

## Moving Forward – A Message from President Rodney Erickson

November 21, 2011

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In the last two painful weeks, Penn State has been shaken to our foundation. But we are moving forward, and with every decision we're committed to doing the right thing for the victims, their families, and the Penn State community. You have all played a role in helping us define a path for the future. You have inspired us with your resilience, generosity, and hope. You have given me your confidence and encouragement.

In the spirit of giving thanks, I wish to share a few observations about our community.

1. We need to continue to listen to one another. I've been contacted by countless students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends, and I've tried to visit as many classrooms, organizations, and campus gatherings as possible. Everyone has openly shared their grief, anger, suggestions, and hopes for the future of Penn State. I've listened and I've learned.

2. Penn Staters care. I've been profoundly moved by the Penn Staters who have pulled together to offer support for the victims and each other. From the moving [candlelight vigil](#) to [charitable efforts](#) to awareness building programs for this very serious issue, Penn Staters have demonstrated a deep commitment to caring.

3. People are Penn State's greatest resource. [Rob Pangborn](#) has stepped up to serve as acting executive vice president and provost, and [David Joyner](#) as acting athletic director. I'm grateful for and confident in their leadership as they help guide us through the challenges ahead.

4. This morning the Penn State Board of Trustees announced the membership of a [Special Committee](#), led by Kenneth Frazier as chair and Ronald Tomalis as vice chair. They also named Judge Louis Freeh, former Director of the FBI, as special counsel in charge of conducting an independent investigation into all aspects of the university's actions in regard to the recent allegations of child abuse. As I stated in my [Five Promises](#), my administration will provide whatever resources, access and information are needed to support the investigation.

5. Our work has just begun. It will be some time before we are able to bring a measure of understanding and resolution to the recent terrible events, even as we refocus our energies on our students, research and service activities. When we return from Thanksgiving break, we'll need to dedicate ourselves to bringing closure to this semester and celebrating the accomplishments of the Fall 2011 graduating class.

Thank you for your support. It gives me confidence that Penn State is moving in the right direction.

I hope you are able to spend some time with your families at Thanksgiving. Travel safely.

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