Dear JCSU Family and Friends,

As a new calendar year begins, Johnson C. Smith is literally “rising to great occasions” as it transforms itself into Charlotte’s Premier Independent Urban University.

Achieving that broad and encompassing vision requires a physical transformation, as well as a new attitude, a change in program offerings and the way we operate our beloved institution.

That’s why the earth is moving on the JCSU campus and along Beatties Ford Road. Six projects, in varying degrees of completion, are currently underway: George E. Davis House renovation; Duke Hall renovation; Mosaic Village construction; HealthPlex construction; Grimes Lounge energy efficiency upgrades; and Smith Hall energy efficiency upgrades. These projects will radically alter our home, giving it the look, feel and atmosphere of an urban campus that will meet the needs of our students, faculty and staff for decades to come, as well as impact the lives of neighborhood residents.

This newsletter is dedicated to updating you on these projects, not only by reviewing their status, but also by explaining how each one will contribute to the radical transformation of JCSU. Together, they will create a progressive campus that will attract a diverse pool of outstanding students, as well as top-notch, highly talented faculty and staff members.

So often, people ask how the University is funding these projects. They ask, “Are you taking money from scholarships and academic programs?” The answer is, “No.” The articles you will read clearly identify the funding sources for each project.

If you are in the JCSU family, I encourage you to walk around and view these projects. I am sure they will make you proud. If you are a friend of JCSU, I urge you to visit the campus. I am positive that you will like what you see as JCSU evolves into a cutting-edge 21st century university that will continue our long legacy of producing compassionate and forward-thinking leaders.

But while here, please forgive our appearance and any inconvenience you might experience due to the construction. The road to greatness can be messy at times, but I assure you it will be well worth it!

Dr. Ronald L. Carter
President
George E. Davis House to Serve as Future Home of Foster Village Network Center
By Anayochukwu Ezeigbo, Assistant Vice President for Business Operations

The George E. Davis House, at the corner of Campus and Dixon streets, is in the Biddleville section of Charlotte, N.C., one block from campus. This building was originally constructed in the 1890s, added onto in the 1900s, and given a brick veneer around 1929. Dr. Davis was the first black Professor here at Johnson C. Smith University and lived from 1862-1959.

The Davis House has fallen into disrepair and was suggested by many for demolition. However, the special significance in terms of its history, architecture and cultural importance contributed to its consideration as a historic landmark. This determination was based on the integrity of design, setting, workmanship, material, feeling and historic association, all of which led to the commission’s decision for the designation.

The architect of record for this project is the firm Neighboring Concepts. The renovation is expected to restore the building to its original look with modifications to accommodate the intended change in use. The scope of renovation will include high-efficiency building, windows and roofing systems. This building has been designated as the first phase of the Foster Village Network Center master plan. The other projects in the network master plan include additional housing and the renovation of the Old Mount Carmel Baptist Church.

Center provides holistic approach to serving students

The Foster Village Network Center is designed to serve young men and women who have phased out of foster care by providing opportunities for them to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions and the possibilities available through continued education. While an increasing number of universities around the country have established programs to support the needs of non-traditional students, very few are actively working with local child welfare agencies and community organizations to construct an integrated model of support for students in all stages of the foster care system.

The JCSU program is rather unique in that it offers a holistic strategy that addresses the needs of students during high school, college years at JCSU and after graduation. The comprehensive program enlists the support of state- and community-based partner organizations, with a focus on funding, easing the transition from foster care to independent living, providing a supportive surrogate family for success during college and propelling young minds toward successful, productive lives in their communities.

The Foster Care Network will provide a myriad of services and support including:

- Year-round housing and other basic needs
- Financial aid
- Academic advising, career counseling and supplemental support
- Personal guidance and counseling
- Opportunities for student community engagement and leadership
- Planned transitions

The project is funded by Title III, Wells Fargo and a loan from the Historic Landmark Commission. The Davis House has been designated by the Historic Landmark Commission as one of the destination points on the historic map of greater Charlotte.
Duke Hall Renovation Project Slated for Completion Spring 2013

Duke Hall is undergoing a $5.5 million renovation with help from the Duke Endowment grant received last fall. The current structure will be transformed into suite-style residential units. This thorough renovation project includes new plumbing and electrical work. Recently, students were given a chance to view the models and express their opinions on the lay-outs of the suites. Upgrades will include full kitchens, modern furniture, study and TV lounge areas. This provides the University another opportunity to create a living and learning environment where students achieve academic and personal success.

