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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

January 5, 2018

Happy New Year, Southernites and Friends!

2017 was in so many ways a phenomenal year for the Alumni Federation. Three and and half years ago, this organization took on as its number one priority a goal to help the University grow enrollment. We began in 2014 by entering into an MOU with the University and Foundation to hire student recruiters across the country to take advantage of the national reputation of Southern University and the strategic placement of alumni throughout America. That collaboration led to an increase in enrollment in 2015. In 2016, we expanded our focus beyond simply recruiting students but also doing whatever we could to help the University retain students. ***Recruitment and Retention*** became our expanded focus to help the University grow enrollment. However, the collaboration between the University, Foundation and Federation really jumped to a new level in 2017 when we developed the IMAGINE 20,000 initiative that set a bold goal of growing enrollment over the next 15 years to 20,000 students. It was like the beginning of a dream come true.

Our renewed focus nationwide led to chapters doubling down their efforts to recruit and retain students. We saw an exponential jump in participation in our National Academic Signing Day Program in April. The TOP JAGS program caught fire recruiting top performing high school students from around the country to Southern. Not only did the number of Alumni Federation chapters around the country grow, but the efforts to raise more scholarship dollars to help recruit and retain students also grew. I can't thank you, our alumni and supporters, enough for the money you raised through our Alumni Federation chapters and, in particular, through the Southern University System Foundation. Of course, the most exciting part of that ground swell of dedication to growing enrollment came when the Baton Rouge Area Foundation awarded the University a $1,000,000 grant to help develop the Master Plan for the IMAGINE 20,000 project.

With 2017 now in the books, we are now turning our attention to making 2018 even better than 2017. Earlier this week, I had an opportunity to review a draft of the IMAGINE 20,000 report prepared by Marga, Inc. Thanks to so many of you who responded to our online surveys that the Foundation and Federation circulated last semester. You have provided some great feedback, and I am pleased with the progress we are making to develop a Master Plan to reimagine Southern University and grow enrollment.

Finally, the Southern University Board of Supervisors met earlier today. Among others, the Board accepted President-Chancellor Belton's recommendation to hire former FAMU President, Dr. James Ammons, as the new SUS Executive Vice President and SUBR Executive Vice Chancellor. We welcome Dr. Ammons to the Jaguar family. Similarly, Dr. Luria Young, who served as the Interim Provost for the last seven months, was named as the Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for SUBR. Home Chapter member, Dr. Vladimir Appeaning, was also named SUS Vice President for Strategic Planning, Policy, and Institutional Effectiveness. Former Federation Executive Director and SU System Chief of Staff, Dr. Robyn Merrick, was promoted to SUS Vice President for External Affairs for the SU System. I look

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forward to working with the new leadership as the Federation continues to help advance this institution. Congratulations to all of the new appointees.

I am hopeful that we have the right System and SUBR team in place to allow us to focus even more energy now on recruiting and retaining more great faculty to support all of the students we are hoping to recruit and retain. We will certainly need our great faculty to strengthen and revamp our academic offerings to ensure we can deliver a good product to our most important customers, our students. It's no secret that to recruit and retain great faculty, we will need to also better compensate them. This point was eloquently made by the representatives of the SUBR faculty senate at today's board meeting.

The Alumni Federation and our amazing chapters have planned a slew of wonderful activities around the country that you will find here in ***News & Notes***. I look forward to joining you at as many of these events as possible. To be sure, I will be promoting IMAGINE 20,000 everywhere I go!

Once again, best wishes for a prosperous and Happy New Year!

Preston J. Castille, Jr., Esq.
National President