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MEMORANDUM

TO : SSU National Alumni Association, SSU Foundation and Supporters

FROM: Earl G. Yarbrough, Sr., Ph.D., President

DATE: January 22, 2009

RE : Savannah State University Homecoming Events

Having the opportunity now to observe two Homecoming events, I want to commend the Homecoming Committee for its work and leadership over the years. I am delighted to have witnessed the strong support of our alumni, students, employees and friends, who lend their time to this most important event.

Given my observations, and that of others, I am instituting a few changes in several activities associated with future Homecoming events beginning in 2009. These changes are not designed to lessen the enjoyment and excitement surrounding Homecoming, but are designed for safety, additional opportunities, and to ensure we appropriately honor Savannah State University's Founders' Day observance.

Specific Safety Related Items:

The Recreational Vehicle (RV) parking next to T.A. Wright Football Stadium will be moved across the street adjacent to the baseball field. The tents typically located in that area, will be assigned on a "first come" basis after all RV slots have been sold. Space will be made available on the opposite side of the baseball field for additional tents. A diagram of these spaces will be provided in the Homecoming packets for 2009.

We will also place barricades and fencing in specific locations to better control pedestrian and vehicle traffic, as well as at the entrances and exits to the campus before and after the football game. These changes will afford us greater control of pedestrian traffic around the stadium, and allow for the flow of emergency vehicles that might be needed. Above all, the safety of all pedestrians on the campus during this time is the utmost concern.

Specific Items Related to Opportunities:

It is estimated that more than 10,000 people visit our campus during our Homecoming Football event. As an institution that attempts to do all we can for our students, this single event presents the greatest revenue opportunity for the alumni, employees, and friends in support of our students.

Allow me to share an example of how this past year's event could have benefited our students. If we were to average a charge of just \$10 for an estimated 10,000 people who entered the campus for Homecoming this past year alone (excluding those persons with game-day tickets), we could have generated an additional revenue of \$100,000. Given our cost of nearly \$25,000 for Homecoming preparations, security, clean-up, etc., Savannah State University could have realized \$75,000 in additional funds for the University. Many of these individuals do not attend the game, but will visit the tailgate activities. This single observation alone has significant implications for the University that cannot be ignored.

As such, we will implement an appropriate entrance fee (to be determined) for all pedestrian traffic entering the campus for the 2009 Homecoming event. Individuals who hold a football game-day ticket will be admitted on the basis of their ticket. Persons who choose to attend only the tailgate activity will pay an admission fee for that activity. We will also make every attempt to provide on campus parking for visitors during this event.

Another opportunity for the University is the Homecoming Golf Tournament, which was previously handled by the Savannah State University Foundation. I am assigning this event to the Athletic Department as a fundraiser to support athletics exclusively. As most of you know, in order for Savannah State University to compete at the Division I level, we must raise external dollars. As we continue to target a number of local businesses and organizations for favorable sponsorships, this golf tournament can be a major fundraiser. Our Athletic Director will have the responsibility for planning and coordinating this event for Savannah State University.

In conjunction with the Vice President for University Advancement, the 2009 Homecoming Committee will also be asked to develop a concert that will not only be enjoyable for our alumni, but will produce additional revenue to support academic scholarships for our students.

Honoring Our Founding:

Over the past two Homecoming events I have witnessed first-hand, conflicting events that hindered the full support of both activities; the golf tournament and the Savannah State University Founders' Day Program. Both events were held on the Friday prior to Saturday's game-day. The observance of Founders' Day alone holds great significance in the history of Savannah State University and should be an event that inspires our students, alumni and the community.

After much consideration, Founders' Day at Savannah State University will now be observed closer to the actual date and month of our original beginning. This observance will take place the **first Monday during the week of the Thanksgiving Holiday**. This change will allow us to give this program the attention and proper recognition deserving of such a historical time. We will work to promote greater attendance of this program from the student body, the community, and will be our single focus on that day with a special spotlight on those who are prominent figures in our history.

Summary:

Again, as I referenced earlier, these changes are not meant to impede the excitement and tradition that is Homecoming. Indeed the current economic climate and the potential for additional state budget cutbacks will significantly impact Savannah State University in the coming years.

Our greatest challenge has always been, and still remain that of raising external funds to support academic scholarships. We are working to identify the additional resources needed to increase academic scholarships, as well as faculty initiatives and staff development.

As we look forward to an exciting new year, I ask for your continued support in helping to make Savannah State University the "Best Value-Added" institution in the country.