Students tour one of the model kitchens and single bedrooms in Duke Hall

At JCSU, customer service is not just about how staff treats students and prospective students, donors and area residents – it’s also about how they treat each other. “Intrinsic to good customer service is how we treat each other – from the back of the house to the front of the house,” says JCSU President Dr. Ronald L. Carter.

As part of this year’s concerted efforts in this area, Dr. Carter and JCSU Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Dr. Elfred Anthony Pinkard are hosting small lunches with faculty and staff to talk about ‘The Smith Gold and Blue Standards.’ The purpose, Dr. Carter explains, is “to facilitate the common good of the University.” Workshops on the key aspects of internal customer service are also being planned.

A bridge for providing good internal customer service is job competencies. In recognition of that connection, Dr. Carter says “We will make sure staff has opportunities to be high performers in carrying out their duties.”

Rare Wine Donated to JCSU

Shakespeare wrote in Othello, “Good wine is a good familiar creature if it be well used.” And JCSU plans to make very good use of a 120-year-old bottle of wine that was recently donated to the University. An anonymous donor recently contributed a rare wine from his extensive private collection: an 1891 Biondi-Santi Brunello. It is one of only seven remaining in the world and will be raffled to raise funds for JCSU in spring 2012. He has also donated three additional wines (1945 Biondi-Santi Brunello, 1955 Biondi-Santi Brunello, 1961 Biondi-Santi Brunello) that will be showcased at a fundraising event in spring 2012.

“This is an extraordinary opportunity for the University to develop partnerships among entrepreneurs and wine enthusiasts and to cultivate funds and new relationships,” says President Ronald L. Carter. “The event will bring us national and international attention.”
Mosaic Village Rises to the Occasion in Historic West End
By Gerald Hector, Vice President of Business and Finance

Gazing at a mosaic, it is nearly impossible to comprehend the amount of time and precision required to create the natural blending of elements that result in the final image. Individually, the pieces may appear disjointed. Yet, when placed together, the result is incredible.

Such a mosaic is envisioned along West Trade Street in the Historic West End.

Designed with college students and young professionals in mind, Mosaic Village is envisioned as a vibrant and energetic community located at the heart of Historic West End, just walking distance from center city Charlotte, Johnson C. Smith University, Johnson and Wales and Gateway Village. Seen as one of the first pieces of this envisioned cultural mosaic, the mixed-use project consists of a 299-bed housing facility for JCSU, retail space and a 400-car parking deck.

Inspired by the area’s rich history and unmatched resilience, JCSU’s Mosaic Village has carefully been sculpted by the cultural influence of jazz music, seen and heard at the nearby historic Excelsior Club. The rhythmic progression of the building pulls from the jazz aesthetic and its improvisational, yet structured, nature. A study of how the layers of music can inform and compose the layers of architecture produces an array of breaks, riffs, vamps, bridges and improvs in physical form. Following these rules from the realm of jazz, the public and physical realm of Mosaic Village becomes an architectural composition that respects its history, while chartering a new path for the Historic West End community.

Mosaic Village has been designed as a sustainable campus that promotes diversity, mobility, identity, history and vitality. The new urban housing development consists of 80 units each with a kitchen, washer/dryer and two bathrooms. Lounges and syndicate rooms are spread throughout each level to promote social interaction, while a fitness room, game room and computer lab are located in the main lobby. The 6,800 square feet of street-level retail space consists of three main shell spaces located along West Trade Street, each with an outdoor terrace and interior courtyard. The parking deck serves the immediate needs of the building, while also providing adequate space to serve the surrounding community and future development. As one of the main features of the village, the top level of the deck serves as a rooftop terrace with a skyline view of uptown Charlotte.

The village has a goal of sharing resources innovatively, appreciating the individual differences that come with diversity and celebrating the opportunities for collaboration and engagement involved with being part of the overall mosaic that is Historic West End.
Mosaic Amenities to Appeal to Students

By Cathy Jones, Dean of Student Development

Mosaic Village is a magnificent new urban student housing opportunity scheduled to open in fall, 2012. Located just a half-mile from campus, this modern suite-style apartment complex will serve 299 students at Johnson C. Smith University. The four-story urban housing facility will include: retail shops on the street level; a secured parking garage; a rooftop patio for event scheduling; an outdoor courtyard; two-, four- and five-bedroom unit floor plans; an environmentally-conscious modern design; video surveillance with 24-hour security; and amazing views of Charlotte’s skyline.

