

A VISION FOR RICE UNIVERSITY

EMERGING FROM PRESIDENT DAVID W. LEEBRON'S CALL TO CONVERSATION

As a leading research university with a distinctive commitment to undergraduate education, Rice University aspires to pathbreaking research, unsurpassed teaching, and contributions to the betterment of our world. It seeks to fulfill this mission by cultivating a diverse community of learning and discovery that produces leaders across the spectrum of human endeavor.

The university must take the following steps in furtherance of this mission:

- ***We must visibly and substantially increase our commitment to our research mission and raise our research and scholarship profile.*** We must especially focus on departments and disciplines in strategically selected areas where we have an opportunity to achieve nationally and internationally recognized levels of distinction and achievement. Success in this endeavor will require significant investments in and improvements to our research support, physical facilities, and information technology infrastructure.
- ***We must provide a holistic undergraduate experience that equips our students with the knowledge, the skills, and the values to make a distinctive impact in the world.*** This requires that we reexamine the undergraduate curriculum, as well as focus on enhanced research opportunities, training in communication skills, and leadership development for our students.
- ***We must strengthen our graduate and postdoctoral programs to attract and recruit high-caliber students and young researchers.*** Greater attention must be paid to providing competitive financial support, appropriate teaching opportunities, and attractive campus amenities that will contribute to a stronger sense of community among our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Our doctoral programs are central to our ambition as a research university, and we must achieve greater recognition of the quality of our doctoral students and the success they attain.
- ***We must aggressively foster collaborative relationships with other institutions to leverage our resources.*** This is particularly important in light of our comparatively small size. Our geographic location offers excellent opportunities, and we are especially well situated to develop substantial strategic research and teaching relationships with the other members of the Texas Medical Center. We also can expand our teaching and research achievement in the arts in part through effective partnerships with the cultural institutions of the museum district.
- ***We must invest in a select number of interdisciplinary endeavors that will enable us to leverage our own strengths as well as the strengths of potential collaborators.*** These interdisciplinary endeavors should include some efforts to which we have already made substantial commitments and new areas that will emerge as we develop our strategic priorities and research vision for the future.
- ***We must continue to invest in our professional schools in architecture, management, and music, as well as the Baker Institute for Public Policy and seek ways to integrate their success into the broader university.*** We must also seize opportunities for bold new endeavors when they arise, but we should not fund new schools out of the general resources of the university.

continued

- *We must increase the size of the university to realize more fully our ambition as an institution of national and international distinction that attracts the very best students and researchers from around the globe.* Growth will enable us to develop a more dynamic and diverse campus environment, increase our faculty in strategic areas, improve our services, enhance the employment opportunities for our students, more effectively use our infrastructure, and build a more vibrant national and international alumni base. Growth in undergraduate enrollment must be carefully planned and occur in ways that preserve the distinctive features of our culture and campus, provide an undergraduate educational experience characterized by meaningful direct interactions with faculty and residential life in the colleges, and maintain and enhance the extraordinary quality and diversity of our student body. Our undergraduate student body should become more national and international, reflecting our status as a premier research university. In light of these considerations, Rice's undergraduate enrollment will be increased to approximately 3,800 students within the next decade.

- *We must become an international university, with a more significant orientation toward Asia and Latin America than now characterizes our commitments.* The great universities of the 21st century will inevitably be global universities, and although we are comparatively small, that ought not be seen as an obstacle to our global reach. We should begin

by increasing the number of international students in our undergraduate student body; develop research, student exchange, and other relationships with distinguished universities and policy institutes around the world; and foster the international learning (both here at Rice and around the world) of our faculty, students, and staff.

- *We must provide the spaces and facilities that will cultivate greater dynamism and vibrancy on the campus and foster our sense of community.* To achieve this, we must provide more attractive campuswide amenities, including a new recreational facility, a reconfiguration of the Rice Memorial Center to house a more substantial dining facility, and enhancement of outdoor spaces with a special focus on the Central Quadrangle. We should make a greater commitment to incorporate art into the campus landscape and interior public spaces.

- *We must fully engage with the city of Houston—learning from it and contributing to it—as a successful partnership with our home city is an essential part of our future.* We should do so by continuing to integrate Houston into the educational experience of our students, by emphasizing selective areas of research especially important to the city (notably energy and urban studies), by making tangible contributions to improve our city (particularly K-12 education and environmental quality), and by continuing to provide innovative educational and cultural resources to the broader Houston population.

The Rice University Board of Trustees unanimously endorsed the tenets of this vision at its December 2005 meeting. **Additional information about Rice's Vision for the 2nd Century is available at <http://www.rice.edu/v2c>.**

“Rice is in a state of transition. It is in a transition from good to better. Facing extraordinary opportunity, the institution is about to become braver, stronger, sounder, more beautiful.”

—Edgar Odell Lovett, at his final commencement as Rice University's first president in 1946