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December 12, 2008

Dr. Luis M. Proenza  
President  
The University of Akron  
Office of the President  
Buchtel Hall 114  
Akron, Ohio 44325-4702

Dear President Proenza,

On behalf of Carnegie Foundation President Anthony Bryk and the entire Foundation, congratulations! Your institution has been selected for the 2008 Community Engagement Classification in the category of Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships. We are pleased to inform you of this classification decision before its public release on December 18, 2008, when we will announce the entire set of newly classified institutions.

Your application documented excellent alignment among mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement, and you were able to respond to the classification framework with both descriptions and examples of exemplary institutionalized practices of community engagement. You also documented and coordinated evidence of community engagement in a coherent and compelling response to the framework's inquiry.

Your campus is one of 119 institutions that will now be added to the Community Engagement Classification completed in 2006, bringing the total to almost 200. It is heartening to see this level of commitment and activity. Clearly, higher education is making real strides in finding ways to engage with and contribute to important community agendas. There is much to celebrate.

There are also areas in which more work must be done. During the selection process, we noted that even among the most effective applications there are categories of practice in need of continued development. Those areas include: (1) assessment, (2) partnerships, and (3) faculty rewards:

(1) The assessment practices required by the Community Engagement Classification must meet a broad range of purposes: assessing community perceptions of institutional engagement; tracking and recording of institution-wide engagement data; assessment of the impact of community engagement on students, faculty, community, and institution; identification and assessment of student learning outcomes in curricular engagement; and ongoing feedback mechanisms for partnerships. That range of purposes calls for sophisticated understandings and approaches to achieve the respective assessment goals. We urge institutions to continue to develop assessment toward those ends.