

From the President

I would like to welcome our newest graduates to Western Illinois University's Alumni Association. You will always be a member of the Western Illinois family and have numerous opportunities to stay involved with your alma mater. To those of you who are already active alumni and friends, we appreciate your continued loyalty.

It is always rewarding to take a look back at our many achievements during the past school year. While there are far too many to list in this column, I'd like to highlight just a few of our numerous accomplishments. Western's first nine doctoral candidates graduated in Fall 2008, while six graduated last month. The Illinois Board of Higher Education approved programs in engineering, nursing and anthropology, and Western's nursing program received licensure approval from the State of Illinois for our four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree, which begins this fall. Western received a \$1 million donation from the John Deere and Moline foundations for the WIU-Quad Cities-based engineering degree program, which begins in Fall 2009.

The University made national news when ABC selected Western's Inauguration Neighborhood Ball as one of the celebrations to be featured during the news broadcasts of inauguration activities, and Western was named to the Presidential Honor Roll for Community Service, which is one of the highest honors an institution can receive. Our Quad Cities campus continues to expand, as do our distance and online learning initiatives.

While the 2008-2009 school year has been rewarding, we've also had our share of challenging times. We experienced crisis situations twice during the 2008-2009 school year when anonymous threats disrupted our campus. As with past situations, we immediately issued an alert via the emergency alert system and heightened security on campus, including increased police presence. Our campus was affected by the recent H1N1 outbreak, and like much of the country, Western has also been affected by the economic crisis.

State budgets continue to remain in flux; however, we continue to provide our students with the exceptional resources and programs they need and deserve. What is most heartening is that even during these difficult times, Western continues to provide remarkable opportunities for all of its students.

I hope to see you at Western for the annual Homecoming celebration [Oct. 16-17](#). I also look forward to seeing many of you at one of our other alumni events across the U.S. in 2009-2010.

All my best wishes,
Al Goldfarb