



December 2008

Dear Friends of KU Business:

The Graduation Recognition Ceremony held in December is one of my favorite events of the year. In a season of holidays and celebration, graduation is certainly an accomplishment our students should savor, and the significance of this ceremony should not get lost in a busy holiday season. Our students, faculty, staff and alumni also should take a moment to give this graduation success its due as it's shared by all of us involved with the KU School of Business.

In a year that has, for Americans and those all around the globe, had its ups and downs, one might even say "the best of times and the worst of times," we need to maintain our optimism. I think all of us today might have some concerns that as our recent graduates start their careers, the times may be a little tough, the job market a little tight, the first steps a little challenging. However, I know these young women and men to be a group of bright, energetic, gifted individuals. I believe that they will overcome any obstacles they might encounter and soon enough will be making a name for themselves in the world.

Part of what gives me optimism is something said by Mr. Andrew Jetter, President and CEO of the Federal Home Loan Bank, during a recent lecture hosted by the School. Mr. Jetter spoke about some of the problems that are created when decision makers do not have "skin in the game." We all know that to have "skin in the game" means you have a share, a stake, an investment, a commitment. Mr. Jetter was talking about people who lacked a personal commitment in the success of their endeavors.

This is certainly not the case here at the School of Business. It is without question that our students, faculty, alumni, staff, and the businesses that hire our graduates do have skin in the game. And it's evidenced by their significant commitments, efforts and contributions to the School. They want the School and everything associated with it to succeed.

Our business faculty have gained national and international attention and have been nationally recognized for their progressive and innovative contributions to teaching. Many of our faculty conduct cutting edge research and others continue to expand the knowledge base in their fields. The regional and the national press have turned to our faculty for their advice and expertise on topics covered every day in the news. Through their teaching, their research and their service, our faculty have shown their commitment to the KU School of Business. They have a stake in and make an investment in our success.

When it comes to our alumni, the list is long of those who have made their mark in the world, and these successful business alumni are happy to give back in so many ways. Many of those who have received our Distinguished Alumni Award serve on the School's advisory boards, helping insure that our programs and curricula are relevant to the workplace and are beneficial to our students. There are others, across the country and around the globe, who assist our students

by inviting them to visit their companies, introducing them to their industries, creating job shadowing opportunities, offering internships and jobs. Still others make financial contributions, set up scholarships, create professorships and give generously to the School. These alumni are making an investment of their time, energy, attention and financial resources in the School's success. They understand they have "skin in the game" because their successes reflect on the School of Business and vice versa, the School's successes reflect on them.

Perhaps those with the greatest investment in this enterprise are our students and their families. We all understand that they made a very literal financial investment as well as their commitment to years of study to achieve their degrees and graduate. Our students make a commitment to this School in others ways, too. For example, our tax students volunteer each year to assist those with low income prepare their tax returns. Many of our students are involved in community service as a result of being a member of one of our student organizations. Our students have shown a culture of giving and not just receiving.

Each year, many of our students participate in case competitions, where they have 24 hours to make a business proposal to a real-world company. They are involved in Net Impact, working on issues concerning business ethics, or they may have joined one of the Jayhawks on Wall Street excursions or been on one of the Xplore trips to Dallas or New York. Perhaps they were among the MBA students who travelled to China to meet with international business leaders. Others took advantage of our study abroad programs and learned just how global business is while studying in Italy, France, India, Brazil and beyond. All students are making an investment, not just in themselves and their education, but they also were representing our School.

As our students move on from the halls of Summerfield, it's important for them to know and for all of us to be reminded, there have been and are now many, many people with "skin in the game," making an investment in their education, in their success, in our KU School of Business.

Please be assured that we will continue to make the KU School of Business one of the best in the country. We know our continued success reflects on all of us – students, faculty, alumni and staff. We all have something at stake in the future of the KU School of Business. We all have skin in the game.

Best wishes for a fun and safe holiday season and may 2009 be a prosperous year for one and all!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

William L. Fuerst  
Dean