

Dear Colleagues,

The return of our students for a new academic year brings a true vibrancy to campus. Their presence is a tangible reminder of why we are all here – our commitment to student success. Despite a fiscally challenging 2008-09, we can all be proud of our past achievements as we look ahead to a year that again promises to bring challenge and opportunity in equal measure.

Obviously, enrollment is critical to our fiscal health. We anticipate a 2 percent growth in our full-time population with full-time undergraduate enrollment approaching record levels. A major factor in our enrollment growth has been the success of our First-Year Experience and new student orientation programs, which once again have achieved excellent results in boosting our retention numbers. A more selective admissions process has seen an improvement in SAT scores among incoming freshmen, and our residence halls are filled to capacity.

As you know, 85 employees left the university during the summer under the state's retirement incentive program. A number of these faculty, administrators and staff members had served Southern for many years. They carry with them valuable experience and skills and leave behind a legacy of dedicated service to Southern and its students. We wish them all a healthy and happy retirement.

Under the conditions of the hiring freeze, we were able to fill only a limited number of these retiree positions and other pre-existing vacancies with most consideration being given to positions directly related to the health and safety of our campus community as well as classroom instruction. As a result, a great deal of planning took place during the summer to ensure that classes have adequate coverage and that our general operations continue with minimal disruption.

A number of operational changes have taken effect already particularly in areas performing essential business functions. During the fall semester, we will continue to implement plans that will help us to continue to operate efficiently and effectively. To review the initial changes implemented as a result of the retirement incentive program, my June 30th letter to the campus community is available at www.southernct.edu/aboutscsu/presidentspage .

On a positive note, our campus revitalization program continues. Currently, we are ready to go to bid for a 1,200-space parking garage in Lot 7, replacing the tennis courts, with construction projected for 2010. Design for the mechanical and electrical upgrades for Earl and Jennings Halls is close to completion and we are initiating the design for health and safety improvements to Moore Fieldhouse. An architect has been selected to commence the design for the new science lab building on Fitch Street and design is near completion for a new home for the School of Business in the former student center. And, this summer, the Department of Information Technology moved from its temporary quarters on Fitch Street to a new home in Office Building One on Wintergreen Avenue next to the Granoff Health Center.

In another important development regarding campus health and safety, a siren/public address system is scheduled to be installed on campus this year. The system, to be placed atop five campus buildings, will enable the university to send out an audible tone, a live message or a

digital recorded message. It will complement our SCSUAlert system and other communication measures that we have implemented under our 2007 Emergency Management Plan.

Obviously, this is a period of true transition for our university. But as we demonstrated last year, guided by our strategic plan and driven by the dedication and energy of our faculty, administrators and staff, Southern provides an excellent education even in difficult economic times. In that spirit, I invite you to join me and other members of our community in welcoming the class of 2013 at the **New Student Induction Ceremony, this Friday from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. at Lyman Center**, as these students begin their educational journey at Southern.

I hope you enjoyed a refreshing summer and I look forward to joining with you during this new academic year to successfully meet our challenges while embracing the opportunities that lie ahead.

Cheryl J. Norton
President