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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

December 16, 2016

Dear Southernites and Friends:

Last Saturday, the city of Baton Rouge elected a new mayor, Sharon Weston Broome. Mayor-elect Broome has already appointed several Southern alums to her transition team, and I'm excited about the future of our city. Southern continues to play a significant role in the success of the Capital City. As you know, Southern is expanding its footprint in the Baton Rouge area, and it is comforting to know that Southern's growth will be welcomed by the leadership of this city. Indeed, this week I had the pleasure of speaking to the Board of Commissioners of the Downtown Development District about the expansion of our Baton Rouge campus to downtown Baton Rouge. The DDD is excited about Southern's new downtown presence, and I am thrilled that the Alumni Federation has been able to lead such a positive initiative for our alma mater.

SULC Chancellor Pierre is making final plans to start classes at the new location beginning January 4th. President Belton's office has been instrumental in securing the signage for the location, and is strongly promoting its success among the SU campuses in Baton Rouge (SULC, SUBR and the SU Ag Center). I again extend my gratitude for the administration's cooperation. Dr. Graysen Walles and the Mentorship Academy have been such great partners in this new collaboration. After seeing the design of the SU mascot sign that is planned for the building, the high school decided to upgrade its mascot sign also. The school's mascot is the shark. Jaguars and Sharks sharing space: innovation at its finest. The Mentorship Academy is a STEAM school, focusing on science, technology, engineering, arts & math. The collaborative opportunities that can evolve from this school are endless, and I look forward to keeping you informed about the progress of this initiative. There are already talks about the Ag Center participating in the downtown location, and dual enrollment opportunities with the high school students. The pipeline to Southern is already opening up.

Yesterday, I appeared as a guest on Dianne Andrew's television show, *In Black & White*. Thanks to those of you who joined the studio audience. Ironically, Dianne had just filmed a show on mentoring with a panel of young people from our community. It was a great introduction for us to have a deeper discussion on mentorship with the other panelists during our show. It seemed quite fitting that we would discuss mentorship as Southern develops this relationship with the Mentorship Academy and the more than 500 high school students who attend the school. Special thanks to Dianne for affording me the opportunity to speak to her television audience.

Today, we welcome hundreds of new alumni into the Alumni Federation during graduation ceremonies on the SUBR campus. Derrick Warren will have the honor of administering the oath and inducting these graduates into the Federation. Congratulations to all of our new alums throughout the SU System who will be graduating this Fall. After graduation, the SU Board of Supervisors will meet. Please tune in via www.sus.edu to watch the Board meeting. I look forward to briefing the Board on the new SU downtown location, the Federation's Adopt-a-Juke campaign to purchase new uniforms for the band, and Academic Signing Day 2017, which has been set for April 22, 2017.

Happy Holidays!

Southernly Yours,

Preston

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