Dear Colleagues,

The excitement of new and returning students and the renewed energy of faculty and staff returning from summer break make Mines a very exciting place to be! As we start our new academic year, it is clear that the demand for a Mines education remains strong. Out of 12,500 applicants, last week we welcomed 955 new freshmen and 120 transfer students to campus, along with 400 new graduate students. This year’s incoming undergraduate class holds the highest ACT and SAT scores (29 and 1300) as well as the largest number of women and domestic underrepresented racial and ethnic students we’ve had to date.

We also welcomed 29 new faculty and many new staff to campus over the summer. Our faculty not only educate our students but inform and influence the direction of their fields. Nationally and here on campus, our faculty collaborate across disciplines and departments to develop novel approaches to research that offers promising results. For example, the NSF-funded ReNEWIt (Reinventing the Nation’s Urban Water Infrastructure) project includes Mines faculty from geology, hydrology, biology, engineering and numerical modeling working towards the goal of reducing urban water consumption. Another example is Mines’ hydrate engineers and solar energy physicists working together to build a better solar cell, an exciting development in renewable energy research. Here at Mines, our faculty employ a multidisciplinary approach to solving the world's most pressing earth resource, energy, and environmental challenges, and use innovative methods to engage and educate the next generation of scientists and engineers. I’m excited to see what our newest members contribute to our vibrant community of teaching and research faculty.

Each year research becomes a more vital part of the Mines activities, and in 2011-12 we saw a record-breaking year in research funding with our faculty bringing in $56 million in total awards. We are emerging as one of the nation’s university leaders in the critical areas of water and the environment, unconventional and renewable energy, and strategic and critical minerals. Our talented faculty drive this research culture and ensure that it is part of the undergraduate experience.

Provost Parker recently announced the formation of our second (yet-to-be-named) college, consisting of Chemical and Biological Engineering, Chemistry, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, and Physics departments. I’d like to thank Provost Parker, department heads Dr. Marr, Dr. Wu, Dr. Kaufman, and Dr. Furtak, and the faculty who provided valuable insight into the formation of this new college. We have just passed the first anniversary of the formation of the College of Engineering and Computational Sciences, and Dean Kevin Moore has experienced the challenges of this new model as well as the benefits, including having recruited top new faculty due to synergies produced by the formation of the new department as well as the ability for more targeted relations with recruiters. My thanks go out to Dean Moore and Dean Dean for their leadership in helping Mines transition to a new three college model.
Thanks to the many remarkable Mines alumni and friends who have been so generous in their support, we had a record fundraising year, bringing in $32.6 million in FY12. Almost 3,500 donors made gifts and commitments last year, including an $11.2 million contribution from Hugh ('74) and Michelle Harvey to further bolster the Harvey Scholars student scholarship program they established with a $10 million gift in 2009. A $5 million commitment from 1983 alumni Mike and Patty Starzer will also provide further support for student scholarships. And we’re off to a great start this year with 1976 alumnus Bruce Grewcock’s $5 million commitment to the Center for Underground Construction & Tunneling and to scholarships, and the nearly $2.5 million raised to establish the Robert J. Weimer Distinguished Endowed Chair in Sedimentary and Petroleum Geology, which we’ll celebrate at Homecoming later this month.

Much remains for us to accomplish in order to achieve the ambitious campaign priorities we’ve set for ourselves, which include garnering support for more endowed chairs and professorships, scholarships and fellowships, student enrichment programs, and high-priority capital projects. Our capital construction projects renew and revitalize our physical plant and provide the state-of-the-art facilities needed for a great teaching and research university. The Wright Student Wellness Center and Marquez Hall were funded through private-public partnerships, and both will be celebrated with Grand Opening ceremonies on September 14 and September 28, respectively. Last month the Board of Trustees approved funding for a new home for the Mines Foundation and Alumni Association, as well as project financing that enables us to move ahead with our strategic objective of transforming Mines into a residential campus. We will soon begin plans for a new 200-bed residence hall, a 500-seat dining hall facility, and a Student Center renovation, all with the goal of better meeting our housing and meal plan needs as well as the delivery of campus programs within a residential community. The investments we make in the residential campus align with our mission and vision of educating the best and brightest engineering and applied sciences students in Colorado. Those students are heavily recruited by top-tier universities and base their choice on the total student experience—what happens both inside and outside of the classroom. We will continue to make investments in our campus infrastructure so that we can continue to attract the best students to Mines, which in turn helps us recruit and retain the most talented teaching faculty.

Every day our faculty, staff, and students are doing the hard work necessary for success. It’s our people that make our university great, and I want to thank every member of the Mines community for continuing to foster an environment where both individual contribution and team effort are valued, innovation is a given, and a collective purpose moves us forward in our goal to meet the world’s earth resources, energy, and environmental challenges head-on. I am sincerely grateful for your efforts and involvement in making Mines a truly special place. I look forward to continuing our work together. Here’s to the start of a wonderful year!

Best regards,

Bill Scoggins, President