

The Days Ahead... A Message from Rodney Erickson

December 5, 2011

The days ahead....
December 5, 2011

As we begin the final two weeks of this semester, exams, papers and performances are upon us. Although our University has not returned to a normal routine, there is a comforting sense that collectively we are returning to the urgency and importance of the academic work that fundamentally defines who we are.

Concurrently, I'm staying focused on fulfilling my five promises to the Penn State community with new initiatives including the following:

- To seek appropriate ways to foster healing and raise broad awareness of the issues of sexual abuse, Penn State is partnering with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Penn State has committed \$1.5 million of our share of this year's Big Ten bowl proceeds to help fund initiatives with these organizations; the remainder of the proceeds will support other related initiatives. In addition, we're taking inventory of the resources that we have on our campuses that can be applied to prevention and healing for the victims of child abuse.
- To encourage open and ongoing dialogue, we're holding a series of town hall forums. Thank you to the many students who attended last week's event, as well as those who watched it online. I'll be meeting with the Faculty Senate tomorrow (Tuesday). Next week I will meet with the Staff Advisory Council to discuss their concerns and next month, we've scheduled forums for alumni across the state and beyond. This type of discussion is vital for moving forward.
- Visit http://live.psu.edu/tag/Penn_State_Promise for regular updates on the Penn State Promise.

With all we have shared in the last month, I feel it's also important to offer you an update on our institutional well-being. As a university and a community, we have endured a great deal, but our core mission and values remain intact. Penn State is an outstanding academic institution, and we demonstrate this every day. We are defined by our commitment to exceptional teaching. We are defined by our \$805 million research enterprise that addresses complex and pressing issues such as food production, energy, health and well-being, national security and economic development. We are defined by our leadership and contributions in the arts and humanities. And we are defined by our service work that has improved countless lives around the globe. Penn Staters are defined by our hard work and accomplishments, and there's still great demand to be part of our community. Consider these indicators:

- To date, applications for admission to Penn State are up more than 3.4 percent over last year. Paid memberships in the Alumni Association—the largest in the nation—stand at 166,842; that's up about 2 percent over last year.
- The base of philanthropic support remains strong. Since July 1 and for the month of November, our annual giving program totals via the Lion Line, direct mail and online contributions show increases over last year in three important categories—the amount of dollars and the number of donors and gifts. Penn State Career Services reports that interest by corporate recruiters has not wavered; in fact, recruiters and corporations are registering for the Spring Career Fair at a higher rate than they did last spring.
- All corporate partners and sponsors have stood by Intercollegiate Athletics, and our student-athletes continue to represent Penn State with sportsmanship, dedication and pride. Please join me in congratulating the Nittany Lion Football team for its invitation to meet the University of Houston in the TicketCity Bowl in Dallas on Jan. 2, 2012. This is a fitting acknowledgement of the team's hard work, and the proceeds will further efforts to better protect our children.

Finally, I urge you to take a moment to reflect on the important work that happens every day at Penn State. I believe wholeheartedly in the value of this undertaking, and I hope you'll share my confidence in our future. There is much to accomplish before Commencement weekend!

Thank you for all you do for Penn State.



President Rodney Erickson

[Office of the President](#) | [Promise](#) | [Biography](#) | [Speeches and Messages](#)

The Pennsylvania State University © 2011

« [Many Congratulations to Proud to Be a Penn Stater and RAINN](#) — [The Opinion of a PSU Mom](#) »

Tags: Erickson, five promises, Looking Ahead, PCAR, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, President, PSU, PSUTownHall, Rodney, Town Hall