Students residing at Mosaic Village will enjoy the benefits of being close to campus and having easy access to classes, campus events and programs. Amenities include:

- 24-hour billiard/game room
- 24-hour fitness room
- 24-hour computer room
- Free parking
- Large multi-purpose room
- Four syndicate lounges
- Nine lounges with plasma TV’s
- High-speed internet, free wi-fi, satellite TV
- Washer and dryer in each unit
- Full kitchens in each unit
- Fully furnished
- Trolley access to campus

The University’s goal is to ensure that the student experience is as convenient as possible. Students who live off campus sometimes struggle to balance the resources to pay for an apartment, transportation, gas, utilities, cable and other expenses. Mosaic Village will give them the opportunity to enjoy being close to campus while experiencing the benefits of safe and secure living. Students who are currently living off campus will be offered first priority to apply for housing at Mosaic Village.
Health and Wellness Department to Get New Home at HealthPlex
By Dr. Diane Bowles, Vice President for Government and Sponsored Research and Gantt Huberman Architects

A groundbreaking ceremony to launch the building of a new HealthPlex Center took place on August 19, 2011 at Johnson C. Smith University. Currently under construction, the center is a 5,750-square-foot addition to the existing swimming pool building adjacent to Brayboy Gymnasium.

The HealthPlex will house the University’s wellness department and will give staff, faculty and students of JCSU free access to a health facility and wellness programming. The programming will address the unique needs and concerns of the JCSU campus and the surrounding community. The center will offer exercise, weight loss and nutrition programs to the University students, faculty and administration. It will also provide community outreach programs to Charlotte-Mecklenburg school children through instructions and promotion of health and fitness improvements.

The HealthPlex will have a fitness center equipped with Freemotion Fitness cardio and strength equipment, a multipurpose room equipped with a teaching kitchen, yoga and pilates studio, wellness programs, group exercise classes, aquatic programming, locker rooms, storage and offices.

Current programming includes health coaching, fitness challenges, Vitality Challenge, weight management, group exercise classes, water fitness classes, Living Healthy Seminar Series and fitness assessments. Future programming plans will offer a community health forum, a running group, health fair, 5K training program, triathlon training program, Greek games, a faculty/staff field day and more.

Along with programming, the JCSU HealthPlex also is the center of applied health research in the fields of health, human performance and sports. Students, staff and faculty will be able to perform research that will benefit the University and the surrounding community. The HealthPlex will be equipped with various pieces of equipment to assist in research such as: iWorks metabolic cart with EKG, Keiser pneumatic power training equipment, MicroFit health/wellness/nutrition tracking software, FitnessGram, Matrix’s KrankCycle, and Freemotion Fitness Inclines Trainer treadmills.

Building materials and construction procedures emphasize sustainable “green” practice using exterior sun shades, low-E glazing, zero VOC paints and high efficiency TPO reflective and insulated roofing. Select construction refuse will be recycled through Mecklenburg County Recycling Center.
JCSU Awarded Energy and Sustainability Grant for Grimes Lounge and Smith Hall

In the spring of 2011, the North Carolina State Energy Office (SEO) announced a request for proposals to increase energy efficiency in the facilities of large non-profits, companies and organizations. This highly competitive grant program was funded by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funds. The University, upon review and completion of the requirements, submitted a proposal to fund several critical strategic energy needs on campus. The University then contracted with a team of energy consultants, general contractors and engineers to quickly assess the viability of several projects and create the proposals from which two key projects were selected:

1. The replacement of the roofing system and the glass curtain walls in Grimes Lounge and the top floor of the Mary Joyce Crisp Taylor Student Union, which hosts major events on campus. Due to its orientation and location, Grimes Lounge is generally too hot, despite auxiliary cooling units. It still requires supplementary cooling in the summer months. This grant allowed for the replacement of the older standard glass with a high-efficiency, tinted glass that retains conditioned air in the summer while retaining heat in the winter months. The roof on Grimes Lounge was also a source of heat loss and heat gain due to the type of roofing system installed. This grant also allowed for the design and installation of a higher energy-efficient roofing system (see photo at right) that minimizes heat loss and gain and reduces energy use.

2. The second key project was to upgrade the building systems in Smith Hall. Smith is the second oldest residence hall on campus and was a residence for seminarins in the early years. It is currently a mixed-use residence and administrative hall. Students living in the building were uncomfortable with room temperatures that could not be controlled. The problem often led to open windows while the system was running, which wasted energy. This project allowed for the installation of an automatic control system that adjusts energy use according to the temperature, and installation of new more efficient pumps.

