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## University must adapt to new role as partner

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Since becoming president of the University of Delaware in July, I have spent a great deal of time learning about the University and about the First State. I have been very impressed by the bright and talented people I have met on the campus and throughout Delaware.

What everyone here knows -- and what I am quickly learning -- is that you can get things done in Delaware because of its intimate size and because of a spirit of partnership. Government officials, business leaders and community representatives know one another, are willing to listen to one another, and most importantly are prepared to work with one another.

The ability to get things done through partnerships has served this state well, and the University has played an important role in that process.

Historically, UD has been Delaware's primary provider of a workforce with advanced skills and knowledge, and the state's largest provider of trained professionals in fields ranging from finance and engineering to education and health. As a nationally-designated Land Grant, Sea Grant, Urban Grant and Space Grant institution, UD provides an extraordinary range of services to the region's citizens. In fact, UD provides a broader array of continuing public and community services to Delaware than is provided by public universities in larger states.

These are strong foundations, but the opportunity and the need exist for UD to become an even more important asset of the communities it serves. One reason for that enhanced opportunity is UD's emergence as a major research university, bringing in more than \$150 million each year in external contracts and grants and supporting internationally-recognized research programs in such fields as alternative energy, corporate governance, life sciences, the environment and agriculture and advanced materials. Development of new and expanded partnerships in these areas holds great promise. Moreover, while UD often is recognized as one of the nation's finest undergraduate institutions, it also now ranks in the top tier of U.S. graduate universities, with nearly 1,000 masters and doctoral graduates annually who join the labor force with the most advanced education and training available.

In the decades ahead, I believe the University of Delaware will exemplify even more fully an engaged public university that mobilizes its knowledge resources to address the emerging challenges of the 21st century and will do so through expanded partnerships with government, business, and community institutions.

The global restructuring of economic forces requires us to refocus on the emerging requirements for long-term prosperity and to understand the role of higher education in meeting those requirements. The global economy is increasingly based on the creation and application of new knowledge. At the same time, the long-term dominance of the U.S. higher education industry is under challenge by other nations. If that challenge is not met, then U.S. leadership in knowledge creation, particularly in science and technology, will not continue.

What is required is increased investment in education and research combined with a framework of policies that sustains the development of knowledge-based industries. America's universities, particularly research universities such as UD, must also change. Beyond supporting individual excellence, UD must create flexible and adaptive internal arrangements that encourage constellations of faculty and students to focus their creative imagination and energy on scholarship that impacts the critical needs of our state and nation.

The University must develop new models of partnership with government and industry that aggregate and concentrate resources in areas of emerging opportunity and comparative advantage. In the traditional land-grant model, universities

conducted research, studied how to apply it and then reached out to the community. In the new models of partnership, all the partners must be involved and invested from the beginning.

An excellent example of this new model of a successful knowledge-based partnership is the Delaware Biotechnology Institute.

More than 120 faculty from six institutions and 27 academic departments along with several hundred graduate and postdoctoral researchers contribute to the work of DBI. Located adjacent to the University's Newark campus, DBI was conceived and created as a collaboration of state government, industry and higher education.

It has become an important hub for federal funding of basic research in the life sciences. It combines the resources of industry and the state with the expertise of the University of Delaware, Delaware State University, Delaware Technical & Community College, Wesley College, Nemours and Christiana Care.

It is estimated that more than 12,000 new primary and secondary jobs have been created in the life sciences since the establishment of DBI.

Pursuing the new models of partnership requires that government, industry and the University think differently and more creatively. The key to success is to bring all the stakeholders together for an open and sustained dialog on what is needed and how we can be mutually supportive.

As a first step, UD is hosting a conference on Friday, on "Creating Knowledge-Based Partnerships: Challenges and Opportunities." Co-sponsored by the Governor's Office, the Business Roundtable, the State Chamber of Commerce, the Delaware Public Policy Institute, Select Greater Philadelphia and The News Journal, the conference is the first in a series that will highlight opportunities for enhanced future partnerships.

The inaugural event will feature a welcome by Gov. Ruth Ann Minner and keynote speeches by Chad Holliday, chairman and CEO of DuPont, and Abby Joseph Cohen, partner and chief U.S. investment strategist with Goldman Sachs & Co.

In addition, a series of panel discussions will bring together business, government and educational leaders to discuss areas where the generation of new knowledge holds so much promise for partnership. Future programs on other potential knowledge-based partnerships are already being planned.

In addition to these programs, the University will be acting on the recommendations of an Economic Development Task Force, with the goal of increasing UD's impact on economic development in the state and region.

Our challenge is to build on the ideas that emerge from these programs and to build the environment and support structure that will enable us to create new knowledge-based partnerships.

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