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A Growth Spurt

The College of Engineering has always kept its focus on the future. Everything we do, from developing curriculum to the execution of research, aims to improve the quality of education and life for today and generations to come. It's not in our nature to dwell on the past; however, to demonstrate the strength of the college, I want to discuss how CIT has grown in the last six years.

In 2004, I was fortunate to become the dean of a well-run, robust college. My job was to build off of my predecessors' successes and mobilize faculty, staff, students and alumni to further advance the college's comparative strengths. We are succeeding in this mission, in spite of a difficult economic environment.

We have made major strides in expanding CIT's enrollment. In 2004, the college had 2,378 students. By Fall 2009, our total enrollment was 2,956, roughly a 24% increase. The rise is due to a substantial increase in graduate students. From 2004 through 2009, we saw more than a 46% increase in both master's and Ph.D. students. This is important because graduate students expand our research capacity. This in turn, heightens our reputation, enabling us to recruit the brightest students to our programs. During 2004–2009, we experienced a 43% increase in female students and an approximate 27% increase in underrepresented minority students. This accomplishment allows us to sustain a culture that enables everyone to be successful in their academic pursuits.

Our growth can be linked directly to innovation and investments in academics and research and Carnegie Mellon Silicon Valley stands as evidence. In 2008 the California campus was folded into the ranks of CIT, and great things have resulted. Bicoastal master's and Ph.D. programs have been created by leveraging our strengths in Pittsburgh, and enrollment at the campus has almost tripled. The CyLab Mobility Center and interACT are both bicoastal research centers and have generated activities that create significant growth areas for the college and provide students exciting educational, research and networking opportunities. We have a substantial alumni population in the Bay Area, which fuels the spirit of entrepreneurship in the CIT community.

Because of the support we have received from our alumni, industry and foundations, we have been able to invest in programs in Pittsburgh. Our investments have created more opportunities for all of our students—undergraduate students are offered a \$3,000 scholarship to spend a summer in a foreign country pursuing their academic interests. Limited resources allow us to only offer about 15 such scholarships every year but it is my goal to expand this to about 100 scholarships within the next 3 to 5 years. All Ph.D. students get a tuition fellowship in their first year. This allows them to pursue their interests and find a research topic and an advisor without being encumbered by the need for immediate support. Not to mention, these fellowships allow us to compete effectively with peer universities, recruit better students and reduce the cost of supporting Ph.D. students.

On the international front, we've partnered with Portugal's Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education to create the Information and Communications Technologies Institute (ICTI). ICTI ignites collaborations between Carnegie Mellon and Portuguese universities and research facilities with the goal of changing the culture of higher education in Portugal. Within three years of starting the program, we are seeing success as evidenced by the creation of institutes that integrate both research and graduate education under one umbrella and by the creation of joint Ph.D. programs amongst Portuguese universities. In a similar manner, we are working with the Rwandan government to develop a regional Centre of Excellence in Kigali. As Rwanda strives to become the technology hub for East Africa, Carnegie Mellon will help address the region's skill needs by offering master's programs in information technology and electrical and computer engineering. These international endeavors raise awareness of Carnegie Mellon throughout the world and teach students how to manage and deploy technology globally.

CIT has excellent vital signs, and there are a number of metrics we can use to measure our growth. For example, our sponsored research budget increases annually, the size of the student body and faculty has grown and the impact of our research and collaborations is being recognized more as evidenced by the rankings of our academic programs. They are consistently ranked top 10 in U.S. and global venues. The measure that I personally use to guide my decisions is, "Are our students, faculty and alumni better served today than they were yesterday?" Up to now, all indications are that the answer is yes. While I trust this to be true, the only way for me to verify this is to hear from all of you out there who are working hard to grow our reputation.

Dean Pradeep K. Khosla