President’s Message

On November 4, 2011, we marked the 150th anniversary of the very first day the University of Washington opened its doors. It was quite a celebration as throngs of purple-clad students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends gathered to observe and express their unwavering pride for a place that has so deeply affected who they are and where they’re going. Even alumni in places as far away as Tokyo and Moscow raised a glass to their alma mater. The sight was a far cry from that day a century and a half ago, when the University began with a sole instructor teaching 30 students in a single classroom. Who could have imagined that from those humble beginnings would emerge what is today one of the finest public research universities in the world?

Looking back upon our University’s history, it is truly remarkable all the ways that the UW has influenced science, technology, medicine and culture. The list of individuals whose accomplishments have helped and inspired others is endless, the number of game-changing innovations that have been derived from within our halls, astonishing. Yet, the most exciting elements of our University lie not in our past, but in our future.

People come to the UW because they are aware of the incredible opportunities to be found here. Both inside and outside our buildings, their time here is defined by both the potential and the responsibility to do something utterly extraordinary. We’ve fostered some of the most brilliant minds of our time—artists, doctors, astronauts, entrepreneurs—and the list continues to grow. What they all have in common is that the UW shaped their capacity to achieve excellence, and they all left the campus as stronger and more prepared people than when they entered.

As we reflect on the past 150 years, we see that the UW has created a proud and significant legacy, having made strides in more ways than I would ever attempt to count. A century and a half seems like a long time, but when I look around at the Huskies here on our campus, it’s undeniably evident that there are far more achievements yet to come—achievements that will further our University, city, the state, the nation and, indeed, the world. We may be 150 years old now, but we have only just begun to make our mark.

Michael K. Young
PRESIDENT