**President Kent Fuchs**
**Annual Letter to Gators for Higher Education (G4HE)**
**January \_\_\_, 2018**

Dear Gator Advocates,

Happy New Year from 226 Tigert Hall!

We begin 2018 on a note of terrific promise for the University of Florida. We have officially joined the ranks of the nation’s top-10 public universities; we’re nearly halfway toward our $3 billion goal in one of the largest fundraising campaigns of any public university; and we’re growing our faculty as part of a major new hiring initative.

We owe a great deal of this progress to the support of our elected officials – and that support remains critical to our further ascension. As members of Gators for Higher Education, your voice and advocacy on UF’s behalf will continue to make an immense difference in achieving our strategic goals for excellence and rising international stature.

The 2018 Florida Legislative Session began last week. I would like to ask for your valued advocacy once again, and I hope that you will also encourage others to lend their support to UF and our agenda by joining Gators for Higher Education.

Here are our major legislative priorities this year:

**Plan to Continue to Raise our National Ranking -- $76 million**

UF is requesting $76 million to maintain and accelerate our rise to the top of the national rankings. We’ve divided our plan into three categories:

* $25 million in preeminence
	+ Support the hiring of 100 lecturers and 100 teacher-scholars
* $35 million for world-class faculty and scholars
	+ Support, recruit and retain outstanding faculty fitting of a premiere academic and research institution
* $16 million to attract the most accomplished graduate students
	+ Provide graduate scholarship in the colleges of dentistry, veterinary medicine, medicine and law – all costly professional areas of study – and in STEM graduate areas

**Infrastructure Projects -- $87.4 million**

Our building and infrastructure needs include:

* $30 million for utilities, infrastructure and capital renewal to help UF address its most serious building maintenance problems
* $50 million for the Data Science and Information Technology Building to enhance recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty through offering technically-advanced facilities – and the opportunity to collaborate with other top researchers in engineering and medical fields
* $7.4 million for Music Building construction, providing efficient and modern teaching labs and studio spaces

**Other Projects -- Approximately $9 million**

* $2.5 million to enhance Zika research and education capacity
* $2.5 million to create the first-of-its-kind Institute for Comparative Veterinary Diagnostics at the College of Veterinary Medicine
* $250,000 to preserve and protect the 35 historic buildings within the Historic District of St. Augustine, which UF manages
* $3.7 million for the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to meet increased research and extension workload demands.

As the legislative session continues, I urge you to stay involved through [Gators for Higher Education](http://gatorsforhighered.ufl.edu/). There you will find advocacy tools, as well as current updates on our legislative priorities.

Members of Gators for Higher Education, thank you again for your commitment to UF and for your steadfast and very effective support. I look forward to working with you this session and during the entire year as we continue to build and sustain the truly great university that Floridians deserve.

Warmly,

W. Kent Fuchs
President
University of Florida