



RENEWING MINDS UNION 2012



When Union University trustees unanimously approved "Renewing Minds: Union 2012," they intensified the challenge of reclaiming and applying the Christian intellectual tradition in a grace-filled community.

"The 2012 plan is therefore a clarion call to re-emphasize our foundational commitments, including our identity, our Christ-centered mission and our liberal arts heritage," said President David S. Dockery. "The plan calls for all departments, schools and disciplines across campus to join together in seeking to reclaim the Christian intellectual tradition."

Dockery said this newest plan is an extension of the commitments found in the last three long-range plans – concluded in 2001, 2005 and 2010 – that have directed the university's work since his election as president in 1996. But he added that "Renewing Minds: Union 2012" has its own distinctive aims.

"The emphasis is less on the new and novel," Dockery said, "and more on qualitative commitments to enhance and strengthen the many, many good things taking place at Union University."

In addition to the current construction projects across the campus, the plan calls for Union to construct six new campus housing buildings on the west side of Walker Road. The buildings will be arranged in two quads which will be identical to the quads on the east side of the road that were built after the 2008 tornado destroyed the existing housing complexes. Three buildings, constituting three-fourths of one quad, are scheduled for completion in time for fall semester of 2010. There

The university's Honors Community, which builds upon the current honors program, is designed to provide highly academically qualified students with the social, intellectual and material resources to develop their gifts.

The new plan also includes:

- development of opportunities for Union students to study in international and intercultural contexts.
- strengthening of Union's commitment to racial reconciliation by providing support for the Intercultural Community Council Culture Fest initiative and continued development of the Center for Racial Reconciliation and the School of Education's urban studies program.
- completion of construction projects currently underway on the Union campus, including the new pharmacy building, and the Smith Soccer Complex. The pharmacy building has been named Providence Hall and is scheduled to open for fall semester classes. The soccer complex is expected to be ready for the 2010 season.
- construction of a road on the 55 acres of land that Union owns along Interstate 40 at exit 83, as the university continues to develop strategies for the future use of that property. In addition, the plan lays the groundwork for numerous other initiatives at the university to be developed after 2012.

Dockery said "Renewing Minds: Union 2012" recognizes "the challenges of the economic times in which we find ourselves and is therefore prudent

A Call to Foundational Commitments

will be about 150 new residential rooms for students.

Three additional buildings in a second quad will be complete by the end of 2012. The final two buildings that will complete each quad will be constructed sometime after 2012.

The plan also calls for a commitment to the further development of Union's honors and Gateway programs.

Gateway is a semester-long course for all incoming freshmen and transfers that provides an introduction to the intellectual life at Union. The class includes four plenary sessions that address such topics as the Christian faith, the university's liberal arts foundation, cultural engagement and the Christian worldview. Students then in smaller groups, led by various faculty members, spend multiple weeks discussing each of the topics from the plenary sessions and their application to the core curriculum.

and cautious, while at the same time providing bold and visionary steps for the future."

Gene Fant, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said the strategic plan "is a bold step toward the continued enhancement of the university's overall excellence, which is rooted in our distinctive mission."

"It extends the kind of forward thinking that has led us to this point in the university's history by preparing for the challenges that will face us in the coming years," Fant said. "I am particularly excited at the prospect of exploring how our distinctive liberal arts foundation can merge with our graduate and professional programs to create innovative opportunities for our students and the rest of our community. I am hopeful that the plan will continue the outright transformation of the university into a national and, indeed, international leader in higher education." ■