and share with you the good news of our collective successes.

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Over the next year, we have many exciting things to look forward to that will add to our growing list of successes. And I encourage you, again, to be unremorseful in your enthusiasm for sharing this news.

Master planning is one of the initiatives of our strategic plan, Lynn 2020, and this past year, we have retained the services of architecture and design firms Gensler and L.A. Design and international sustainability firm Buro Happold Consulting Engineers.

Our master plan is due to the City of Boca Raton next month, and we decided that if we had to do it, we were going to do it right.

Gensler has been on campus regularly in recent months, meeting with scores of students, faculty and staff, and in late September they revealed to many of you their drawings of what Lynn’s campus may look like in the future. And I am pleased to inform you that our master plan was just approved by our Board of Trustees last week at their meeting.

Key features of their most recent drawings include a university center that serves as the real heart of the campus, additional meeting rooms and workspaces, a wide range of new academic buildings and athletic facilities, as well as other residential features. Once complete, our campus will become even more residential than it is today – currently 43 percent of our space is residential, and we are planning on that number increasing to 60 percent.

Also, at our urging, the plan focuses on sustainable outcomes, setting ambitious goals to significantly cut our carbon emissions, water building use and site water use, increasing native plantings and reducing waste taken off site.

We have all already seen physical change to our campus with the development of the Wold Performing Arts Center and the Perper Tennis Complex, and soon we will have additional opportunities to come together as we celebrate the completion of Lynn's newest resources.

Right now, we are scheduled to officially dedicate the Perper Tennis Complex on January 29, 2010, and the Wold Performing Arts Center dedication and open house is planned for March 18, 2010.

These academic and athletic facilities, I'm proud to point out, are emblematic of who we are as a university. All are being funded through donations – through the generosity of friends and the hard work of our development officers – and all of these resources stem from our strategic plan. This fact will make their opening all the more exciting and refreshing for us all.

This year we will also be hosting an exciting line up of speakers for our Dialogues of Innovation Speaker Series, including Dr. P.M. Forni, co-founder of the Johns Hopkins Civility Project and author of the book "Choosing Civility," and Blake Mycoskie, founder and chief shoe giver of TOMS Shoes Inc., who you may have seen recently in an AT&T commercial or watched on the TV show the Amazing Race.

As part of this series last year, we welcomed Andrew Zolli, a globally connected leader of the next generation of futurists; Melissa Harris-Lacewell, an associate professor of politics and African American studies at Princeton; and Daniel Silke, a keynote speaker and independent political analyst specializing in South African politics.

Of course, we will also be welcoming David Gregory to campus next month for this year's Dively lecture. And Ed Maucker, editor of the Sun-Sentinel, has kindly agreed to join us for that event to stand in for our departed friend and colleague Dean Irving R. Levine and introduce Mr. Gregory.

Unfortunately, Dean Levine was not the only member of the Lynn family that we lost last year. We also had to say goodbye to Board of Trustees member John T. Hannifan; friend and benefactor Harold Toppel; former Lynn staff member Ed Kowalchick; former Lynn faculty member Bob Curran; and Lynn sophomore Wyatt Cragan; as well as numerous spouses and loved ones of many members of the Lynn family. And although it was difficult to lose these family members, we will always remember them and the impact that they made on us and our institution.

Right now, we are in the middle of our reaccreditation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which will be completed in 2011, and I would like to thank Dr. Jason Walton and Dr. Cynthia Patterson for chairing this overall effort.

As part of this process, we are required to develop a quality enhancement plan, or QEP. The purpose of the QEP is to reflect and affirm our commitment to the enhancement of the quality of higher education, and the QEP addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning.

Through a broad-based consultation with all of our university's constituent groups, we have decided that the topic of our QEP will be community engagement with a service learning component. I would like to thank Phil Riordan and Anna Krift for co-chairing this committee.

Community engagement wasn't that surprising of a topic, actually. We've seen an appetite among our community for giving back – an appetite that has seen tens of thousands of dollars raised in just the last year alone for charities including Food for the Poor, the American Cancer Society and many others. It seems we can't pitch a fashion show or January-term without there being a social conscience element connected to it.

That has been purely organic – and inspiring. Your, and our students', appetite for that has lit this fire. And through the QEP, we will all do still more – for those in need, but also for ourselves (as we know the two are connected).

And right on the heels of our accreditation will be the celebration of Lynn University's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012 – literally around the corner – and we will be moving ahead with our planning very soon. This will be an extremely festive time as we celebrate the incredible amount that we have accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

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I believe in Lynn University. I believe in our people, our mission and our vision – and I know that all of you believe in Lynn too. It is evident through your support and dedication, and it is reflected through our students.

Bernard Londoni, a former student who is now pursuing his master's degree in conflict resolution at James Madison University, recently sent me a very touching letter that I wanted to share with you. He wrote:

“I never thought of achieving the great things I have achieved here at Lynn University. I feel Lynn has given me the light which I will use on each road I travel. You have changed my life and have given me the knowledge that no one will take away from me.”

All of you have contributed in one way or another to this student's confidence and accomplishments – and I know that all of you are capable of making every student who steps foot on our campus feel the same way that Bernard feels.

I know that I have asked a lot of you today – and I will continue to do so throughout the rest of the year. But I hope I've also given you the confidence – and comfort - you need to go about your daily work.

The Dialogues of Learning, our newly established recruitment plan, the Wold Performing Arts Center, the Perper Tennis Complex and our new master plan are all part of our Lynn 2020 successes – and they are part of your successes.

And the year ahead will be a time of even greater success for Lynn.

We believe our adoption of a three-year degree will make us even more attractive to potential students. We are taking a careful approach to building this niche program for our campus, and

our leadership team is unearthing more wisdom and feedback from other campuses that have launched three-year degree programs.

And this year's January-term – which again features a roster of experiential opportunities for our students – will give us still more to say about Lynn and our distinctive approach to higher education.

And while construction will likely quiet on the Perper Tennis Complex in December and on the Wold Performing Arts Center in March, we aren't quite ready to say goodbye to the earth movers on our campus...

Today I am thrilled to announce that an anonymous, first-time donor has come forward with a gift of \$1 million to go toward a new \$2.5 million soccer stadium for our campus. And that substantial gift was made in honor of former Marymount soccer player and Lynn University Senior Vice President for Administration, Greg Malfitano, who has been serving this institution for 37 years. What a testament and tribute to someone who has given his life to serving Lynn.

And we will begin fundraising for the remaining amount right away.

With the ink still wet on our new master plan, and less than five years into Lynn 2020, the Lynn of tomorrow is already coming into focus and fruition. So let the *Economist* and others declare our state sorrowful. I don't buy it.

Whether or not our elected officials – federal and state – wish to remember, independent education is here to stay. And Lynn is here to thrive. And we will play a major role in shaping the future for our community and our state – but more importantly, for our students.

Yes, we are being buffeted by the winds of change and the rains and rising waters of recession. Some say those waters are receding. Whether they are or not, Lynn will continue to offer the education, environment and support that the students of today require to succeed tomorrow – whatever that tomorrow looks like.

And because of that, I still can say that the state of our university is strong. This tree may tremble, but it still stands. And with your support, it will remain standing for many years to come.

In two weeks, we will celebrate our Founders Day, and I will see you there. And I will see all of you again when we dedicate the Perper Tennis Complex. And at our holiday party... the Wold Performing Arts Center grand opening... and at our new university home, where I will be hosting many groups in the months ahead, including the first group of parents this Friday.

Thank you each again for all you do for our university. It is a privilege to serve you, our students and our university. Please take care of each other, yourselves and those in your care.