January 2012
We entered this New Year with students and faculty sending photos from all over the world as part of international trips in our global business curriculum. From the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal to Ipanema beach in Rio, we intend to carry that enthusiasm and momentum into Rice University’s centennial year and McNair Hall’s first decade.

With all the anniversaries, it’s the perfect time for reflection. Over the last dozen years, the Jones School has gone through a transformation, starting with Gil Whitaker and carrying on his legacy of excellence. Today the Jones School is celebrating and sustaining a positive trajectory that comprises initiatives for the current academic year, including faculty recruiting; possible relaunch of the Masters of Accountancy; enhancing excellence in entrepreneurship at Rice; strengthening the business minor and JGSB support of leadership at Rice; planning for greater utilization of McNair Hall; and preparing for a successful conclusion of the centennial campaign.

Looking forward
Faculty recruiting is a priority for the school this year as we refill some positions that were left vacant following the dip in enrollments last year. Faculty in all areas have been actively recruiting and getting positive responses from some stellar candidates. A few offers have been extended and others will be forthcoming during the coming months.

With the enthusiastic support of the major public accounting firms and many of our alumni, the Jones School continues to discuss the feasibility of relaunching the Rice Masters of Accountancy. Our accounting faculty helped to create a vision for a very innovative curriculum that was embraced by public
accounting leaders. We are currently exploring options for the philanthropic support that will be critical to any decision to relaunch the program and will determine ultimate success.

There is great opportunity to build a top three entrepreneurship program, rivaling the best on the east and west coasts and serving the broader Rice, Texas Medical Center, Houston, and global communities. The Jones School and Rice Alliance have already established a top ten reputation in entrepreneurship. Getting to the next level will require broadening our impact: course offerings for undergraduate and graduate students outside of the Jones School; hiring faculty in multiple disciplines conducting research on topics related to entrepreneurship and professors in the practice of entrepreneurship; rich mix of extra-curricular activities that sustain and grow our connections with the external entrepreneurial community; and an umbrella center for entrepreneurship that provides a strong academic core at Rice.

The Rice Business Minor remains very popular with Rice undergraduates. Student interest in taking courses still outpaces our ability to staff additional sections, while course evaluations continue to be among the best on campus. Our numbers reflect 31 percent of the Rice 2012 graduating class will have taken one or more business minor courses. At the same time, we are taking our expertise outside McNair Hall to the broader campus. Collaboration with the Rice undergraduate career management office has been very productive as JGSB faculty members have volunteered to help with personal development seminars to help prepare students for interviews. The Rice Board of Trustees believes that JGSB could do more to realize Rice students’ potential. Given our faculty expertise in disciplines related to leadership and the Jones School’s positive trajectory, we are exploring potential expansion of our role in supporting leadership education across campus.

As a continuation of the earlier facility programming and design activities from last year, we are finalizing a long term architectural plan for our current site. Phase I will start this spring with repurposing elements of the current structure to better accommodate our near term needs. Depending on student growth and fundraising after the Centennial Campaign, Phase II is a few years out and will include two new wings extending to the south from the executive commons and from the executive education private offices. Phase III is likely to complete the space available in our current location by extending the current building to the west. It will likely be 2020 before all three phases are completed.

The original student count in planning the existing McNair Hall was 640, based on four full-time sections. We are now at 750. Renovations this year will accommodate more faculty, more PhD students, more staff, etc., but will not increase the number of classrooms. The behavioral lab will move to the present BIC computer room with a design that will support more research. Two seminar rooms will be redesigned within their current walls to better support the learning process. Two other seminar rooms will be shifted from the third to the first floor. Several staff offices will move from the west end to the east end of the building as we open up more faculty and PhD offices in the west end. These renovations will support planned growth for the next few years.

Finally, thanks to the efforts of our Council of Overseers and our external relations team, the response of alumni, friends and corporate investors over the last 18 months catapulted us near the $40 million mark for the Centennial Campaign. As we work diligently to reach our $65 million campaign objective, we hope you work diligently to have a happy, healthy New Year.