

TO: Fans, Friends, and Supporters of LSU Athletics

FROM: Skip Bertman, LSU Director of Athletics

I'm excited to launch this series of letters to you, our supporters of Tiger Athletics, to outline our vision for excellence for your athletics program. I'm calling these letters "Cyber-side Chats" because they will deliver to you our state-of-the-program via e-mail and the Internet.

Our vision is simple but challenging: to be one of the Top Five athletics programs in the nation – year in and year out – for the next quarter of a century.

Let me begin this first letter by telling you a few things that are important for our future.

First, **LSU needs to renovate its aging athletics facilities and to build new facilities** to realize our vision.

Second, **LSU needs to find funding** for the renovation and construction of those facilities, and to continue to operate a competitive athletics program.

Third, **we at LSU are very aware of our unique fan base** and are sensitive to our season ticket holders.

Recent media coverage has detailed the state law restricting LSU to using only 12 percent of the tickets in Tiger Stadium for private fund-raising. Louisiana is the only state in the nine-state SEC region – and, we believe, in the entire country – that restricts by law the number of seats its universities can use for private fund-raising.

We had planned to petition the legislature to repeal that law, but we have since decided to pursue other means available to us within the current laws to achieve our funding and facility goals.

This limitation on our fund-raising ability, however, leaves us in a precarious financial situation for the coming years. There are two sobering facts we must address as we shape the future of your athletics program:

No. 1, LSU trails top SEC schools in fund-raising. Last year, LSU was able to generate only \$3.1 million through its priority-seating program because we are restricted in the number of seats available for private fund-raising. Because they had more and better seats available for fund raising, Florida was able to generate \$15 million, Tennessee \$13.4 million and Alabama \$12 million. You can see how, multiplied over several years, LSU will continue to fall further and further behind our competition.

No. 2, LSU is behind its SEC competitors in facility improvements. While most of our sister schools in the SEC are spending anywhere from \$90 million to over \$160 million each since the early 1990s on major building and renovation projects, LSU has

spent less than \$70 million since 1979! And \$50 million of that was the 11,000-seat addition to Tiger Stadium in 2000.

Facilities play a critical role in fan enjoyment and student-athlete recruitment that cannot be compromised if LSU is to continue to field a successful Division I athletic program. You deserve the best environment possible when enjoying LSU events – comfortable seating in your stadiums, clean, spacious and functional restrooms, and accessible concession stands.

So the questions remain: Where do we find the financial resources necessary to fund the building projects for the future of Tiger Athletics? And how does LSU continue to fund its athletics program in the coming years amidst the climbing costs of doing everyday business?

Those are the questions with which we are wrestling now. In the coming weeks, through this correspondence, I will continue to paint you a full picture of the state of LSU Athletics so that you can have a better understanding of our goals and plans.

Don't forget that the LSU Athletics Department is a totally self-sufficient auxiliary of Louisiana State University. LSU Athletics uses no state tax dollars and it takes no student fees.

We have some very important decisions to make in the coming months. We want you to play a role in the future success of LSU Athletics, so we welcome your feedback at LSUvision@etigers.net. While I cannot guarantee a response to every e-mail we receive, please know they will all be read, so I do encourage your participation in this process.

I also encourage you to forward this letter to any Tiger fan who is not a season ticket holder. Our goal with these Cyber-side Chats is to inform as many LSU supporters as we possibly can.

I thank you for your continued support of Tiger Athletics as we move ahead with our vision for excellence.

(This letter has been e-mailed to every Tiger fan in our database for whom we have an e-mail address. If you know of someone who would like to receive these e-mail updates, send their addresses to LSUvision@etigers.net.)

May 8, 2003