I am pleased to have this opportunity to again address our alumni. A professional life spent in teaching and administration has given me a personal connection with many of you, and one of the true pleasures of my job as President is meeting and getting to know as many Hofstra graduates as possible. More than anything else, you - our graduates - exemplify Hofstra’s success. Your accomplishments enhance Hofstra’s reputation and inspire new students.

Each graduate has memories of life at Hofstra, memories of beginning college and of your challenges and successes. Many of you have shared with me special memories of your time at Hofstra, of a mentoring professor, close friends and a nurturing campus. This special feeling of Hofstra as a close-knit and caring community is essential to maintain even as the University grows in size, in number of schools, in majors and in complexity. We have many existing programs that aid in keeping students connected and confident. These include Freshman Advancement, a department that provides support for students making the transition from high school to college. There is a mentor program in place where upperclassmen assist their younger peers. Freshman Advancement also coordinates a variety of events, programs and excursions throughout the academic year that keep freshmen social, busy and also familiar with the surrounding Long Island community and New York City attractions.

Additional improvements, however, can be made. One of the goals of my presidency is to enhance the student supportiveness and friendliness of the University in every possible way. Students need to be spared as much bureaucracy as possible in dealing with financial aid, payment, registration and other administrative tasks so that they can focus on their studies. Students need to feel supported by a caring community as they adapt to college life. I have formed a task force consisting of administrators, deans and faculty to study the first year experience, registration and advisement, and to recommend to me improvements to ensure the best possible experience for each and every student. The task force is consulting with experts from other schools, reviewing current practices, and talking to students and will be making specific recommendations this year. I welcome your comments and suggestions as well.

As I close, I want to briefly mention some special events that took place earlier this semester. From April 27 to May 4, Hofstra revisited an old tradition; the spring Festival of the Arts which had not been held on campus for more than 30 years. This was spearheaded by alumnus and longtime faculty member, Herb Deutsch ’56, who last year retired as chair of the Music Department. The festival included art exhibits, musical performances, film screenings and concerts, many of which featured the remarkable talents of Hofstra students and faculty. We look forward to the continuation of this revised tradition.

May 4th, the finale of the Festival of the Arts, also marked the 20th Hofstra Dutch Festival. During a particularly brutal winter season, we daydreamed of spring and the bloom of 100,000 tulips across our South Campus. The 20th Dutch Festival was real cause for celebration on our campus and we welcomed thousands of visitors from all over the New York metropolitan area for the event.

Lastly, please join us for the Hofstra Gala Ball, which has been scheduled for May 29. Our guests of honor are acclaimed authors Donald E. Axinn ’75 and Nelson R. DeMille ’70. The annual Gala has been very instrumental in building the Hofstra Scholarship Fund; all money raised directly benefits Hofstra students who need financial support in order to complete their studies. To date, the Gala has raised millions of dollars for student scholarships. You will find more information on how to attend or support the Gala in this issue of the Update.

We appreciate feedback from alumni. If you have any thoughts on the freshman experience, please e-mail your suggestions to freshman@hofstra.edu or to deanofstudents@hofstra.edu.

Stuart Rabinowitz
President