JCSU’s proposal competed with others and was accepted by the State Energy Office (SEO). The project was funded $305,303 on a split-funding basis, with a matching requirement for JCSU to leverage 48 percent of the total cost. This project was on a fast track, with less than six months to substantially complete the design, bid and construction phases. A team based on the funding task included Anayochukwu C. Ezeigbo, vice president for business operations; Gerald Hector, vice president for business and finance; Calor Energy for grant administration and energy issues; and Lee Morgan, Inc., as the construction manager.

Design began in September 2011 followed by construction in October. The majority of the work occurred around Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks to minimize disruptions to University business. The remaining aspects of the installation included special-order glass panes, general construction and re-installation of the window shades which are scheduled for completion by the end of January.

This project also included $6,500 to educate JCSU students and the University community about the project and to broadcast energy-saving themes on a widescreen television in the rotunda lobby. It covered energy awareness gatherings for students during study breaks during the fall semester finals week. This grant, which was completed on budget, is projected to save the equivalent of 400,000 kilowatt hours of power annually, or $32,000, while improving the comfort level in the space for the University and guests.
Johnson C. Smith University: An HBCU for the 21st Century
By Elfred Anthony Pinkard, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Johnson C. Smith is a member of a community of institutions of higher learning that were founded for a unique and noble purpose which emerged from this nation’s troubled past and conflicted notion about the rights of its citizens of African descent. Emerging from the tragedy of forced servitude and the promise of the American dream, newly freed enslaved people of African descent looked to education as the vehicle for personal and communal uplift. Despite the revealing social restrictions on the rights of these newly freed Americans and the rigid social codes which separated the races, a unique and special interracial cooperation formed which established institutions for African Americans. The history and purpose of these institutions are intricately bound to the history of this nation and the history of American higher education, as well. The definition of HBCUs was codified in the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, as “…any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principle mission was, and is, the education of black Americans…”

Today, according to the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 104 HBCUs exist. They are public, private, four-year, two-year, single-gendered, religious, rural, urban and liberal arts colleges. Among them are medical schools, law schools, dental schools, theological seminaries and divinity schools, and major research institutions. They have directly or indirectly touched the lives of every African American living today and they have added to the rich mosaic and the unique diversity of America’s colleges and universities. And while they occupy a special place in the collective hearts of African Americans, HBCUs have contributed mightily to the building and enrichment of this nation. They have provided this nation with an educated class of African American leaders, entrepreneurs, physicians, lawyers, educators, architects, engineers, fine artists and the decent, respectable hardworking men and women who make up the solid African American middle class.

For most of their existence until the late 20th century, HBCUs were the only option of higher education open to African Americans interested in pursuing a college education. As such, these institutions have educated generations of talented African American students. A steady and reliable stream of potential students was never an issue for most HBCUs, most notably those with outstanding academic reputations. The hard fought battles to confront and eradicate de jure and de facto segregation resulted in an unintended consequence for many institutions in the African American community and HCBUs were not immune. As opportunities to attend any college or university opened up, especially for academically gifted and financially able African American students, many HBCUs began to see a diminution in the numbers of students seeking admission to their campuses. Additionally, as access to higher education evolved, in the cultural imagination, from a privilege to a right, many HBCUs, because of their historic missions, felt absolutely compelled to accept every student who applied. As a result, many institutions began to report lower graduation rates and increased fiscal instability because of students’ inability to meet their academic and financial obligations to the institution. Further, in the minds of many, African American student access to any colleges and universities rendered the HBCU obsolete given the elimination of segregation and the espoused value of integration as a desirable, hard won social practice. The confluence of these circumstances has had a damaging impact on the collective community of HBCUs and a direct impact on a few. Within the last two decades, at least three private HBCUs have lost their accreditation and seen their reputations severely damaged among the public, perspective students and their parents. Many more have faced sanctions by their accrediting body and confront fiscal and fundraising challenges. To complicate matters further, many predominantly white colleges and universities have declared an interest and intent to actively pursue African American students and offer admission with substantial financial assistance to their institutions.

The response from HBCUs has been varied and uneven; however, those that have forcefully claimed their place as institutions with a future have been strategic about visioning an expansive mission and agenda for the 21st century. The transformation at JCSU is one example of a modern HBCU honoring its historic mission while expanding that mission to address contemporary realities. This has meant creating innovative academic programs, a diverse student and workplace environment, developing community partnerships and alliances and claiming our place as Charlotte’s “premier, independent, urban institution.” In the wake of this response to the current educational landscape and the challenges facing HBCUs, JCSU is and will remain forever an HBCU and a member of a proud community of institutions that, since the 19th century, have faced and triumphed against incredible odds. It is a noteworthy tradition for which we are all proud and intend, without apology, to honor and affirm.