



DATE: December 5, 2005

TO: David Leebron, President

FROM: Marjorie Corcoran, Speaker
Deborah Harter, Deputy Speaker

ABOUT: Faculty Senate Endorsement of the Call to Conversation

On behalf of the Rice University faculty, we would like to express our enthusiastic support for the Call to Conversation that President Leebron extended last year. This Call represented a creative and inclusive beginning to our planning process, one in which many constituencies – including faculty, students, staff, alumni, and Houston community leaders – have been able meaningfully to participate. We particularly appreciate the energy with which President Leebron sought out faculty input through preliminary discussions with the Senate, open fora, meetings with departments, and individual conversations. Such mechanisms, together with the Call to Conversation website, encouraged broad involvement from across the university and generated a sense of excitement. This open engagement with the faculty and other constituencies will, we believe, continue as the process moves forward.

We further acknowledge the fundamental importance of the issues raised in the initial Call to Conversation document, and we are grateful to President Leebron for inviting reflection about these at the outset of the planning process. Institutions sometimes resist change, and it takes courage to ask the basic questions about size, mission, and focus that his Call put forth.

The faculty applauds President Leebron's inclusive process. During the coming months, the Senate commits to leading the full faculty in an open, informed, thorough consideration of the Call to Conversation as together we chart our university's course over the next decade.