The University of Oklahoma is truly an extraordinary institution, known for its academic excellence and strong sense of community.

Attracting top students from across the nation and more than 100 countries around the world, OU provides a major university experience in a private college atmosphere. OU is number one in the nation in the number of National Merit Scholars enrolled per capita among public universities and is in the top five of public universities in the nation in the graduation of Rhodes Scholars. The OU Honors College is one of the largest honors programs among public universities in the United States, matching the University’s best and brightest students with faculty in classrooms of 19 or fewer students. OU is one of the few public universities in the nation to cap the class size of first-year English composition courses at no more than 19. The University is first in the Big 12 and at the top in the nation in international exchange agreements with countries around the world with 171 student exchange agreements with universities in 60 countries. The number of endowed faculty positions has more than quadrupled since 1994, increasing from less than 100 to more than 450 today, helping to retain and attract talented faculty members.

OU has emerged as a pacesetter for public higher education in the United States and is ranked by The Princeton Review among the top 10 public universities in the nation in terms of academic excellence and cost for students. Just one year after launching a five-year Campaign for Scholarship endowments, we reached our goal of raising $50 million, allowing the university to award hundreds of new scholarships and ensuring that OU will remain affordable and keep open the door of opportunity for all qualified students. Because the need for scholarships remains high, the campaign goal was increased to $100 million to be raised by September 2009. In addition, OU’s private endowment has increased more than five-fold since 1994, growing from $204 million to more than $1.1 billion.

There is a true sense of family on the OU campus. Serving as a model for other public universities, OU established the Faculty-In-Residence program which places faculty members and their families in each of our residence halls to foster faculty and student interaction and encourage intergenerational friendships. Further, a different professor adopts each floor of the residence halls as well as each fraternity and sorority, allowing students and faculty to build relationships outside of the classroom. These and other student-centered efforts were recently rewarded when OU was ranked in the top 10 universities in the nation in the Freshmen Year Experience, according to a national study by the Policy Center on the First Year of College.

OU is extraordinary, too, because of its excellent programs and resources. OU’s two public museums, the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, rank among the top university-based museums in the country. OU’s Bizzell Memorial Library features the largest history of science collection in the world, and is the only place in the United States where you can hold a book with Galileo's handwriting in your own hands.

During the past decade, research expenditures have more than doubled at OU and sponsored research has grown at twice the national growth rate. In fiscal year 2006, OU set a new record high of $239 million in external funding for research and sponsored programs, more than $17 million above the previous year. Particularly successful university research programs including weather, genomics, chemistry, health sciences, nanosciences, education, and applied social research as well as technology development and transfer will continue to grow with the development of the University Research Campus. The buildings and spaces on the research campus support a true community of ideas that reflects the core mission and values of the university, but with a decidedly modern approach that includes academia, government and the private sector.

Since 1995, almost $1.5 billion in construction projects have been completed, are under way or are forthcoming on OU’s three campuses. As each new facility opens, we bring to the campus national and international figures in relevant fields of study. Among the largest facilities that have opened recently include the $18.7 million renovation and expansion of historic Holmberg Hall, home of music and dance programs; the $67 million National Weather Center, largest research center of its kind in the nation; the $19 million Price Hall, serving the Michael F. Price College of Business; the $17 million Gaylord Hall for
journalism and mass communication; the $27 million Stephenson Research and Technology Center; and the $83.5 million stadium project.

Projects currently under construction include the 38,000-square-foot Lissa and Cy Wagner Student Academic Services Center, which will greatly enhance a wide variety of services – including academic advising and tutoring – designed to help our students succeed in their academic goals. Construction is also underway on Devon Energy Hall which will provide 80,000 square feet of instructional and research space for our College of Engineering. Just next to it, the ExxonMobil Lawrence G. Rawl Engineering Practice Facility is also under construction and will be a center of interdisciplinary research and experiments.

I invite you to visit campus our beautiful campus and discover OU’s impact of excellence.

Sincerely,

David L. Boren
President