

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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In some ways, Rice is like many of the other great research universities of America. We are committed, in the words of our mission statement, to “path-breaking research, unsurpassed teaching and contribution to the betterment of our world.” Yet, we also are boldly distinctive in the way we achieve these aims. In some cases, we choose, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, to do things “not because they are easy, but because they are hard.”

While we are among the renowned research universities of the world, we also are among the smallest, yet we have never wavered from matching research ambition and accomplishment with an unusual commitment to undergraduate teaching. We have adopted a phrase that captures the essence of Rice University: “unconventional wisdom.” Unconventional describes our (sometimes quirky) uniqueness, while wisdom reflects our success in contributing to new understandings and solutions.

Since its founding in 1912, Rice continually has sought to raise its sights and embark on new endeavors. Rice’s founding president, Edgar Odell Lovett, “set no upper limit to its educational endeavor,” and that philosophy of excellence and achievement is more important than ever as Rice prepares to celebrate its centennial anniversary in 2012 and to make an even greater impact in its second century of teaching and discovery.

Rice will continue applying its expertise to the needs of a world facing increasingly complex challenges: entrenched poverty, pandemic disease, religious intolerance, terrorism, fuel and water shortages and environmental degradation, to name just a few. It is also a world of possibility: environmental sustainability, renewable fuels, breakthroughs in health care and wellness, more peace and prosperity in more places, and greater understanding among the diverse peoples who inhabit our planet. The blueprint we have developed to prepare Rice to help solve those problems and realize those possibilities is the Vision for the Second Century. This 10-point strategic plan will expand Rice’s reach in critical areas of research and public service within its home city and throughout the country and the world. I encourage you to learn more about it at [www.rice.edu/vision](http://www.rice.edu/vision).

At each stage in our history, we have taken another step in the direction of realizing President Lovett’s original vision. Much of our success depends on the scholars and researchers who transform our classrooms and laboratories into catalysts for ideas and inventions. Much also depends on students of ambitious vision who are willing and able to take their Rice education to even greater heights. We aim to transform extraordinary students into extraordinary leaders.

We are pleased that you have chosen to become a part of this dynamic and resourceful university as it embarks on its second century of excellence and achievement. Welcome to Rice.

David W. Leebron  
*President*  
Rice University