November 1, 2010

Dear members of the University community:

After a wonderful weekend of Homecoming activities, today I start my first official day as your president. I am honored and humbled to serve. I am honored because the University of Maryland is one of the great research universities in the country. I am humbled to follow two giants in American higher education, Dan Mote and Brit Kirwan. Under their successive leadership, the University's ascendancy to national and global stature and impact has been truly remarkable. The University's successes are a testament to the accomplishments of our faculty, staff, and administrators, and to the excellence and diversity of our students.

My commitment to you as I take the helm is that we will continue the upward trajectory already in progress: transformative excellence on all fronts—in learning and teaching; research and creative work; student life; alumni relations; civic engagement; intercollegiate athletics; and partnerships with public, private, and non-profit stakeholders.

These are uncertain economic times in the nation and the world. We have all been impacted by austerity measures over the past three years.

Nobody knows for certain when the economy will fully recover and what the future will hold for public investment in higher education. But times of fiscal challenge are also times of great opportunity.

I believe we must hold fast to the bold vision, high aims, and big ideas in our "Transforming Maryland" strategic plan and in our "Great Expectations" campaign. We are blessed with unequalled strategic assets: our location inside the Beltway; a highly educated and diverse population in the State; the knowledge-based economy of Maryland; our bedrock values of innovation, creativity, interdisciplinary, collaboration, and entrepreneurship; and our greatest asset—you—the talented and loyal members and supporters of the University.

The University of Maryland today is better and stronger than it was 10 or 20 years ago. It will be even better and stronger 10 years hence. I will lead our journey to reach higher levels of academic excellence, societal impact, and global leadership. I will devote my full energies to fulfilling our mission of creating better futures for Maryland, the nation, and the world.

Together, we will build on our accomplishments. Let us continue to broaden educational opportunity for students and support their success, for they are the reason that higher education exists. Let us retain and recruit the most talented faculty and staff, for they are the lifeblood of the University. Let us bring the world to the campus and project the University on to the world stage. And let us catalyze the economic, artistic, and cultural vitality of the State; promote a more vibrant surrounding community; expand partnerships that turn ideas into tangible societal impact; and be an incubator of leadership, a laboratory for discovery, and a steward of sustainability and social justice.

The success of the University of Maryland—the University of and for the people of Maryland—is key to the future of Maryland. We will continue to work collaboratively with the University System of Maryland, the executive and legislative branches of the State, our congressional delegation, the City of College Park, Prince George's County, our UM College Park Foundation and our Alumni Association so that the flagship institution gains the resources and the capability to carry out its mandate to be equal to the best in the
nation. I will work relentlessly to inspire the support of our generous alumni, supporters, and friends who have been so instrumental to our success thus far.

As your new president, I welcome and value your input. I am already meeting with groups of faculty, students, staff, and external stakeholders to identify the most critical challenges and opportunities for the University. I hope you will be part of the dialogue in my visits throughout the campus. Please share with me your dreams and your hopes for the University, as well as your concerns and your advice. You may also write me at wdloh@umd.edu. My leadership style is to work collaboratively, consultatively, and transparently with you in the spirit of shared and democratic governance.

I want to thank the University leadership (our first-rate team of vice presidents, deans, and administrative staff) and the USM leadership and staff for their work in ensuring a smooth transition over the past two months. I am especially grateful to Nariman Farvardin for his outstanding leadership as provost and as acting president and for his valued counsel to me.

And, I want say a special thank you to every member and supporter of the University for everything that you do to make us all proud of our University.

To all who have extended such a warm welcome to my wife Barbara and me, we are deeply touched. We are thrilled to join the University family and excited to be new Terps.

Sincerely,

Wallace D. Loh
President