It’s an honor for me to greet you for the first time. Working with the Russ College Board and Dean Irwin is insightful and invigorating. In our biannual meetings and our monthly phone conferences, we discuss how to capitalize on what is great about the Russ College while encouraging strategic areas that will strengthen our college and Ohio University.

We do that with metrics developed under the leadership of Dean Irwin. We’re unique at Ohio University—and among academic institutions nationwide, I suspect—in having such a set of measurable goals to guide us. An important piece is the Russ Vision Plan, a long-range look at how to invest the 2008 Russ bequest. I’m happy to report that the plan already has reaped benefits.

Fueling our junior faculty successes with grants (see pages 8-9) is a new grant writing position supported by the Russ bequest. During the last year alone, the Russ College grant writer worked on more than 60 proposals, emphasizing junior faculty and very productive senior faculty. Our grant writer reviews up to 30 grant funding announcements a day; does research to find appropriate funding sources; and leads workshops specifically tailored to Russ College faculty, researchers, and graduate students.

Our new math program, which you can read about on pages 12-13, is also supported by the Russ Vision plan. In its first year, it dramatically increased our students’ success rates. By providing more individualized teaching, we give students who enroll in the Russ College a stronger footing—so they will stay enrolled and graduate from the Russ College.

Scholarships is another area we’re targeting, toward the goal of increasing enrollment. Ohio’s population is declining, so higher education institutions are competing harder for students. But between fall 2010 and fall 2011, the Russ College enjoyed an increase of more than 50 applicants, from 999 to 1050 prospective students. As a result, enrollment has grown. We offered more scholarships in that time period, and it’s paying off.

Another portion of the Russ Vision Plan—and again a unique characteristic of the Russ College—is tied intimately to the Russes. Their bequest included the Russ Research Center, a technology park near Dayton, Ohio, that was home to their company, Systems Research Laboratories. Today’s tenants include Sensor Technology Systems, which develops night vision goggles for military special operations teams, and Cornerstone Research, which provides high-tech prototyping for new products.

A very special feature of the park is the Russ Venture Group building, a free-standing structure in the front corner of the property. It was once Fritz’s personal office and workshop. To foster additional connections with engineering and technology firms, we’ll renovate it into a small innovation center, with offices of various sizes and accompanying office equipment to support start-ups.

Our strategies and plans move our college forward not just on spreadsheets and in numbers. As we see returns on our investments, our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are making their mark on our nation and world. These are the discoveries, collaborations, and breakthroughs we all share as part of the Russ College legacy.

Emmett Boyle, M.S. ’70, is chair of the Russ College Board of Visitors and the college’s campaign committee for The Promise Lives campaign. With more than 45 years in the aerospace and aluminum industries in engineering, management, and ownership roles, he now resides in Ohio and Florida with his wife, Debra Boger, where they operate The Elmwood Group, a consulting company. He was inducted into the Russ College Academy of Distinguished Graduates in 2006.

Please welcome Susan Lee to the Russ College. As the Russ College’s chief fund-raising officer, she oversees and directs all charitable giving activities. Susan, who has 15 years of experience in higher education fund-raising, also holds a doctorate in higher education administration/leadership studies.

For more information about how to give to the Russ College, contact her at lees3@ohio.edu or 740.593.0894.