In 2007-08, my first year as chancellor of UCLA, the state of California maintained its funding commitments to the university. Combined with sound financial management, the state commitments allowed UCLA to advance its mission as one of the world’s top research universities.

In fall 2007, UCLA enrolled 4,564 new freshmen, out of 50,755 applicants, and 3,321 of the 13,451 transfer students who applied for undergraduate admission. In the 2007-08 academic year, we awarded 7,083 bachelor’s, 2,561 master’s, 752 doctoral and 609 professional degrees.

Our students continued to demonstrate not only their academic ability, but also their dedication to making the world better. Three UCLA students received the 2008 UCLA Charles E. Young Humanitarian Award for their extraordinary commitment to public service. Yecenia Olmos worked with Project Literacy, a UCLA student-run organization that provides tutoring in underserved communities. Neilesh Patel created HealthCare Volunteer, a Web site that connects volunteers with public health organizations around the world. Cynthia Reasner created the SEED Mentoring Project, a program that pairs UCLA students with foster youth.

During 2007-08, UCLA received $892 million in total research awards. Although the rankings have not yet been compiled by the National Science Foundation (NSF), our number will most likely place us in the top five in the nation in the amount of research funding won by faculty.

Not surprisingly, our world-class faculty continued to win prestigious acclaim. Professor Saul Friedlander and Professor Emeritus Daniel Walker Howe, both of our history department, received Pulitzer Prizes. Among others, seven faculty members were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, two received Sloan Research Fellowships and Professor Terence Tao won the NSF’s 2008 Alan T. Waterman Award.

The university’s community engagement continued to grow, helping to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles while informing our own research and learning. UCLA’s faculty, staff and students are engaged in partnerships with 200 civic
organizations through our UCLA in L.A. initiative alone. More than half of our undergraduates participate in volunteer activities or community service. This year, we started planning for an expanded civic engagement initiative that will enable us to focus comprehensively on important issues facing the Los Angeles community.

As we have every year since 1979, we recognized outstanding people for their contributions to society with The UCLA Medal, the university’s highest honor. Recipients in 2008 were philanthropist Lloyd Cotsen, whose contributions have enabled the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA to become the nation’s leader in the field; UCLA alumna Linda Griego, former president and CEO of Rebuild L.A.; businessman and philanthropist Richard Ziman, who endowed the interdisciplinary Richard S. Ziman Center for Real Estate at UCLA; and Charles M. Vest, president of the National Academy of Engineering.

In June, we opened the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. U.S. News & World Report ranked the medical center among the nation’s top three hospitals, and for the 19th consecutive year, the Best in the West. During the year, we formally dedicated the California NanoSystems Institute building, the UCLA Biomedical Sciences Research Building and Orthopaedic Hospital Research Center, the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research, the Engineering V building and the Krieger Child Care Center’s expansion.

UCLA’s athletic teams earned three more NCAA team championships, bringing our national-record total to 103. The women’s water polo team won its fourth consecutive NCAA title and the men’s golf and women’s tennis teams also brought home championship trophies.

In 2007-08, gifts and pledges to UCLA totaled $481 million, including eight of $10 million or more. The Packard Humanities Institute’s gift-in-kind, valued at $39 million, supports a capital project in Santa Clarita to benefit the UCLA Film and Television Archive. A $30 million gift from Herb and Lani Alpert through The Herb Alpert Foundation established the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. A $20 million gift from Leslie and Susan Gonda through the Leslie and Susan Gonda (Goldschmied) Foundation supported construction of the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. In addition, funds pledged toward our five-year Ensuring Academic Excellence Initiative reached $250 million, meeting the initiative’s goal.

Today, at UCLA, we are continuing to define just what it means to be a world-class public research university in a thriving urban setting in the 21st century. We have before us a remarkable opportunity.

Gene D. Block
Chancellor